# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/14/20

# Inner Invincibility



Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me… —[Matthew 11:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+11%3A29)

“Whom the Lord loves He chastens…” ([Hebrews 12:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:6)). How petty our complaining is! Our Lord begins to bring us to the point where we can have fellowship with Him, only to hear us moan and groan, saying, “Oh Lord, just let me be like other people!” Jesus is asking us to get beside Him and take one end of the yoke, so that we can pull together. That’s why Jesus says to us, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” ([Matthew 11:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:30)). Are you closely identified with the Lord Jesus like that? If so, you will thank God when you feel the pressure of His hand upon you.

“…to those who have no might He increases strength” ([Isaiah 40:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+40:29)). God comes and takes us out of our emotionalism, and then our complaining turns into a hymn of praise. The only way to know the strength of God is to take the yoke of Jesus upon us and to learn from Him.

“…the joy of the Lord is your strength” ([Nehemiah 8:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah+8:10)). Where do the saints get their joy? If we did not know some Christians well, we might think from just observing them that they have no burdens at all to bear. But we must lift the veil from our eyes. The fact that the peace, light, and joy of God is in them is proof that a burden is there as well. The burden that God places on us squeezes the grapes in our lives and produces the wine, but most of us see only the wine and not the burden. No power on earth or in hell can conquer the Spirit of God living within the human spirit; it creates an inner invincibility.

If your life is producing only a whine, instead of the wine, then ruthlessly kick it out. It is definitely a crime for a Christian to be weak in God’s strength.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Jesus Christ is always unyielding to my claim to my right to myself. The one essential element in all our Lord’s teaching about discipleship is abandon, no calculation, no trace of self-interest.Disciples Indeed, 395 L

# CCEL – 4/14/20

**My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.**—[PSA. 63:5,6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.5)

How precious . . . are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.—How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!—Thy love is better than wine.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.—Thou art fairer than the children of men.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.—His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

[Psa. 139:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.17). -[Psa. 119:103](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.103). -[Song 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.2).[Psa. 73:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.25). -[Psa. 45:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.45.html" \l "Ps.45.2).[Song 2:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.3). -[Song 5:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.15).

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.” **[Psalm 22:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.7)**

Mockery was a great ingredient in our Lord’s woe. Judas mocked him in the garden; the chief priests and scribes laughed him to scorn; Herod set him at nought; the servants and the soldiers jeered at him, and brutally insulted him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed his royalty; and on the tree all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at him. Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the quick. Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with anguish far beyond all mortal guess, and then picture that motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt of one poor suffering victim! Surely there must have been something more in the crucified One than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honoured him with such contempt. Was it not evil confessing, in the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross? O Jesus, “despised and rejected of men,” how couldst thou die for men who treated thee so ill? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree. We, too, have despised thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet thou bleedest to heal our wounds, and diest to give us life. O that we could set thee on a glorious high throne in all men’s hearts! We would ring out thy praises over land and sea till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject.

“Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign Good!

Thou art not loved, because not understood:

This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile

Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.”

# Word Live – 4/14/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/14/20

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# Today in the Word – 4/14/20

# Deep Weeds

**Read:** [**Matthew 13:24–29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13%3a24%e2%80%9329%2c+36%e2%80%9342)

### **The Parable of the Weeds**

24Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

28“‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

29“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.

**Read:** [**Matthew 13:36–42**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13%3a24%e2%80%9329%2c+36%e2%80%9342)

### **The Parable of the Weeds Explained**

36Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

37He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Many who have invited friends to visit their church have heard this excuse: “I don’t go to church because it has too many hypocrites!” We may feel defensive at that accusation. Perhaps we feel our church is different, more genuine than the churches our friends have attended.

Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness. 2 Timothy 2:19

Today’s parable, might make us reconsider this criticism. There are hypocrites in the church. One reason is the mysterious way the gospel of the kingdom spreads. According to Jesus, the final manifestation of the kingdom will not come until the end of the age (v. 39). But those who believe the gospel are already people (literally “sons”) of the kingdom by faith. They have been rescued from the dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13).

Jesus warned that some who appear to be His servants are impostors (Matt. 7:21–22). These false Christians are sometimes hard to distinguish. Some who we think are people of the kingdom may not be. Others that we think are not genuine children of God may only be young in their faith or immature.

“So long as the Church is on pilgrimage in the world, the good and sincere will be mixed in it with the bad and the hypocrites,” the Reformer John Calvin cautioned. “So the children of God must arm themselves with patience and maintain an unbroken constancy of faith among all the offenses which can trouble them.” We accept those who claim to be Christ’s based on their profession of faith. This does not mean that we should turn a blind eye to sin or inconsistency. “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness’ ” (2 Tim. 2:19).

>> After reading this passage, we may be tempted to scrutinize our fellow church members. Instead, perhaps we can turn the spotlight on our own lives and commitment to God and submit to the transforming work of His Spirit.

### **Pray with Us**

We invite you to reflect on the powerful exhortation in Paul’s letter to Timothy in today’s key verse. During your prayer time, ask the Lord to help you submit to the transforming work of His Spirit.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/14/20

# Healing Words

 **Read:** [**Proverbs 16:20–24**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2016.20%E2%80%9324)

20Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16861a" \o "See footnote a)]  
    and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

21The wise in heart are called discerning,  
    and gracious words promote instruction.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16862b" \o "See footnote b)]

22Prudence is a fountain of life to the prudent,  
    but folly brings punishment to fools.

23The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent,  
    and their lips promote instruction.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16864c" \o "See footnote c)]

24Gracious words are a honeycomb,  
    sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Proverbs 16:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV#en-NIV-16861) Or whoever speaks prudently finds what is good
2. [Proverbs 16:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV#en-NIV-16862) Or words make a person persuasive
3. [Proverbs 16:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A20%E2%80%9324&version=NIV#en-NIV-16864) Or prudent / and make their lips persuasive

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. [Proverbs 16:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2016.24)

A recent study has shown that encouraging words from a health-care provider can help patients recuperate faster from their ailments. A simple experiment exposed volunteer study participants to a skin allergen to make them itch and then compared the reactions between those who received assurance from their physician and those who didn’t. Patients who received encouragement from their doctors had less discomfort and itching than their counterparts.

The writer of Proverbs knew how important encouraging words are. “Gracious words” bring “healing to the bones,” he wrote ([Proverbs 16:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2016.24)). The positive effect of words isn’t limited to our health: when we heed the wisdom of instruction, we’re also more likely to prosper in our efforts (v. 20). So too encouragement buoys us for the challenges we face now and may encounter in the future.

We may not yet fully understand why or even how much wisdom and encouragement bring strength and healing to our daily lives. Yet the cheers and guidance of our parents, coaches, and colleagues seem to help us endure difficulty and steer us toward success. Similarly, the Bible brings us encouragement when we face trials, equipping us to bear up under even the most unthinkable circumstances. Help us, God, to be strengthened by Your wisdom and to, in turn, offer the healing and hope of “gracious words” to those You’ve placed in our lives.

By:  [Kirsten Holmberg](https://odb.org/author/kirstenholmberg/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who has spoken “gracious words” into your life? Why is it vital for you to share words of encouragement with others?

Dear Father, thank You for Your words of healing and hope.

#### **Insight**

In [Proverbs 16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2016) we find two examples of Hebrew poetry. In verse 20, we see “synonymous parallelism,” in which the same idea is repeated using slightly different words. The key connector for the comparison is the word and. Verse 22 is an example of “antithetical parallelism,” a device that uses opposite ideas set in terms of contrast. Here the key connector for the contrast is the word but. See if you can find other examples of these poetic devices in [Proverbs 16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2016).

# God Calling – 4/14/20

# Equally Yoked

My children, I guide you always. The walking in the way may not be always carried out, but the guiding is always so sure. God is using you both in marvelous ways. Go on gladly. You will see.

To be a perfect gymnast you must learn balance. It is balance and poise, perfect balance and poise, I am teaching you now. This will give you power in dealing with the lives of others, and that power is already being marvelously manifested.

