# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/13/21

# What To Do When Your Burden Is Overwhelming



Cast your burden on the Lord… —[Psalm 55:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Psalm+55%3A22)

We must recognize the difference between burdens that are right for us to bear and burdens that are wrong. We should never bear the burdens of sin or doubt, but there are some burdens placed on us by God which He does not intend to lift off. God wants us to roll them back on Him— to literally “cast your burden,” which He has given you, “on the Lord….” If we set out to serve God and do His work but get out of touch with Him, the sense of responsibility we feel will be overwhelming and defeating. But if we will only roll back on God the burdens He has placed on us, He will take away that immense feeling of responsibility, replacing it with an awareness and understanding of Himself and His presence.

Many servants set out to serve God with great courage and with the right motives. But with no intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ, they are soon defeated. They do not know what to do with their burden, and it produces weariness in their lives. Others will see this and say, “What a sad end to something that had such a great beginning!”

“Cast your burden on the Lord….” You have been bearing it all, but you need to deliberately place one end on God’s shoulder. “…the government will be upon His shoulder” ([Isaiah 9:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+9:6)). Commit to God whatever burden He has placed on you. Don’t just cast it aside, but put it over onto Him and place yourself there with it. You will see that your burden is then lightened by the sense of companionship. But you should never try to separate yourself from your burden.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment.

[The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption](http://www.dhp.org/Products/Quotable-Oswald-Chambers--The__BW382.aspx?affid=RBCHAMB)

# CCEL – 4/13/21

**Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.**—[PROV. 3:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.9)

He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

I beseech you . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.—Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

[II Cor. 9:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.9.html" \l "iiCor.9.6). -[I Cor. 16:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.16.html" \l "iCor.16.2).[Heb. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html" \l "Heb.6.10).[Rom. 12:l](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1). -[II Cor. 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14). -[I Cor. 10:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.31).

“A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.” **[Song of Solomon 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.13)**

Myrrh may well be chosen as the type of Jesus on account of its preciousness, its perfume, its pleasantness, its healing, preserving, disinfecting qualities, and its connection with sacrifice. But why is he compared to “a bundle of myrrh”? First, for plenty. He is not a drop of it, he is a casket full. He is not a sprig or flower of it, but a whole bundle. There is enough in Christ for all my necessities; let me not be slow to avail myself of him. Our well-beloved is compared to a “bundle” again, for variety: for there is in Christ not only the one thing needful, but in “him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;” everything needful is in him. Take Jesus in his different characters, and you will see a marvellous variety—Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Friend, Shepherd. Consider him in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent; view him in his virtue, gentleness, courage, self-denial, love, faithfulness, truth, righteousness—everywhere he is a bundle of preciousness. He is a “bundle of myrrh” for preservation—not loose myrrh to be dropped on the floor or trodden on, but myrrh tied up, myrrh to be stored in a casket. We must value him as our best treasure; we must prize his words and his ordinances; and we must keep our thoughts of him and knowledge of him as under lock and key, lest the devil should steal anything from us. Moreover, Jesus is a “bundle of myrrh” for speciality; the emblem suggests the idea of distinguishing, discriminating grace. From before the foundation of the world, he was set apart for his people; and he gives forth his perfume only to those who understand how to enter into communion with him, to have close dealings with him. Oh! blessed people whom the Lord hath admitted into his secrets, and for whom he sets himself apart. Oh! choice and happy who are thus made to say, “A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.”

# Word Live – 4/13/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/13/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/13/21

# Hezekiah's Prayer

**Read:** [**2 Kings 19:15–19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Kings+19%3a15%e2%80%9319)

15And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: “Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

17“It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. 18They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 19Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God.”

People love an underdog story, when a downtrodden person conquers great obstacles and transforms into a hero. In today’s passage, Hezekiah is the underdog. Assyria is set on attacking the city of Judah. They have been ruthless with other cities they conquered, treating them like animals. Now they were fixed on the people of Judah. In fact, they were overly confident that they could defeat Judah. They sent Hezekiah a letter mocking Yahweh: “Do not let the god you depend on deceive you” (v. 10), inferring that they have defeated other countries and their gods did not save them. But the Assyrians underestimated Yahweh; they did not realize that He alone is God.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31

Hezekiah went to the Temple, symbolically laid the letter before God, and prayed, “You alone are God” (v. 15), affirming God’s sovereignty and His supremacy. He passionately pleaded for deliverance from his enemy. Pointing to the letter he said, “Listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God” (v. 16). It is true Assyria had conquered other countries and had “thrown their gods into the fire” (v. 17), but Hezekiah rightly points out that those gods were “fashioned by human hands” (v. 18). Fourth-century bishop Athanasius of Alexandria suggests, “Instead of arming ourselves with swords, we ought to extend our hands in prayer.” That is exactly what Hezekiah did.