The vision you both have is the means of clearing the obstacles away. When My disciple sees My purpose ahead, that very sight is the power that clears away every obstacle along the range of vision. You will both have mighty power to do this. Spiritual Light is in itself a miracle-worker.

People waste so much time in seeking to work out what they see. I declare to you that in the seeing My purpose all is done. Truly I said to My Disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But to you, and the twos who gather to hear Me as you do, I can declare those things now, that then I left unsaid.

Is not the message of My servant Paul now plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," because My Guidance is intensified immeasurably in power, when the two are one in desire to be with Me -- but so few have understood.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/15/20

# The Failure To Pay Close Attention



The high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days. —[2 Chronicles 15:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Chronicles+15%3A17)

Asa was not completely obedient in the outward, visible areas of his life. He was obedient in what he considered the most important areas, but he was not entirely right. Beware of ever thinking, “Oh, that thing in my life doesn’t matter much.” The fact that it doesn’t matter much to you may mean that it matters a great deal to God. Nothing should be considered a trivial matter by a child of God. How much longer are we going to prevent God from teaching us even one thing? But He keeps trying to teach us and He never loses patience. You say, “I know I am right with God”— yet the “high places” still remain in your life. There is still an area of disobedience. Do you protest that your heart is right with God, and yet there is something in your life He causes you to doubt? Whenever God causes a doubt about something, stop it immediately, no matter what it may be. Nothing in our lives is a mere insignificant detail to God.

Are there some things regarding your physical or intellectual life to which you have been paying no attention at all? If so, you may think you are all correct in the important areas, but you are careless— you are failing to concentrate or to focus properly. You no more need a day off from spiritual concentration on matters in your life than your heart needs a day off from beating. As you cannot take a day off morally and remain moral, neither can you take a day off spiritually and remain spiritual. God wants you to be entirely His, and it requires paying close attention to keep yourself fit. It also takes a tremendous amount of time. Yet some of us expect to rise above all of our problems, going from one mountaintop experience to another, with only a few minutes’ effort.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

God engineers circumstances to see what we will do. Will we be the children of our Father in heaven, or will we go back again to the meaner, common-sense attitude? Will we stake all and stand true to Him? “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” The crown of life means I shall see that my Lord has got the victory after all, even in me.  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 530 L

# CCEL – 4/15/20

**Their Redeemer is strong.**—[JER. 50:34.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.50.html" \l "Jer.50.34)

I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins.—I have laid help upon one that is mighty.—TheLord. . . thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.—Mighty to save.—Able to keep you from falling.—Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—He is able . . . to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[Amos 5:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Amos.5.html" \l "Amos.5.12). -[Psa. 89:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.19). -[Isa. 49:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.49.html" \l "Isa.49.26). -[Isa. 63:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.1). -[Jude 24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.24). -[Rom. 5:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.20).[John 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.18). -[Heb. 7:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.25).[Isa. 50:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.50.html" \l "Isa.50.2).[Rom. 8:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.35),[38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.38).

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” **[Psalm 22:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.1)**

We here behold the Saviour in the depth of his sorrows. No other place so well shows the griefs of Christ as Calvary, and no other moment at Calvary is so full of agony as that in which his cry rends the air—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” At this moment physical weakness was united with acute mental torture from the shame and ignominy through which he had to pass; and to make his grief culminate with emphasis, he suffered spiritual agony surpassing all expression, resulting from the departure of his Father’s presence. This was the black midnight of his horror; then it was that he descended the abyss of suffering. No man can enter into the full meaning of these words. Some of us think at times that we could cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” There are seasons when the brightness of our Father’s smile is eclipsed by clouds and darkness; but let us remember that God never does really forsake us. It is only a seeming forsaking with us, but in Christ’s case it was a real forsaking. We grieve at a little withdrawal of our Father’s love; but the real turning away of God’s face from his Son, who shall calculate how deep the agony which it caused him?

In our case, our cry is often dictated by unbelief: in his case, it was the utterance of a dreadful fact, for God had really turned away from him for a season. O thou poor, distressed soul, who once lived in the sunshine of God’s face, but art now in darkness, remember that he has not really forsaken thee. God in the clouds is as much our God as when he shines forth in all the lustre of his grace; but since even the thought that he has forsaken us gives us agony, what must the woe of the Saviour have been when he exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

# Word Live – 4/15/20

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# Scripture Union – 4/15/20

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# Today in the Word – 4/15/20

# A Prophet Without Honor

**Read:** [**Matthew 13:53–58**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13%3a53%e2%80%9358)

### **A Prophet Without Honor**

53When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. 55“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” 57And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”

58And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

When I first came to faith in Christ, I found it difficult to share the gospel with my father. He did not want to accept spiritual advice from someone who was so much younger. “I used to change your diapers!” he would say.

A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home. Matthew 13:57

Those who knew Jesus from His youth had a similar trouble. They had a hard time accepting Jesus as anything more than “the carpenter’s son” (v. 54). But their doubt was also evidence of their hardened hearts. Like the religious leaders, they wanted Jesus to prove Himself by performing miracles on demand.

Luke 4:16–30 describes Jesus’ visit in more detail. Jesus summarizes their request with these words: “Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum” (Luke 4:23). Jesus’ answer pointed to their unbelief and He made it clear that He was not at their beck and call. The townspeople were so infuriated that they tried to push Jesus over a cliff. Instead, Jesus passed through the crowd unharmed. Luke does not say that this was a miracle, but the incident is reminiscent of Elisha’s escape from the horses and chariots of Aram (2 Kings 6:8–23).

The townspeople of Nazareth admitted that Jesus had displayed both wisdom and miraculous powers (Matt. 13:54). But instead of elevating their opinion of Jesus, these facts seemed like Jesus was acting above His station. “Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?” they said. “Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” The people of Nazareth stumbled over Jesus’ human nature. The Savior’s ordinary life during the years prior to His ministry kept them from seeing Jesus in any other way.

>> We may have our predisposed view of Jesus. Perhaps we see Jesus as a moral teacher, the revolutionary, or a friend. Our preconceptions of Jesus can blind us to His true nature and work. Instead, let Jesus’ words and works shape your view of Him.

### **Pray with Us**

Half-way through the month may be a good time to review what we’ve learned so far in the Gospel of Matthew. What surprising things have you learned about Jesus’ true nature and work? Thank Him today for who He is!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/15/20

# From Pity to Praise

# Today's Devotional Read: 2 Timothy 4:9-18

### **Personal Remarks**

9Do your best to come to me quickly, 10for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. 12I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

14Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

16At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. 18The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength. [2 Timothy 4:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%204.17)

At a coat drive for children, excited kids searched gratefully for their favorite colors and proper sizes. They also gained self-esteem, an organizer said, with new coats boosting their acceptance by peers and school attendance on winter days.

The apostle Paul seemed to need a coat, as well, when he wrote Timothy, “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas” ([2 Timothy 4:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%204.13)). Held in a cold Roman prison, Paul needed warmth but also companionship. “No one came to my support, but everyone deserted me,” he lamented, when he faced a Roman judge (v. 16). His words pierce our hearts with the honesty of this great missionary’s pain.

Yet in these final words of Paul’s last recorded letter—his closing thoughts after an astounding ministry—he moves from pity to praise. “But the Lord stood at my side,” he adds (v. 17), and his words rally our hearts. As Paul declared, “[God] gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death” (v. 17 nlt).

If you’re facing a crisis, lacking even the right clothing for warmth or close friends to help, remember God. He’s faithful to revive, provide, and deliver. Why? For His glory and for our purpose in His kingdom.

By:  [Patricia Raybon](https://odb.org/author/patriciaraybon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what “cold” area of your life do you need God’s great and warming strength? As you praise Him, how does your outlook change?

Our strong God, when life’s circumstances overwhelm us, stand with us, stir our praise, giving us Your strength to overcome.

#### **Insight**

The book of 2 Timothy was written from Rome as Paul was awaiting execution. The clear sense of his impending death is seen in [2 Timothy 4:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%204.6): “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.” His tone is very different in his prison letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon), where he’s under house arrest awaiting trial (see [Acts 28:30–31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2028.30%E2%80%9331)). This difference of tone contributes to the view of many scholars that Paul experienced two imprisonments—the first leading to trial and the second (seen here) leading to execution.