Hezekiah went beyond requesting relief and rescue because he was also concerned about Yahweh’s reputation. Therefore, Hezekiah prayed that through God’s deliverance, “all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God” (v. 19). Hezekiah may have seemed like the underdog to the Assyrians, but God was always on his side, and if “God is for us, who can stand against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

**Apply the Word**

What seems to be standing against you today? I want to encourage you to write that obstacle down on paper, and, like Hezekiah, lay that down before the Lord, asking Him to rule.

### **Pray with Us**

Almighty God, we bring before you the obstacles and fears we face, recognizing that you have already overcome the world. Grant us victory for the glory of your name!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/13/21

# The Frosting of Faith

 **Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.1%E2%80%935)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Thanksgiving**

3I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. [2 Timothy 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.5)

Hand in hand, my grandson and I skipped across the parking lot to find a special back-to-school outfit. A preschooler now, he was excited about everything, and I was determined to ignite his happiness into joy. I’d just seen a coffee mug with the inscription, “Grandmas are moms with lots of frosting.” Frosting equals fun, glitter, joy! That’s my job description as his grandma, right? That . . . and more.

In his second letter to his spiritual son Timothy, Paul calls out his sincere faith—and then credits its lineage both to Timothy’s grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.5)). These women lived out their faith in such a way that Timothy also came to believe in Jesus. Surely, Lois and Eunice loved Timothy and provided for his needs. But clearly, they did more. Paul points to the faith living in them as the source of the faith later living in Timothy.

My job as a grandmother includes the “frosting” moment of a back-to-school outfit. But even more, I’m called to the frosting moments when I share my faith: Bowing our heads over chicken nuggets. Noticing angelic cloud formations in the sky as God’s works of art. Chirping along with a song about Jesus on the radio. Let’s be wooed by the example of moms and grandmas like Eunice and Lois to let our faith become the frosting in life so others will want what we have.

By:  [Elisa Morgan](https://odb.org/author/elisamorgan/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you been influenced by the faith of others? How are you living out your faith so that others might be influenced?

Dear God, help me to invest my time in living out my faith before others.

#### **Insight**

Luke tells us in [Acts 16:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2016.1) that Timothy’s mother was a Jewish believer but his father was a Greek. His mixed heritage, together with the fact that Timothy had already earned the respect of believers in Jesus in his Roman hometown of Lystra (vv. 1–2), caught Paul’s attention. He and Silas were in the process of helping Jewish and gentile followers of Christ understand their relationship to the law of Moses and to one another (15:22). Elders of the church in Jerusalem had recently come to some important conclusions about ways to welcome and encourage gentiles into the faith (vv. 7–21). Paul apparently saw Timothy as an example of a young gentile who was growing in the ways of Jesus. What began like a father-son relationship, developed into a partnership to the point that Paul acknowledged Timothy as his co-author of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

# God Calling – 4/13/21

# Gentle With All

Love and laugh. Make your world the happier for your being in it. Love and rejoice on the gray days.

There are wilderness days for My Disciples as well as Mountains of Transfiguration, but on both it is duty, persistently, faithfully done, that tells.

Be gentle with all. Try to see the heart I see, to know the pain and difficulty of the other life, that I know. Try, before you interview anyone, or speak to anyone, to ask Me to act as interpreter between you two.

Just live the spirit of prayer. In speaking to Me, you find soul-rest. Simple tasks, faithfully done and persisted in, bring their own reward, and are mosaics being laid in the pavement of success.

Welcome all who come here. I love you.

"Let love be without dissimulation." Romans 12:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/14/21

# 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 – 4/14/21

**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 – 4/14/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/14/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/14/21

# Daniel's Prayer

**Read:** [**Daniel 2:1–23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+2%3a1%e2%80%9323)

### **Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream**

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. 2So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#fen-NIV-21761a)] to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-21762b" \o "See footnote b)]”

4Then the astrologers answered the king,[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-21763c" \o "See footnote c)] “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

5The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”

7Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

8Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: 9If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

10The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

12This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. 13So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

14When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. 15He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. 16At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

17Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven 20and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;  
    wisdom and power are his.  
21He changes times and seasons;  
    he deposes kings and raises up others.  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
    and knowledge to the discerning.  
22He reveals deep and hidden things;  
    he knows what lies in darkness,  
    and light dwells with him.  
23I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:  
    You have given me wisdom and power,  
you have made known to me what we asked of you,  
    you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Daniel 2:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-21761) Or Chaldeans; also in verses 4, 5 and 10
2. [Daniel 2:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-21762) Or was
3. [Daniel 2:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Daniel+2%3A1%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-21763) At this point the Hebrew text has in Aramaic, indicating that the text fro

Dreams are not something we talk about much in Christian circles. However, we do see in Scripture that at times the Lord has used dreams to teach people about Himself and to communicate His glory to others. In our text today, the Lord did just that to Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the world.

Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. Daniel 2:20

For Daniel and his friends, the deck was stacked against them. King Nebuchadnezzar’s request to interpret his dream was humanly impossible, and the punishment was absurd. So Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did what only they knew how to do, they prayed. Together they sought help from the “God of heaven.” This title is used four times in this chapter and nowhere else in the book (vv. 18, 19, 37, 44). They needed knowledge for this mystery that could only come from an all-knowing God. While the pagan Babylonians worshiped the luminaries, the Israelites worship the God of heaven. God answered their prayers by revealing the mystery of the dream to Daniel in a vision.

Daniel responded with a prayer of praise to Yahweh (vv. 20–23). His prayer begins by praising God for being eternal, omniscient, and all-powerful (v. 20). He emphasizes that God is sovereign over all political affairs and people and indeed the One who brings people in and out of power. Daniel recognizes that only God is the One capable to give revelation and wisdom by revealing “deep and hidden things” (v. 22).

Daniel was quick to give thanks and praise to the “God of my ancestors,” for the wisdom he discerned (v. 23). The interpretation of the dream was nothing he did on his own or with the help of friends. Humanly speaking, it was impossible. But the God of heaven provided salvation for them.

**Apply the Word**

You may not be asked to interpret any dreams, but if you need wisdom and discernment today, pray to the God of heaven. The all-knowing God knows exactly what you should do.

### **Pray with Us**

All-knowing God, we regularly face difficult decisions and confusing predicaments. We ask for your wisdom to help us make choices that honor you.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/14/21

# Live Like It’s Morning

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 5:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.1%E2%80%939)

1Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. 4Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-29310a" \o "See footnote a)] 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7Therefore do not be partners with them.

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 5:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-29310) Or kingdom of the Messiah and God

The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth. [Ephesians 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.9)

When I have to travel across time zones by air, I try various remedies to avoid jet lag. I think I’ve tried them all! On one occasion, I decided to adjust my in-flight eating to the time zone where I was heading. Instead of eating dinner with the rest of the passengers, I kept watching a movie and tried to fall asleep. The hours of elective fasting were difficult, and the breakfast that came right before we landed left much to be desired. But living “out of sorts” with those around me worked. It jolted my body clock into a new time zone.

Paul knew that if believers in Jesus were to truly reflect Him in their lives, they would need to live out of step with the world around them. They “were once darkness” but now they were to live as “children of light” ([Ephesians 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.8)). And what might that look like? Paul goes on to fill out the picture: “The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth” (v. 9).

Sleeping through dinner may have seemed foolish to the people on my flight, but even as it’s midnight in the world, as believers, we’re called to live like it’s morning. This may provoke scorn and opposition, but in Jesus we can “walk in the way of love,” following the example of the One who “love[s] us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (v. 2).

By:  [Glenn Packiam](https://odb.org/author/glennpackiam/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where have your actions and choices lined up too closely with the world around you? What would the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth look like in your life?

Jesus, wake me up to the new day that has come in You. Fill me with Your power to live in a “different time zone.” Open my eyes to choose goodness, righteousness, and beauty.

To learn more about the characteristics of a believer in Jesus, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/SF132](https://ChristianUniversity.org/SF132).

#### **Insight**

Paul often writes of what our new life in Christ is to look like. We’re new creations from which the old has gone and the new has come ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.17)). In [Ephesians 5:3–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.3%E2%80%937), he lists specific characteristics or actions that should have no place in the lives of believers in Jesus.