# God Calling – 4/15/20

# Never Feel Inadequate

Obey My demands. They are steps in the ladder that lead to success. Above all, keep calm, unmoved.

Go back into the silence to recover this calm when it is lost even for one moment. You accomplish more by this than by all the activities of a long day. At all cost keep calm, you can help nobody when you are agitated. I, your Lord, see not as man sees.

Never feel inadequate for any task. All work here is accomplished by My Spirit, and that can flow through the most humble and lowly. It simply needs an unblocked channel. Rid yourself of self and all is well.

Pray about all, but concentrate on a few things until those are accomplished. I am watching over you. Strength for your daily, hourly task is provided. Yours is the fault, the sin, if it is unclaimed, and you fail for lack of it.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" 2 Corinthians 12:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/16/20

# Can You Come Down From the Mountain?



While you have the light, believe in the light… —[John 12:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+12%3A36)

We all have moments when we feel better than ever before, and we say, “I feel fit for anything; if only I could always be like this!” We are not meant to be. Those moments are moments of insight which we have to live up to even when we do not feel like it. Many of us are no good for the everyday world when we are not on the mountaintop. Yet we must bring our everyday life up to the standard revealed to us on the mountaintop when we were there.

Never allow a feeling that was awakened in you on the mountaintop to evaporate. Don’t place yourself on the shelf by thinking, “How great to be in such a wonderful state of mind!” Act immediately— do something, even if your only reason to act is that you would rather not. If, during a prayer meeting, God shows you something to do, don’t say, “I’ll do it”— just do it! Pick yourself up by the back of the neck and shake off your fleshly laziness. Laziness can always be seen in our cravings for a mountaintop experience; all we talk about is our planning for our time on the mountain. We must learn to live in the ordinary “gray” day according to what we saw on the mountain.

Don’t give up because you have been blocked and confused once— go after it again. Burn your bridges behind you, and stand committed to God by an act of your own will. Never change your decisions, but be sure to make your decisions in the light of what you saw and learned on the mountain.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”?  Disciples Indeed, 389 L

# CCEL – 4/16/20

**I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.**—[PSA. 31:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.22)

I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.—Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off. I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.—I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

[Psa. 69:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.69.html" \l "Ps.69.2). -[Lam. 3:54-57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.54).[Psa. 77:7-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.77.html" \l "Ps.77.7). -[Psa. 27:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.13).

“The precious blood of Christ.” **[1 Peter 1:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.19)**

Standing at the foot of the cross, we see hands, and feet, and side, all distilling crimson streams of precious blood. It is “precious” because of its redeeming and atoning efficacy. By it the sins of Christ’s people are atoned for; they are redeemed from under the law; they are reconciled to God, made one with him. Christ’s blood is also “precious” in its cleansing power; it “cleanseth from all sin.” “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Through Jesus’ blood there is not a spot left upon any believer, no wrinkle nor any such thing remains. O precious blood, which makes us clean, removing the stains of abundant iniquity, and permitting us to stand accepted in the Beloved, notwithstanding the many ways in which we have rebelled against our God. The blood of Christ is likewise “precious” in its preserving power. We are safe from the destroying angel under the sprinkled blood. Remember it is God’s seeing the blood which is the true reason for our being spared. Here is comfort for us when the eye of faith is dim, for God’s eye is still the same. The blood of Christ is “precious” also in its sanctifying influence. The same blood which justifies by taking away sin, does in its after-action, quicken the new nature and lead it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus. And “precious,” unspeakably precious, is this blood, because it has an overcoming power. It is written, “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb.” How could they do otherwise? He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus, fights with a weapon which cannot know defeat. The blood of Jesus! sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death: heaven’s gates are opened. The blood of Jesus! we shall march on, conquering and to conquer, so long as we can trust its power!

# Word Live – 4/16/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/16/20

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 4/16/20

# An Impossible Task

**Read:** [**Matthew 14:1–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+14%3a1%e2%80%9321)

### **John the Baptist Beheaded**

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus, 2and he said to his attendants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

3Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, 4for John had been saying to him: “It is not lawful for you to have her.” 5Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet.

6On Herod’s birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much 7that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” 9The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted 10and had John beheaded in the prison. 11His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. 12John’s disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

13When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

16Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

17“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

18“Bring them here to me,” he said. 19And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Some well-meaning people try to encourage those who are going through difficulties by saying, “God will never give you more than you can handle.” Actually, the Bible never makes this promise. And the example of God’s people suggests the opposite is true.

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

The miraculous feeding described in Matthew 14:1–21 is a case in point. After John’s execution by Herod Antipas, Jesus and the disciples withdrew from Galilee “to a solitary place” (v. 13). Introverts will be reassured that it was not unusual for Jesus to seek solitude. The violent reaction of His hometown and the execution of John the Baptist was evidence of an intensification of the opposition against Jesus. He was about to move into the final stage of His mission.

When the crowd learned Jesus had crossed to the other side of the sea of Galilee, they pursued Him on foot bringing their sick with them. By the time Jesus reached His destination a large crowd had gathered. We would probably be put off by this or irritated about our lack of privacy, but Jesus was moved with compassion (v. 14).

As evening approached, the disciples urged Jesus to send them away. It is not clear whether their motives were selfish or exhibited concern about the crowd’s welfare. Jesus told them to do the impossible: “You give them something to eat” (v. 16). It was already late, and the crowd was large. The multitudes that followed Jesus were made up of the poor who would not have had money to buy food even if it were available. When the disciples said that they had only five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus provided the solution. “Bring them here to me,” He said (v. 18).

>> “Bring them here to me” is the answer we need every time we feel that God has asked us to do more than we are able. We must place our limited resources at His disposal. God will never give you more than He can handle.

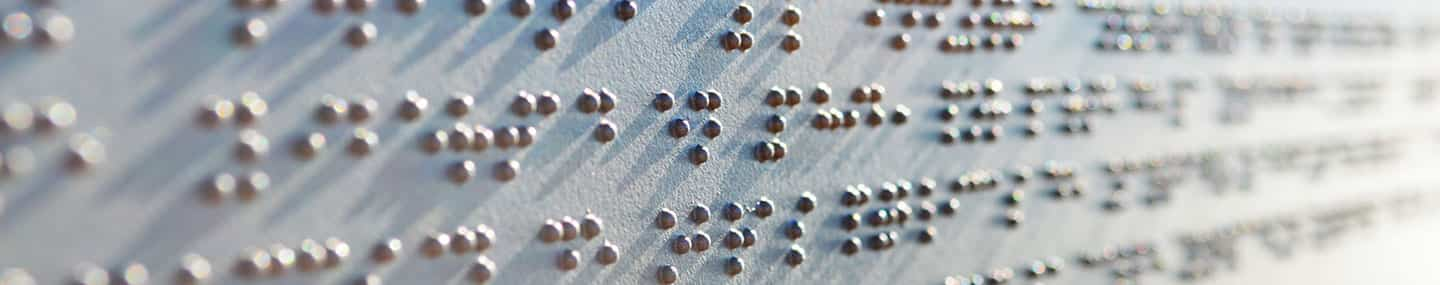
### **Pray with Us**

Today’s devotional gives us an opportunity to remember that Jesus is in control of any circumstance in our lives. As we come to Him in prayer today, we acknowledge our need of His presence and guidance in our walk with Him.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/16/20

# Hungry for God

 **Read:** [**Jeremiah 15:15–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.15%E2%80%9321)

15Lord, you understand;  
    remember me and care for me.  
    Avenge me on my persecutors.  
You are long-suffering—do not take me away;  
    think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.  
16When your words came, I ate them;  
    they were my joy and my heart’s delight,  
for I bear your name,  
    Lord God Almighty.  
17I never sat in the company of revelers,  
    never made merry with them;  
I sat alone because your hand was on me  
    and you had filled me with indignation.  
18Why is my pain unending  
    and my wound grievous and incurable?  
You are to me like a deceptive brook,  
    like a spring that fails.

19Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“If you repent, I will restore you  
    that you may serve me;  
if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,  
    you will be my spokesman.  
Let this people turn to you,  
    but you must not turn to them.  
20I will make you a wall to this people,  
    a fortified wall of bronze;  
they will fight against you  
    but will not overcome you,  
for I am with you  
    to rescue and save you,”  
declares the Lord.  
21“I will save you from the hands of the wicked  
    and deliver you from the grasp of the cruel.”

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight. [Jeremiah 15:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.16)

A new believer in Jesus was desperate to read the Bible. However, he’d lost his eyesight and both hands in an explosion. When he heard about a woman who read Braille with her lips, he tried to do the same—only to discover that the nerve endings of his lips had also been destroyed. Later, he was filled with joy when he discovered that he could feel the Braille characters with his tongue! He had found a way to read and enjoy the Scriptures.

Joy and delight were the emotions the prophet Jeremiah experienced when he received God’s words. “When your words came, I ate them,” he said, “they were my joy and my heart’s delight” ([Jeremiah 15:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2015.16)). Unlike the people of Judah who despised His words (8:9), Jeremiah had been obedient and rejoiced in them. His obedience, however, also led to the prophet being rejected by his own people and persecuted unfairly (15:17).

Some of us may have experienced something similar. We once read the Bible with joy, but obedience to God led to suffering and rejection from others. Like Jeremiah, we can bring our confusion to God. He answered Jeremiah by repeating the promise He gave him when He first called him to be a prophet (vv. 19-21; see 1:18–19). God reminded him that He never lets His people down. We can have this same confidence too. He’s faithful and will never abandon us.

By:  [Poh Fang Chia](https://odb.org/author/pohfangchia/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you experienced joy in reading the Scriptures? What can help you regain your hunger and thirst for God?

Faithful God, thank You for speaking to me through the words of the Bible. Help me to seek You earnestly and to obey You faithfully.

#### **Insight**

The prophet Jeremiah is known as “the weeping prophet.” One reason is that he openly weeps over his wayward Jewish brothers and sisters and the discipline their disobedience requires. The word weep appears twelve times in Jeremiah, including 9:1: “Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.” Jeremiah also bears this title due to his book of laments, which we call Lamentations. In the book, Jeremiah uses the word weep three times, including [Lamentations 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%202.11): “My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed.”

# God Calling – 4/16/20

# Love Your Servants

Love, love, love. Tender Love is the secret. Love those you are training, love those who work with you, love those who serve you.

Dwell on that thought -- God is Love. Link it up with My "I and my Father are one." Dwell on My actions on earth. See in them Love in operation.

If it was God who so acted, then it was Love, Perfect Love, performed those actions, those wonders. Then you, too, must put Love (God) into action in your lives. Perfect Love means perfect forgiveness. Lo, my children, you see that where God is there can be no lack of forgiveness, for that is really lack of love.

God is Love . . . no judging.   
God is Love . . . no resentment.   
God is Love . . . all patience.   
God is Love . . . all power.   
God is Love . . . all supply.

All you need to have is love to God and man. Love to God ensures obedience to every wish, every command. Love is the fulfilling of all law.

Pray much for love.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/17/20

# All or Nothing?



When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment…and plunged into the sea. —[John 21:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+21%3A7)

Have you ever had a crisis in your life in which you deliberately, earnestly, and recklessly abandoned everything? It is a crisis of the will. You may come to that point many times externally, but it will amount to nothing. The true deep crisis of abandonment, or total surrender, is reached internally, not externally. The giving up of only external things may actually be an indication of your being in total bondage.

Have you deliberately committed your will to Jesus Christ? It is a transaction of the will, not of emotion; any positive emotion that results is simply a superficial blessing arising out of the transaction. If you focus your attention on the emotion, you will never make the transaction. Do not ask God what the transaction is to be, but make the determination to surrender your will regarding whatever you see, whether it is in the shallow or the deep, profound places internally.

If you have heard Jesus Christ’s voice on the waves of the sea, you can let your convictions and your consistency take care of themselves by concentrating on maintaining your intimate relationship to Him.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The emphasis to-day is placed on the furtherance of an organization; the note is, “We must keep this thing going.” If we are in God’s order the thing will go; if we are not in His order, it won’t.  Conformed to His Image, 357 R

# CCEL – 4/17/20

**Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.**—[PSA. 50:23.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.50.html" \l "Ps.50.23)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ye are a royal priesthood . . . that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.—Ye . . . as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—By him . . . let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

[Col. 3:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.16). -[I Cor. 6:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.20).[I Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.9). -[I Pet. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.5). -[Heb. 13:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.15).[Psa. 34:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.2).

“Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” **[Hebrews 12:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.24)**

Reader, have you come to the blood of sprinkling? The question is not whether you have come to a knowledge of doctrine, or an observance of ceremonies, or to a certain form of experience, but have you come to the blood of Jesus? The blood of Jesus is the life of all vital godliness. If you have truly come to Jesus, we know how you came—the Holy Spirit sweetly brought you there. You came to the blood of sprinkling with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost, and helpless, you came to take that blood, and that blood alone, as your everlasting hope. You came to the cross of Christ, with a trembling and an aching heart; and oh! what a precious sound it was to you to hear the voice of the blood of Jesus! The dropping of his blood is as the music of heaven to the penitent sons of earth. We are full of sin, but the Saviour bids us lift our eyes to him, and as we gaze upon his streaming wounds, each drop of blood, as it falls, cries, “It is finished; I have made an end of sin; I have brought in everlasting righteousness.” Oh! sweet language of the precious blood of Jesus! If you have come to that blood once, you will come to it constantly. Your life will be “Looking unto Jesus.” Your whole conduct will be epitomized in this—“To whom coming.” Not to whom I have come, but to whom I am always coming. If thou hast ever come to the blood of sprinkling, thou wilt feel thy need of coming to it every day. He who does not desire to wash in it every day, has never washed in it at all. The believer ever feels it to be his joy and privilege that there is still a fountain opened. Past experiences are doubtful food for Christians; a present coming to Christ alone can give us joy and comfort. This morning let us sprinkle our door-post fresh with blood, and then feast upon the Lamb, assured that the destroying angel must pass us by.

# Word Live – 4/17/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/17/20

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# Today in the Word – 4/17/20

# Surprise on the Water

**Read:** [**Matthew 14:22–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+14%3a22%e2%80%9333)

### **Jesus Walks on the Water**

22Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

28“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

29“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

31Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

32And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Are you facing something that seems impossible? Maybe you are up against a physical, financial, or mental challenge. We all experience obstacles. We may not always demand a miracle, as in the case of the feeding of the multitude, but we do often ask God to supply the grace to do what we must. At other times, we turn to God to do the impossible for us.

“You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” Matthew 14:31

After Jesus fed the multitude with five loaves and two fish, He made the disciples get into a boat and return to the other side while He went off by Himself. Jesus went up a mountain to pray. It seems likely that this was in preparation for the next stage in His ministry which culminated in the suffering of the cross.

After the disciples had gone several miles, a storm started. The harried disciples were still battling the storm when Jesus came to them walking on water. His appearance was completely unexpected. The fact that they could see Him suggests that this must have taken place near dawn. The terrified disciples concluded they were seeing a ghost or an evil spirit. In response, Jesus offered reassurance: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (v. 27). In the Greek text the phrase “It is I” is literally “I am” a possible allusion to the name of God in the Old Testament.

What happened next may be more surprising. “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water” (v. 28). His words sound like a test. What if it wasn’t Jesus? Peter’s statement was really a confession of faith: “Lord, since it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water.” Peter’s bold faith was short-lived. Jesus’ power was not.

>> Let’s revisit the opening question: What are you facing today that seems impossible? While we may sometimes falter, God will never fail us. Take reassurance from today’s story that God can both provide for you and enable you. Follow Him in faith!