But the focus of this section lies in the reason Paul gives for leaving these things behind. The word for at the beginning of verse 8 signals that what follows is causal. We leave these things behind because we’re no longer darkness but light. Paul doesn’t say that we inhabited these areas, but rather that we were these things. We were darkness, but now we’re light. The actions left behind belong to darkness and have no place in light.

# God Calling – 4/14/21

# 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 – 4/15/21

# 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 – 4/15/21

**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 – 4/15/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/15/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/15/21

# Elijah's Prayer

**Read:** [**1 Kings 18:25–39**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+18%3a25%e2%80%9339)

25Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.” 26So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

27At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” 28So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. 29Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

30Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. 31Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” 32With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++1+Kings+18%3A25%E2%80%9339&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9374a)] of seed. 33He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.”

34“Do it again,” he said, and they did it again.

“Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. 35The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

36At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

38Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Kings 18:32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++1+Kings+18%3A25%E2%80%9339&version=NIV#en-NIV-9374) That is, probably about 24 pounds or about 11 kilograms

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt underqualified? You feel pressured to act, maybe people are watching, but you have no idea what to do. If you are a person of prayer, you may cry out to Him, “God, why did you bring me to this place? What do you want me to do?” The prophet Elijah probably wondered about something similar when he faced King Ahab and the prophets of Baal on top of Mt. Carmel. He found himself in the midst of a dramatic showdown to determine who was the one true God: Yahweh or Baal.

Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God. 1 Kings 18:37

After hours of shouting from the prophets of Baal, “Baal, answer us!” there was still no response (vv. 26–29). Then it was Elijah’s turn. As evening approached, the sun began creeping down behind the trees and the temperature dropped. The Israelites had been watching and waiting. They saw the altar Elijah repaired, the trench he dug, the wood he gathered, the bull he cut into pieces. Everything was soaking wet (vv. 30–35). Elijah stepped forward and prayed. He may have been thinking, “God, if you are going to show up, now is a great time. I have done everything I can do, now do what only you can do.”

Elijah’s prayer begins by emphasizing Yahweh’s covenant name: “LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel” (v. 36). He then prays that Yahweh would turn their hearts back again so they would know that only Yahweh is God (vv. 36–37). Then something amazing happened. Almost immediately God responds with fire, burning up the sacrifice and the altar, even the water (v. 38). The verdict was in—Yahweh is the only true God!

**Apply the Word**

There may be times when you feel underqualified or all alone. At that moment, you must pray and watch and see what only God can do. It is only He who has the power to turn people’s hearts back again.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, at times we feel helpless to make a difference. The truth is that we can’t reach people without you. We rejoice in our dependence on your power and ask for your intervention in the hearts of those we love.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/15/21

# The Baggage Activity

 **Read:** [**Leviticus 19:32–34**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019.32%E2%80%9334)

32“‘Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.

33“‘When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. 34The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. [Leviticus 19:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019.34)

Karen, a middle school teacher, created an activity to teach her students how to better understand one another. In “The Baggage Activity” students wrote down some of the emotional weights they were carrying. The notes were shared anonymously, giving the students insight into each other’s hardships, often with a tearful response from their peers. The classroom has since been filled with a deeper sense of mutual respect among the young teens, who now have a greater sense of empathy for one another.

Throughout the Bible, God has nudged His people to treat one another with dignity and show empathy in their interaction with others ([Romans 12:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.15)). As early in the history of Israel as the book of Leviticus, God pointed the Israelites toward empathy—especially in their dealings with foreigners. He said to “love them as [themselves]” because they too had been foreigners in Egypt and knew that hardship intimately ([Leviticus 19:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019.34)).

Sometimes the burdens we carry make us feel like foreigners—alone and misunderstood—even among our peers. We don’t always have a similar experience to draw on as the Israelites did with the foreigners among them. Yet we can always treat those God puts in our paths with the respect and understanding that we, ourselves, desire. Whether a modern-day middle schooler, an Israelite, or anything in between, we honor God when we do.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who around you might need your empathy for the burdens they carry? How can you “love them as yourself”?

God, You know the weight in my heart and You graciously unburden me as I put my trust in You. Help me to offer care and compassion toward those in my life.

#### **Insight**

[Leviticus 19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019) provides a list of dos and don’ts for the Israelites—strict laws given for a reason: so they’d be holy or “set apart” for God. They were to avoid wrong behavior and to do good, specifically in terms of interactions with others (see vv. 3–37). In light of the New Testament, the underlying concept of these laws is still relevant today (loving and taking care of others; being honest, etc.). However, certain specific regulations no longer apply. For example, it’s not necessary to avoid wearing clothes made of two different materials (v. 19), which was commonly only allowed by priests; to make animal sacrifices when we sin (v. 21), because Christ’s death has made atonement for our sin; or to avoid certain beard or hair styles (v. 27), because these practices were associated with those who worshiped false gods. Instead, we can stand out as believers in Jesus by displaying a changed heart—living lives of honesty and integrity and treating others well.

# God Calling – 4/15/21

# 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 – 4/16/21

# 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 – 4/16/21

**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 – 4/16/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/16/21

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# Today in the Word – 4/16/21

# David's Prayer for Deliverance

### **Read:** [**Psalm 3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+3)**[**[**a**](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+3+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13959a)**]**

#### **A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.**

1Lord, how many are my foes!  
    How many rise up against me!  
2Many are saying of me,  
    “God will not deliver him.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+3+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13960b)]

3But you, Lord, are a shield around me,  
    my glory, the One who lifts my head high.  
4I call out to the Lord,  
    and he answers me from his holy mountain.

5I lie down and sleep;  
    I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.  
6I will not fear though tens of thousands  
    assail me on every side.

7Arise, Lord!  
    Deliver me, my God!  
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;  
    break the teeth of the wicked.

8From the Lord comes deliverance.  
    May your blessing be on your people.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 3:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+3+&version=NIV#en-NIV-13959) In Hebrew texts 3:1-8 is numbered 3:2-9.
2. [Psalm 3:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+3+&version=NIV#en-NIV-13960) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 4 and 8.

When sin occurs within a family, it can have a ripple effect that is far-reaching and long-lasting. A child may sin against a parent. A husband against a wife. Wrongs done may be remembered for years, and the residual anger can be destructive. It is in the midst of just such a situation that today’s prayer occurs.

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.Romans 8:37

Absalom, the son of King David, harbored anger against his father. While David was a hero to many, that image came crashing down for Absalom. An unthinkable event occurred. David’s daughter and Absalom’s sister, Tamar, was raped by her half-brother, Amnon. When David discovered the heinous act, he was furious but did nothing (2 Sam. 13:22). This infuriated Absalom to the point that he killed his brother, Amnon, and then went after his father, starting a rebellion.

When David heard Absalom was coming, he fled (2 Sam. 15:12). Grief-stricken and mourning, David led his followers through the Mount of Olives. He had abandoned the throne God gave him, and David knew he needed to go to the Lord in prayer. In Psalm 3 David tells God that Absalom and his followers want him dead (vv. 1–2). He declares that Yahweh is his shield and defender (v. 3). He is confident that the Lord will answer (v. 4). During this tragic season of his life, sleep and waking were not things he took for granted. Despite his anxiety, the Lord gave him the rest he needed and the safety to wake alive the next day (vv. 5–6). One can almost feel David’s emotions shift as he asks God to deliver him and to “strike down [his] enemies” (v. 7). David knew he was sinful, but he also knew deliverance would come only from the Lord.

**Apply the Word**

Are you facing an impossible situation? Surrender your sin to the Lord and pray that He will deliver you from the consequences of your sin. Only He can rescue you.

### **Pray with Us**

We confess the bad we have done and the good we have not done. Grant us repentance, Lord, and by your mercy deliver us from the consequences of our sins.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/16/21

# Extending Mercy

 **Read:** [**Luke 17:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017.1%E2%80%935)

### **Sin, Faith, Duty**

17 Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. 2It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25655a)] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

5The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 17:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3A1%E2%80%935&version=NIV#en-NIV-25655) The Greek word for brother or sister (adelphos) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman.

If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. [Luke 17:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017.3)

Reflecting on how she forgave Manasseh, the man who killed her husband and some of her children in the Rwandan genocide, Beata said, “My forgiving is based on what Jesus did. He took the punishment for every evil act throughout all time. His cross is the place we find victory—the only place!” Manasseh had written to Beata from prison more than once, begging her—and God—for forgiveness as he detailed the regular nightmares that plagued him. At first she could extend no mercy, saying she hated him for killing her family. But then “Jesus intruded into her thoughts,” and with God’s help, some two years later, she forgave him.

In this, Beata followed Jesus’ instruction to His disciples to forgive those who repent. He said that even if they “sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them” ([Luke 17:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017.4)). But to forgive can be extremely difficult, as we see by the disciples’ reaction: “Increase our faith!” (v. 5).