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s story of Jesus walking on water reassures us of God’s enabling power. Let’s praise our all-powerful God who strengthens our faith and teaches us to trust Him in all of life’s storms.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/17/20

# Able to Help

 **Read:** [**Hebrews 2:14–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%202.14%E2%80%9318)

14Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. 17For this reason he had to be made like them,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2%3A14%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29995a)] fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Hebrews 2:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2%3A14%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-29995) Or like his brothers

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. [Hebrews 2:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%202.18)

Joe’s eight-week “break” from his job as a crisis care worker at a New York City church was not a vacation. In his words, it was “to live again among the homeless, to become one of them, to remember what hungry, tired, and forgotten feel like.” Joe’s first stint on the streets had come nine years earlier when he arrived from Pittsburgh without a job or a place to stay. For thirteen days he lived on the streets with little food or sleep. That’s how God had prepared him for decades of ministry to needy people.

When Jesus came to earth, He also chose to share the experiences of those He came to save. “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil” ([Hebrews 2:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%202.14)). From birth to death, nothing was missing from Christ’s human experience—except sin (4:15). Because He conquered sin, He can help us when we’re tempted to sin.

And Jesus doesn’t need to reacquaint Himself with our earthly cares. The One who saves us remains connected to us and is deeply interested in us. Whatever life brings, we can be assured that the One who rescued us from our greatest foe, the devil (2:14), stands ready to help us in our times of greatest need.

By:  [Arthur Jackson](https://odb.org/author/arthurjackson/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does it encourage you to know that Jesus became one of us to identify with us and help us? What difference does knowing that He “walked in our shoes” make during this season in your life?

Father, help me to remember that You’re ready to help me in all areas of my life.

#### **Insight**

The New Testament letter to the Hebrews was written to help Jewish believers in Jesus understand the danger of taking their eyes off the One who came to rescue them and all humanity from our universal fear of death (2:1, 14–15). Only Christ can give us the courage to freely live without the fear of dying. Nothing less than the public record of His life, death, and resurrection can overcome Satan’s twisted suggestion that God can’t be trusted because He isn’t as good as He wants us to believe. It took Jesus’ suffering and death to reveal a God who’s merciful enough to forgive the worst of our wrongs. It took His resurrection from the dead and the changed lives of His witnesses to expose the lie that when we’ve taken our last breath, all hope is gone.

# God Calling – 4/17/20

# The Two Joys

My children, I come. Hearts eager to do My Will, send out a call that ever I find irresistible. I know no barrier then.

Resignation to My Will keeps Me barred out from more Hearts than does unbelief. Can anything be such a crime against Love as being resigned? My Will should be welcomed with a glad wonder if I am to do My Work in the heart and life.

The only resignation that could possibly be acceptable to Me is when Self, ousted by My claims, accepts the inevitable and resigns the throne for Me, leaving My Disciple free to carry out My Will, to welcome My Will gladly, rapturously.

In all true discipleship, and in the true spiritual development of each disciple, there is first the wonder and the joy of first acquaintance, then comes the long plain stretch of lesson-learning and discipline, when Joy seems so much a thing of the past as never to be recaptured again.

But the constant experience of Me, the constant persistent recognition of My Work  in daily happenings — the ever accumulating weight of evidence in support of My Guidance —  the numberless instances in which seeming chance or wonderful coincidence can be, must be, traced back to My loving forethought -- all these gradually engender a feeling of wonder, certainty, gratitude, followed in time by Joy.

Joy is of two kinds. The Joy born of Love and Wonder, and the Joy born of Love and Knowledge, and between the experience of the two Joys lie discipline, disappointment, almost disillusion.

But combat these in My Strength, or rather cling blindly, helplessly to Me and let Me combat them, persevere in obeying My Will, accept My discipline, and the second Joy will follow .

And of this second Joy it was that I said, "Your joy no man taketh from you."

Do not regret the first, the second is the greater gift.

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make your free." John 8:31, 32

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/18/20

# Readiness

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God called to him….And he said, "Here I am." —[Exodus 3:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Exodus+3%3A4)

When God speaks, many of us are like people in a fog, and we give no answer. Moses’ reply to God revealed that he knew where he was and that he was ready. Readiness means having a right relationship to God and having the knowledge of where we are. We are so busy telling God where we would like to go. Yet the man or woman who is ready for God and His work is the one who receives the prize when the summons comes. We wait with the idea that some great opportunity or something sensational will be coming our way, and when it does come we are quick to cry out, “Here I am.” Whenever we sense that Jesus Christ is rising up to take authority over some great task, we are there, but we are not ready for some obscure duty.

Readiness for God means that we are prepared to do the smallest thing or the largest thing— it makes no difference. It means we have no choice in what we want to do, but that whatever God’s plans may be, we are there and ready. Whenever any duty presents itself, we hear God’s voice as our Lord heard His Father’s voice, and we are ready for it with the total readiness of our love for Him. Jesus Christ expects to do with us just as His Father did with Him. He can put us wherever He wants, in pleasant duties or in menial ones, because our union with Him is the same as His union with the Father. “…that they may be one just as We are one…” ([John 17:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:22)).

Be ready for the sudden surprise visits of God. A ready person never needs to get ready— he is ready. Think of the time we waste trying to get ready once God has called! The burning bush is a symbol of everything that surrounds the person who is ready, and it is on fire with the presence of God Himself.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To read the Bible according to God’s providential order in your circumstances is the only way to read it, viz., in the blood and passion of personal life. Disciples Indeed, 387

# CCEL – 4/18/20

**I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee.**—[DEUT. 18:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.18.html" \l "Deut.18.18)

[Moses] stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid.—There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

[Deut. 5:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.5.html" \l "Deut.5.5). -[I Tim. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.2.html" \l "iTim.2.5).[Num. 12:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.12.html" \l "Num.12.3). -[Matt. 11:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.29). -[Phi. 2:5-7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.5).[Heb. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.3.html" \l "Heb.3.5).

“She bound the scarlet line in the window.” **[Joshua 2:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Josh.2.html" \l "Josh.2.21)**

Rahab depended for her preservation upon the promise of the spies, whom she looked upon as the representatives of the God of Israel. Her faith was simple and firm, but it was very obedient. To tie the scarlet line in the window was a very trivial act in itself, but she dared not run the risk of omitting it. Come, my soul, is there not here a lesson for thee? Hast thou been attentive to all thy Lord’s will, even though some of his commands should seem non-essential? Hast thou observed in his own way the two ordinances of believers’ baptism and the Lord’s Supper? These neglected, argue much unloving disobedience in thy heart. Be henceforth in all things blameless, even to the tying of a thread, if that be matter of command.

This act of Rahab sets forth a yet more solemn lesson. Have I implicitly trusted in the precious blood of Jesus? Have I tied the scarlet cord, as with a Gordian knot in my window, so that my trust can never be removed? Or can I look out towards the Dead Sea of my sins, or the Jerusalem of my hopes, without seeing the blood, and seeing all things in connection with its blessed power? The passer-by can see a cord of so conspicuous a colour, if it hangs from the window: it will be well for me if my life makes the efficacy of the atonement conspicuous to all onlookers. What is there to be ashamed of? Let men or devils gaze if they will, the blood is my boast and my song. My soul, there is One who will see that scarlet line, even when from weakness of faith thou canst not see it thyself; Jehovah, the Avenger, will see it and pass over thee. Jericho’s walls fell flat: Rahab’s house was on the wall, and yet it stood unmoved; my nature is built into the wall of humanity, and yet when destruction smites the race, I shall be secure. My soul, tie the scarlet thread in the window afresh, and rest in peace.

# Word Live – 4/18/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/18/20

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 4/18/20

# Unimpressive Tradition

**Read:** [**Matthew 15:1–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320)

### **That Which Defiles**

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

3Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? 4For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320" \l "fen-NIV-23638a" \o "See footnote a)] and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-23638b)] 5But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ 6they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8“‘These people honor me with their lips,  
    but their hearts are far from me.  
9They worship me in vain;  
    their teachings are merely human rules.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-23643c)]”

10Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

12Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

13He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. 14Leave them; they are blind guides.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320" \l "fen-NIV-23648d" \o "See footnote d)] If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

15Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

16“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. 17“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 15:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23638) Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16
2. [Matthew 15:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23638) Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9
3. [Matthew 15:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23643) Isaiah 29:13
4. [Matthew 15:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23648) Some manuscripts blind guides of the blind

What is your favorite church tradition? Lighting a candle during the service to signify the presence of the Holy Spirit? Or maybe the meal your congregation shares every time they have communion. Some traditions, like the Lord’s Supper or baptism, were instituted by Christ Himself. Others have been created by our local body of believers.