Beata’s faith increased as she wrestled in prayer over her inability to forgive. If, like her, we’re struggling to forgive, we can ask God through His Holy Spirit to help us to do so. As our faith increases, He helps us to forgive.

By:  [Amy Boucher Pye](https://odb.org/author/amyboucherpye/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

If someone who wronged you later repented, how did you react? How could God help you to forgive in these situations?

Jesus, thank You for releasing me from the consequences of my sin through Your death on the cross. I give You the glory!

Read The Risk of Forgiveness at [DiscoverySeries.org/HP071](https://DiscoverySeries.org/HP071).

#### **Insight**

In [Luke 17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017), Jesus is teaching His disciples how to relate to other people (vv. 1–5) and to God (vv. 6–10). He warns that His disciples aren’t to cause anyone to sin (v. 2) and are to confront those who do sin (v. 3), which was required by the law ([Leviticus 19:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019.17)). Jesus added a third duty: to forgive those who repent ([Luke 17:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017.3%E2%80%934)). His disciples are to deal unequivocally with a brother or sister who sins, with the purpose of restoration and reconciliation ([Matthew 18:15–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2018.15%E2%80%9317)). The rabbis argued that since God forgave Israel’s enemies only three times (inferred from [Amos 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.3), [6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.6), [9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.9), [11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.11), [13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.13)), people only needed to forgive three times. However, Jesus wasn’t setting a new “seven times” limit on forgiveness ([Luke 17:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2017.4)). Rather, the idea is that when it comes to forgiving someone, you don’t keep score. There’s no limit to the number of times you forgive.

# God Calling – 4/16/21

# 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 – 4/17/21

# 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 – 4/17/21

**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 – 4/17/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/17/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/17/21

# David's Prayer for Forgiveness

# Read: [Psalm 39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+39)[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+39&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14514a)]

#### **For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.**

1I said, “I will watch my ways  
    and keep my tongue from sin;  
I will put a muzzle on my mouth  
    while in the presence of the wicked.”  
2So I remained utterly silent,  
    not even saying anything good.  
But my anguish increased;  
3    my heart grew hot within me.  
While I meditated, the fire burned;  
    then I spoke with my tongue:

4“Show me, Lord, my life’s end  
    and the number of my days;  
    let me know how fleeting my life is.  
5You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
    the span of my years is as nothing before you.  
Everyone is but a breath,  
    even those who seem secure.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+39&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-14518b" \o "See footnote b)]

6“Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;  
    in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth  
    without knowing whose it will finally be.

7“But now, Lord, what do I look for?  
    My hope is in you.  
8Save me from all my transgressions;  
    do not make me the scorn of fools.  
9I was silent; I would not open my mouth,  
    for you are the one who has done this.  
10Remove your scourge from me;  
    I am overcome by the blow of your hand.  
11When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,  
    you consume their wealth like a moth—  
    surely everyone is but a breath.

12“Hear my prayer, Lord,  
    listen to my cry for help;  
    do not be deaf to my weeping.  
I dwell with you as a foreigner,  
    a stranger, as all my ancestors were.  
13Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again  
    before I depart and am no more.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 39:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+39&version=NIV#en-NIV-14514) In Hebrew texts 39:1-13 is numbered 39:2-14.
2. [Psalm 39:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+39&version=NIV#en-NIV-14518) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 11.

Silence can be a virtue. But sometimes, God gives us opportunities to speak truth, and we must be careful not to neglect the opening to make a meaningful difference. In our text today, David was silent when he should have spoken. His anguish increased when realizing he did not say anything good: “I remained utterly silent” (v. 2). In the first three verses of this prayer, David confesses his sin of silence (vv. 2–3). It is uncertain exactly what, when, and to whom he should have spoken, but he clearly missed an opportunity to speak God’s truth.

Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips! Psalm 141:3

David realizes that opportunities to speak truth are precious. Life is fleeting and short (v. 4). In the New Testament, James writes that we “are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14). David was aware that one’s life in this world is short and we must make the most of every opportunity. The purpose of life is not to rush or gain wealth, but rather to be committed to the Lord (Ps. 39:6).