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Matthew 15:8

Today’s text recounts a confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders over a matter of tradition. The Pharisees and teachers of the law practiced ceremonial hand washing before eating. The Old Testament law required ceremonial bathing in certain instances, and the priest had to wash his feet and hands before approaching the altar (Ex. 30:17–20). But there is only one instance where handwashing was required of ordinary worshipers (Lev. 15:11). The rabbis had added laws and more laws. Jesus rejected their authority and accused the religious leaders of using their traditions to evade scriptural obligations. The example in verses 4–5 involved the custom known as corban, by which the worshiper dedicated some possession to God, thus removing the item from common use. The tradition allowed some to practice a kind of deferred giving, continuing to use the item until they handed it over to the temple. This vow was being used to evade one’s financial responsibility to care for parents.

Many religious traditions attempt to earn righteous standing by human effort rather than as a gift of grace through Jesus Christ. These laws could not provide righteousness for the worshiper. True righteousness comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

>> Some worship traditions can become so rote that our heart is no longer engaged. As a result, we seem to honor God outwardly, while our heart is far from Him. We must be careful not to let human rules substitute our genuine obedience (vv. 8–9).

### **Pray with Us**

“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked His disciples in today’s reading (v.16). Lord Jesus, we ask you to dispel the dullness and spiritual apathy from our hearts and minds. Give us fervent desire to know your Word!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/18/20

# Being Cared For

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**Psalm 46**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2046.11)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14616a)**]**

#### **For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoth.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-14616b" \o "See footnote b)] A song.**

1God is our refuge and strength,  
    an ever-present help in trouble.  
2Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
    and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
3though its waters roar and foam  
    and the mountains quake with their surging.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14618c)]

4There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
    the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
5God is within her, she will not fall;  
    God will help her at break of day.  
6Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
    he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

7The Lord Almighty is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8Come and see what the Lord has done,  
    the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
9He makes wars cease  
    to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
    he burns the shields[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14624d)] with fire.  
10He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;  
    I will be exalted among the nations,  
    I will be exalted in the earth.”

11The Lord Almighty is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 46:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#en-NIV-14616) In Hebrew texts 46:1-11 is numbered 46:2-12.
2. [Psalm 46:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#en-NIV-14616) Title: Probably a musical term
3. [Psalm 46:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#en-NIV-14618) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 11.
4. [Psalm 46:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=NIV#en-NIV-14624) Or chariots

The Lord Almighty is with us. [Psalm 46:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2046.11)

Debbie, the owner of a housecleaning service, was always searching for more clients to build up her business. On one call she talked with a woman whose response was, “I won’t be able to afford that now; I’m undergoing cancer treatment.” Right then Debbie decided that “no woman undergoing cancer treatment would ever be turned away. They would even be offered a free housecleaning service.” So in 2005 she started a nonprofit organization where companies donated their cleaning services to women battling cancer. One such woman felt a rush of confidence when she came home to a clean house. She said, “For the first time, I actually believed I could beat cancer.”

A feeling of being cared for and supported can help sustain us when we’re facing a challenge. An awareness of God’s presence and support can especially bring hope to encourage our spirit. [Psalm 46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2046), a favorite of many people going through trials, reminds us: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” and “Be still, and know that I am God; . . . I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us” (vv. 1, 10–11).

Reminding ourselves of God’s promises and His presence with us can be a means to help renew our hearts and give us the courage and confidence to go through hard times.

By:  [Anne Cetas](https://odb.org/author/annecetas/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

For what trials are you depending on God for strength? What Bible verses help you?

I’m grateful, God, for Your presence and Your promises. May I live out an attitude of confidence in You and Your ability to sustain me.

To learn more about why life can sometimes feel unfair, visit [bit.ly/2YeZilB.](https://bit.ly/2YeZilB.)

#### **Insight**

Given the dire language of its introduction, this psalm was likely written during a significant crisis. But which crisis? Many scholars believe it occurred during the reign of Hezekiah when the Assyrian army had surrounded Jerusalem. The situation looked dismal for God’s people, but the city had two advantages the Assyrians knew nothing of. Hezekiah had protected the spring of Gihon, located outside the city, by tunneling through stone to the water source. Then he concealed the spring. This life-giving spring may be the inspiration for the line, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God” ([Psalm 46:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2046.4)). Most important, however, the psalmist knew the ultimate source of the city’s safety. Jerusalem enjoyed the presence of the one true God. His miraculous intervention on behalf of the city meant they had only to be still and await His deliverance. He’s the life-sustaining Spring.

# God Calling – 4/18/20

# No Dark Days

Such light, such joy flows out from this house. It affects all who come here.

Do not feel that you have to try and help them. Just love them, welcome them, shower little courtesies and love-signs on them, and they must be helped.

Love is God. Give them Love, and you give them God. Then leave Him to do His Work. Love all, even the beggars. Send no one away without a word of cheer, a feeling that you care. I may have put the impulse to come here into some despairing one's heart. Think if you failed Me!

Besides, you have no choice. You told Me it was My Home. I shall use it. Remember this. There would be no dark winter days were Love in the hearts of all My children.

Oh! My children, can you not feel the joy of knowing, loving, and companying with Me?

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Roman 13:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/19/20

# Beware of the Least Likely Temptation

Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. —[1 Kings 2:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Kings+2%3A28)

Joab withstood the greatest test of his life, remaining absolutely loyal to David by not turning to follow after the fascinating and ambitious Absalom. Yet toward the end of his life he turned to follow after the weak and cowardly Adonijah. Always remain alert to the fact that where one person has turned back is exactly where anyone may be tempted to turn back (see [1 Corinthians 10:11-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+10:11-13)). You may have just victoriously gone through a great crisis, but now be alert about the things that may appear to be the least likely to tempt you. Beware of thinking that the areas of your life where you have experienced victory in the past are now the least likely to cause you to stumble and fall.

We are apt to say, “It is not at all likely that having been through the greatest crisis of my life I would now turn back to the things of the world.” Do not try to predict where the temptation will come; it is the least likely thing that is the real danger. It is in the aftermath of a great spiritual event that the least likely things begin to have an effect. They may not be forceful and dominant, but they are there. And if you are not careful to be forewarned, they will trip you. You have remained true to God under great and intense trials— now beware of the undercurrent. Do not be abnormally examining your inner self, looking forward with dread, but stay alert; keep your memory sharp before God. Unguarded strength is actually a double weakness, because that is where the least likely temptations will be effective in sapping strength. The Bible characters stumbled over their strong points, never their weak ones.

“…kept by the power of God…”— that is the only safety. ([1 Peter 1:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+1:5)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

When we no longer seek God for His blessings, we have time to seek Him for Himself.  The Moral Foundations of Life, 728 L

# CCEL – 4/19/20

**Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.**—[JOHN 10:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.7)

The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.—Christ . . . hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.—The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.—Through him we . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.—Having . . . boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.—We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[Matt. 27:51](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.27.html#Matt.27.51). -[I Pet. 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.3.html" \l "iPet.3.18). -[Heb. 9:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html" \l "Heb.9.8).[John 10:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.9).[John 14:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.6). -[Eph. 2:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.18). -[Heb. 10:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.19). -[Rom. 5:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.1).

“Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” **[Matthew 27:51](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.27.html" \l "Matt.27.51)**

No mean miracle was wrought in the rending of so strong and thick a veil; but it was not intended merely as a display of power—many lessons were herein taught us. The old law of ordinances was put away, and like a worn-out vesture, rent and laid aside. When Jesus died, the sacrifices were all finished, because all fulfilled in him, and therefore the place of their presentation was marked with an evident token of decay. That rent also revealed all the hidden things of the old dispensation: the mercy-seat could now be seen, and the glory of God gleamed forth above it. By the death of our Lord Jesus we have a clear revelation of God, for he was “not as Moses, who put a veil over his face.” Life and immortality are now brought to light, and things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world are manifest in him. The annual ceremony of atonement was thus abolished. The atoning blood which was once every year sprinkled within the veil, was now offered once for all by the great High Priest, and therefore the place of the symbolical rite was broken up. No blood of bullocks or of lambs is needed now, for Jesus has entered within the veil with his own blood. Hence access to God is now permitted, and is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus. There is no small space laid open through which we may peer at the mercy-seat, but the rent reaches from the top to the bottom. We may come with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace. Shall we err if we say that the opening of the Holy of Holies in this marvellous manner by our Lord’s expiring cry was the type of the opening of the gates of paradise to all the saints by virtue of the Passion? Our bleeding Lord hath the key of heaven; he openeth and no man shutteth; let us enter in with him into the heavenly places, and sit with him there till our common enemies shall be made his footstool.