David prays for repentance and admits his sin. He cast his hope to God for deliverance from his transgressions and affirmed the necessity of God’s correction (vv. 7–11). David’s prayer consists of both his confession of sin and his desire for the hope that can only be found in the Lord. He is so ashamed, with “weeping,” that he cannot fathom he could even be in the presence of God (vv. 12–13). However, if you read ahead to Psalm 40, you will see that God answered David’s prayer which included a promise of the one true Deliverer.

**Apply the Word**

Have there been times you were silent when you should have said something? Perhaps you noticed an injustice or habitual sin in someone’s life and did not speak up? Remember, this life is short, so let your words make a difference for God.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, we are natural critics. Give us discernment and humility to determine when we should address the issues we see. Give us wisdom to know what to say, and courage to say it with grace and truth.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/17/21

# Windows

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 55:6–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.6%E2%80%9313)

6Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
    call on him while he is near.  
7Let the wicked forsake their ways  
    and the unrighteous their thoughts.  
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,  
    and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

8“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
    neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the Lord.  
9“As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
    so are my ways higher than your ways  
    and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
10As the rain and the snow  
    come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
    without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
    so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
11so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
    It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
    and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.  
12You will go out in joy  
    and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
    will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
    will clap their hands.  
13Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
    and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the Lord’s renown,  
    for an everlasting sign,  
    that will endure forever.”

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace. [Isaiah 55:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.12)

Near the foothills of the Himalayas, a visitor noticed a row of houses without windows. His guide explained that some of the villagers feared that demons might sneak into their homes while they slept, so they built impermeable walls. You could tell when a homeowner began to follow Jesus because he put in windows to let in the light.

A similar dynamic may take place in us, though we might not see it quite that way. We live in scary, polarizing times. Satan and his demons instigate angry divisions that split families and friends. I often feel like hiding behind my walls. But Jesus wants me to cut in a window.

Israel sought refuge in higher walls, but God said their security lay with Him. He reigns from heaven, and His word governs all ([Isaiah 55:10–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.10%E2%80%9311)). If Israel would return to Him, God would “have mercy on them” (v. 7) and restore them as His people to bless the world ([Genesis 12:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2012.1%E2%80%933)). He would lift them up, ultimately leading them in a triumphal parade. Their celebration “will be for the Lord’s renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever” ([Isaiah 55:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.13)).

Sometimes walls are necessary. Walls with windows are best. They show the world that we trust God for the future. Our fears are real. Our God is greater. Windows open us to Jesus—“the light of the world” ([John 8:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.12))—and to others who need Him.

By:  [Mike Wittmer](https://odb.org/author/mwittmer/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Would you say your life is more wall or window? Why? Is there a person or situation you need to be more open to?

Almighty Father, flood my heart with the confidence of Your love.

#### **Insight**

[Isaiah 55:6–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.6%E2%80%9313) features one of the characteristics of Isaiah’s writing—the use of imagery from nature. These verses include about a dozen such references. The prophet speaks of heaven and earth and rain and snow (vv. 9–10), “mountains and hills” and “trees of the field” (v. 12). One scholar notes that “Isaiah’s world vibrates with nature’s buzzing.” After a bit of biographical and historical information, the book begins with, “Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth!” (1:2). The much-loved nature references in chapter 40 include these familiar words: “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. . . . The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever” (vv. 6–8).

# God Calling – 4/17/21

# 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 – 4/18/21

# Readiness



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 – 4/18/21

**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 – 4/18/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/18/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/18/21

# David's Prayer for Favor

**Read:** [**Psalm 5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+5)**[**[**a**](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13975a)**]**

#### **For the director of music. For pipes. A psalm of David.**

1Listen to my words, Lord,  
    consider my lament.  
2Hear my cry for help,  
    my King and my God,  
    for to you I pray.

3In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice;  
    in the morning I lay my requests before you  
    and wait expectantly.  
4For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness;  
    with you, evil people are not welcome.  
5The arrogant cannot stand  
    in your presence.  
You hate all who do wrong;  
6    you destroy those who tell lies.  
The bloodthirsty and deceitful  
    you, Lord, detest.  
7But I, by your great love,  
    can come into your house;  
in reverence I bow down  
    toward your holy temple.

8Lead me, Lord, in your righteousness  
    because of my enemies—  
    make your way straight before me.  
9Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;  
    their heart is filled with malice.  
Their throat is an open grave;  
    with their tongues they tell lies.  
10Declare them guilty, O God!  
    Let their intrigues be their downfall.  
Banish them for their many sins,  
    for they have rebelled against you.  
11But let all who take refuge in you be glad;  
    let them ever sing for joy.  
Spread your protection over them,  
    that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

12Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous;  
    you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 5:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Psalm+5&version=NIV#en-NIV-13975) In Hebrew texts 5:1-12 is numbered 5:2-13.