# Word Live – 4/19/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/19/20

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 4/19/20

# An Unlikely Believer

**Read:** [**Matthew 15:21–28**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a21%e2%80%9328)

### **The Faith of a Canaanite Woman**

21Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

23Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

24He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

25The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

26He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

27“Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

28Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Who are your heroes of faith? They may be martyrs who faced death for the sake of the gospel or missionaries who have endured hardship. These individuals look like heroes, at least to us. They expect great things from God and attempt great things for Him.

Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith!” Matthew 15:28

The Canaanite woman who asked Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter would not have appeared on that list for any of Jesus’ disciples. For one thing, she was a Canaanite! A pagan and not of Jewish descent. But she at least knew enough about Jesus to address Him by His messianic title and to ask Him to show mercy (v. 22).

Although Jesus ignored her at first, she persisted. His silence seems uncharacteristic. Why didn’t Jesus respond at once? His explanation was related to His mission. He had come as the Son of David, seeking “the lost sheep of Israel” (v. 24). Before He offered Himself as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Jesus offered Himself to Israel as their long-awaited King. This does not mean that God had no interest in non-Jews. God had promised that the Messiah would be a “light to the Gentiles” (Isa. 49:6).

Jesus’ use of the term “dogs” to refer to the woman in verse 26 seems surprisingly harsh to modern ears. In some cases the Old Testament employs the term dogs in a derisive sense (Ps. 22:16). But dogs were also employed to help shepherd the flock and as guard dogs (Job 30:1; Isa. 56:10). Jesus’ point was simply that the children come first. Encouraged by this, the woman turned the metaphor on its head to make her case (v. 27). She did not see Jesus’ response to her request as “no” but as “not yet.” Her good humor was a reflection of her faith.

>> Delay does not always mean that God is denying your request. What are you waiting on today? Have faith that God does hear and that He will answer you, even if you do not sense His response right away.

### **Pray with Us**

What a powerful example of persistent faith the story of the Canaanite woman gives us! We pray we will follow her example, with strong faith, courage, and grace. Lord, help us truly believe that you hear us.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/19/20

# The Forecaster’s Mistake

 **Read:** [**Jeremiah 23:16–22**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2023.16%E2%80%9322)

16This is what the Lord Almighty says:

“Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you;  
    they fill you with false hopes.  
They speak visions from their own minds,  
    not from the mouth of the Lord.  
17They keep saying to those who despise me,  
    ‘The Lord says: You will have peace.’  
And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts  
    they say, ‘No harm will come to you.’  
18But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord  
    to see or to hear his word?  
    Who has listened and heard his word?  
19See, the storm of the Lord  
    will burst out in wrath,  
a whirlwind swirling down  
    on the heads of the wicked.  
20The anger of the Lord will not turn back  
    until he fully accomplishes  
    the purposes of his heart.  
In days to come  
    you will understand it clearly.  
21I did not send these prophets,  
    yet they have run with their message;  
I did not speak to them,  
    yet they have prophesied.  
22But if they had stood in my council,  
    they would have proclaimed my words to my people  
and would have turned them from their evil ways  
    and from their evil deeds.

Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. [Jeremiah 23:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2023.28)

At noon on September 21, 1938, a young meteorologist warned the U.S. Weather Bureau of two fronts forcing a hurricane northward toward New England. But the chief of forecasting scoffed at Charles Pierce’s prediction. Surely a tropical storm wouldn’t strike so far north.

Two hours later, the 1938 New England Hurricane made landfall on Long Island. By 4:00 p.m. it had reached New England, tossing ships onto land as homes crumbled into the sea. More than six hundred people died. Had the victims received Pierce’s warning—based on solid data and his detailed maps—they likely would have survived.

The concept of knowing whose word to heed has precedent in Scripture. In Jeremiah’s day, God warned His people against false prophets. “Do not listen [to them],” He said. “They fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord” ([Jeremiah 23:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2023.16)). God said of them, “If they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people” (v. 22).

“False prophets” are still with us. “Experts” dispense advice while ignoring God altogether or twisting His words to suit their purposes. But through His Word and Spirit, God has given us what we need to begin to discern the false from the true. As we gauge everything by the truth of His Word, our own words and lives will increasingly reflect that truth to others.

By:  [Tim Gustafson](https://odb.org/author/timgustafson/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s the standard I use when I decide whether something is true? What in my attitude needs to change toward those who disagree with me?

God, so many claim to speak for You these days. Help us learn what You really have to say. Make us sensitive to Your Spirit, not the spirit of this world.

#### **Insight**

In [Jeremiah 23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2023), God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah against the “shepherds” (kings and priests, vv. 1–2) and prophets (vv. 9–40) for their continued disobedience and for leading the people astray. The shepherds were called to be godly leaders who guided and protected; instead, they’d destroyed and scattered “the sheep of [God’s] pasture” (v. 1). And rather than speaking God’s truths, the prophets “prophesied by Baal and led [God’s] people Israel astray” (v. 13). They “live[d] a lie” and strengthened “the hands of evildoers” so that they didn’t turn back “from their wickedness” (v. 14). God warned the people not to listen to the false prophets who weren’t speaking for God and offered only “false hopes” (v. 16). Because of their refusal to listen, Judah would be exiled at the hands of the Babylonians. Yet God wouldn’t forsake them forever (vv. 3–8).

# God Calling – 4/19/20

# Life Is A Love Story

You need Me. I need you.

My broken world needs you. Many a weary troubled heart needs you. Many a troubled heart will be gladdened by you, drawn nearer to Me by you both.

Health -- Peace -- Joy -- Patience -- Endurance, they all come from contact with Me.

Oh! It is the glorious way, the upward way, the wonderful discoveries, the tender intimacies, the amazing, almost incomprehensible, understanding. Truly the Christian Life -- Life with Me -- is a Love story. Leave all to Me.

All you have missed you will find in Me, the Soul's Lover, the Soul's Friend, Father -- Mother -- Comrade -- Brother. Try Me.

You cannot make too many demands upon Me -- nor put too great a strain upon My Love and Forbearance.

Claim -- claim -- claim -- Healing -- Power -- Joy -- Supply -- what you will.

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." Song of Solomon 2:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/20/20

# Can a Saint Falsely Accuse God?

All the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen… —[2 Corinthians 1:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+1%3A20)

Jesus’ parable of the talents recorded in [Matthew 25:14-30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25:14-30)  was a warning that it is possible for us to misjudge our capacities. This parable has nothing to do with natural gifts and abilities, but relates to the gift of the Holy Spirit as He was first given at Pentecost. We must never measure our spiritual capacity on the basis of our education or our intellect; our capacity in spiritual things is measured on the basis of the promises of God. If we get less than God wants us to have, we will falsely accuse Him as the servant falsely accused his master when he said, “You expect more of me than you gave me the power to do. You demand too much of me, and I cannot stand true to you here where you have placed me.” When it is a question of God’s Almighty Spirit, never say, “I can’t.” Never allow the limitation of your own natural ability to enter into the matter. If we have received the Holy Spirit, God expects the work of the Holy Spirit to be exhibited in us.

The servant justified himself, while condemning his lord on every point, as if to say, “Your demand on me is way out of proportion to what you gave to me.” Have we been falsely accusing God by daring to worry after He has said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”? ([Matthew 6:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:33)). Worrying means exactly what this servant implied— “I know your intent is to leave me unprotected and vulnerable.” A person who is lazy in the natural realm is always critical, saying, “I haven’t had a decent chance,” and someone who is lazy in the spiritual realm is critical of God. Lazy people always strike out at others in an independent way.

Never forget that our capacity and capability in spiritual matters is measured by, and based on, the promises of God. Is God able to fulfill His promises? Our answer depends on whether or not we have received the Holy Spirit.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Always keep in contact with those books and those people that enlarge your horizon and make it possible for you to stretch yourself mentally. The Moral Foundations of Life, 721 R

# CCEL – 4/20/20

**There shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand.**—[DEUT. 13:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.13.html" \l "Deut.13.17)

Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.—Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.—Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God . . . And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

[II Cor. 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17). -[I Pet. 2:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.11). -[Jude 23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.23).[I John 3:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.2). -[Tit. 2:11-14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.11).

“That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death.” **[Hebrews 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14)**

O child of God, death hath lost its sting, because the devil’s power over it is destroyed. Then cease to fear dying. Ask grace from God the Holy Ghost, that by an intimate knowledge and a firm belief of thy Redeemer’s death, thou mayst be strengthened for that dread hour. Living near the cross of Calvary thou mayst think of death with pleasure, and welcome it when it comes with intense delight. It is sweet to die in the Lord: it is a covenant-blessing to sleep in Jesus. Death is no longer banishment, it is a return from exile, a going home to the many mansions where the loved ones already dwell. The distance between glorified spirits in heaven and militant saints on earth seems great; but it is not so. We are not far from home—a moment will bring us there. The sail is spread; the soul is launched upon the deep. How long will be its voyage? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail ere it shall be reefed in the port of peace? How long shall that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to that sea which knows no storm? Listen to the answer, “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” Yon ship has just departed, but it is already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like that ship of old, upon the Lake of Galilee, a storm had tossed it, but Jesus said, “Peace, be still,” and immediately it came to land. Think not that a long period intervenes between the instant of death and the eternity of glory. When the eyes close on earth they open in heaven. The horses of fire are not an instant on the road. Then, O child of God, what is there for thee to fear in death, seeing that through the death of thy Lord its curse and sting are destroyed? and now it is but a Jacob’s ladder whose foot is in the dark grave, but its top reaches to glory everlasting.

# Word Live – 4/20/20

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 4/20/20

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 4/20/20

# An Unwelcome Prediction

**Read:** [**Matthew 16:13–28**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328)

### **Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah**

13When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you that you are Peter,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328" \l "fen-NIV-23691a" \o "See footnote a)] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-23691b)] will not overcome it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-23692c)] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-23692d)] loosed in heaven.” 20Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

### **Jesus Predicts His Death**

21From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25For whoever wants to save their life[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-23698e)] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

28“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 16:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-23691) The Greek word for Peter means rock.
2. [Matthew 16:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-23691) That is, the realm of the dead
3. [Matthew 16:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-23692) Or will have been
4. [Matthew 16:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-23692) Or will have been
5. [Matthew 16:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16%3a13%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-23698) The Greek word means either life or soul; also in verse 26.

“Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in event of success.” According to legend, prior to his arctic expedition Ernest Shackleton posted this ad. If Jesus had published an ad inviting men and women to become His disciples, what would He have written? He would probably have emphasized the rigors that came with the calling.

You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16:16

As Jesus and the disciples continued their temporary retreat from ministry in Galilee, they moved in a territory with a strong pagan influence. Caesarea Philippi had been given to Herod the Great in 20 B.C. and was being governed by his son Philip the Tetrarch. While there, Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (v. 13). Popular opinion saw something unique in Jesus but fell short of the truth. Some believed Him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead. Others thought that He was Elijah, the one who Malachi had promised (Mal. 4:5). Still others thought that He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets that would appear in the last days.

Jesus was not trying to gauge His popularity. Rather, He used the opportunity to pose the same question to His disciples. Peter’s straightforward answer was a matter of divine revelation. Peter proved that God was the source of his insight after Jesus told the disciples what lay ahead: suffering, death, and resurrection. Perhaps emboldened by Jesus’ earlier praise, Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked Him for talking this way (v. 23). Peter meant well, but by trying to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross, he had become an unwitting tool of Satan.

>> Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 24). This was literally true for most of the apostles, and it is metaphorically true for us. Only Jesus can die for our sins, but we must all die to ourselves (Rom. 8:13).

### **Pray with Us**

Coming to the Lord in prayer today, we ask Him to give us insight into the nature of discipleship, our cross, and dying to ourselves. We thank Him for His Word which helps us experience Jesus as those who walked and talked with Him did.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/20/20

# The Singing Revolution

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**Psalm 42:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.1%E2%80%935) **[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557a)**][[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-14557b" \o "See footnote b)]**

#### **For the director of music. A maskil[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557c)**] of the Sons of Korah.**

1As the deer pants for streams of water,  
    so my soul pants for you, my God.  
2My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
    When can I go and meet with God?  
3My tears have been my food  
    day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
    “Where is your God?”  
4These things I remember  
    as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
    under the protection of the Mighty One[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14560d)]  
with shouts of joy and praise  
    among the festive throng.

5Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
    Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
    for I will yet praise him,  
    my Savior and my God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) In many Hebrew manuscripts Psalms 42 and 43 constitute one psalm.
2. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) In Hebrew texts 42:1-11 is numbered 42:2-12.
3. [Psalm 42:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-14557) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
4. [Psalm 42:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-14560) See Septuagint and Syriac; the meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. [Psalm 42:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.5)

What does it take to ignite a revolution? Guns? Bombs? Guerrilla warfare? In late-1980s Estonia, it took songs. After the people had lived under the burden of Soviet occupation for decades, a movement began with the singing of a series of patriotic songs. These songs birthed the “Singing Revolution,” which played a key role in restoring Estonian independence in 1991.

“This was a non-violent revolution that overthrew a very violent occupation,” says a website describing the movement. “But singing had always been a major unifying force for Estonians while they endured fifty years of Soviet rule.”

Music can also play a significant part in helping us through our own hard times. I wonder if that’s why we so readily identify with the psalms. It was in a dark night of the soul that the psalmist sang, “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” ([Psalm 42:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.5)). It was in a season of deep disillusionment that Asaph, the worship leader, reminded himself, “Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart” (73:1).

In our own challenging times, may we join the psalmists with a singing revolution for our hearts. Such a revolution overwhelms the personal tyranny of despair and confusion with faith-fueled confidence in God’s great love and faithfulness.

By:  [Bill Crowder](https://odb.org/author/billcrowder/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How do you respond when life is overwhelming? What songs bring you the most comfort and why?

Father, I thank You that Your mercies are new every morning and Your faithfulness is great. Empower me to sing the song of Your great love—even when I must sing it through my tears.

#### **Insight**

[Psalms 42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042) and [43](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2043) fit together seamlessly and may have been written as one song. The concluding verse of [Psalm 43](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2043) mirrors [Psalm 42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042) verses 5 and 11. In these psalms we gain a window into the human spirit as it engages in profound emotional struggle. The author copes with his personal crisis by first acknowledging his desperate need of God. Then he outlines his problem. He’s in a dark place (42:3) and so he recalls better days (v. 4). Aware of God’s unfailing goodness to him in the past, he challenges himself: “Why, my soul, are you downcast? . . . Put your hope in God” (vv. 5, 11; 43:5). Yet questions linger (42:9; 43:2). In our spiritual struggles, our emotions must be acknowledged. It’s healthy to be completely honest before God, and it’s vital to keep our focus on Him in our emotional anguish.

# God Calling – 4/20/20

# Heart's Agony

There is a Calvary-Cross on which one hangs alone, untended by even the nearest and dearest.

But beside that Cross, there stands another, and to My dear ones I say little, I hang there afresh beside each one through the hours of the heart's agony.

Have you ever thought of the Joy that the patient, gentle, loving obedience of My disciples brings to My heart? I know no Joy such as the Joy I feel at the loving trust of a dear one.

The wounds of the Hands and Feet hurt little compared with the wounds in the Heart that are the wounds, not of My enemies, but of My friends.

Little doubts, little fears, little misunderstandings. It is the tender trifles of a day that gladden My Heart. I that speak unto you, am He -- your Master.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;  
 but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15