Before I followed God’s leading into full-time vocational ministry, I wanted to be an architect. I love design and structure. Did you know that our prayer life and our prayers need structure as well? Theologian D. A. Carson writes, “We do not drift into spiritual life; we do not drift into disciplined prayer. We will not grow in prayer unless we plan to pray.”

In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. Psalm 5:3

The arrangement of this psalm is consistent with traditional Jewish prayers. The order establishes the precedence of moving from praise to petition. This approach to prayer was to first express repentance, praise, and adoration toward God and only afterward express petition. This prayer from David was likely sung in connection with the prayers at the Temple’s morning offerings (v. 3). David recognizes Yahweh as the true King and that, as an earthly king, he is simply occupying the Lord’s throne (v. 2). David then transitions to God’s holiness and fatherly compassion. In verses 4–6, David clearly contrasts God’s sacredness with the evilness of humanity. A right understanding of who God is and who we are correctly positions us to pray prayers that are pleasing to the Lord.

David emphasizes the only reason he can enter the Lord’s house and worship is His extraordinary love (v. 7). The word David uses for love specifically points to the Lord’s covenant love for His people. Now, he feels he can make his request to God. In verses 8 to 10, David asks the Lord to declare his enemies guilty because of their many sins. David’s petition is not merely for their punishment, but rather for the Lord to be exalted. He concludes by confidently asking for protection for those who follow the Lord (vv. 11–12). David planned his prayer and the Lord answered.

**Apply the Word**

Consider how you structure your prayer. Do you typically start with an ask? Today, try beginning with praise and repentance. Getting in the right mindset and perspective allow our prayers to be more theologically aligned with God’s will for our life.

### **Pray with Us**

Gracious God, creation proclaims your creative majesty. You are the standard of holiness, truth, and justice. You made us to worship you, and this we do with joy!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/18/21

# Hard Ground and Tender Mercy

 **Read:** [**Ruth 4:13–22**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%204.13%E2%80%9322)

### **Naomi Gains a Son**

13So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

16Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. 17The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### The Genealogy of David

18This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron,

19Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

20Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+4%3A13%E2%80%9322&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-7211a" \o "See footnote a)]

21Salmon the father of Boaz,

Boaz the father of Obed,

22Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of David.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ruth 4:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+4%3A13%E2%80%9322&version=NIV#en-NIV-7211) A few Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate (see also verse 21 and Septuagint of 1 Chron. 2:11); most Hebrew manuscripts Salma

Praise be to the Lord. [Ruth 4:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%204.14)

When James was just six years old, his older brother David died tragically in an ice-skating accident. It was the day before David’s fourteenth birthday. In the years that followed, James tried his best to console his mother, Margaret, who in her deep grief sometimes reminded herself that her elder son would never have to face the challenges of growing up. In James Barrie’s fertile imagination, decades later that same idea would burgeon into inspiration for a much-loved children’s story character who never aged: Peter Pan. Like a flower pushing its way through pavement, good emerged even from the hard ground of unthinkable heartache.

How comforting is the thought that God, in an infinitely more creative way, is able to bring good out of our most difficult circumstances. A beautiful illustration of this occurs in the Old Testament story of Ruth. Naomi lost her two sons, leaving her without means or support. Her widowed daughter-in-law Ruth chose to remain with Naomi to help provide for her and to serve her God ([Ruth 1:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%201.16)). In the end, God’s provision brought them unexpected joy. Ruth remarried and had a child, “and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David” (4:17). He would also be listed among the ancestors of Jesus ([Matthew 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%201.5)).

God’s tender mercy reaches beyond our ability to fathom and meets us in surprising places. Keep looking! Perhaps you’ll see it today.

By:  [James Banks](https://odb.org/author/jamesbanks/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you seen God bring unexpected good out of difficult circumstances in your life? How can you share what He’s done with others?

Loving God, I thank You that one day You’ll wipe every tear from my eyes because You’re greater than every heartache or difficulty I’ll ever face.

#### **Insight**

Obed, the son of Ruth and Boaz, is referred to as a “guardian-redeemer” or “kinsman-redeemer” ([Ruth 4:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%204.14)). The Hebrew go’el refers to a nearest relative who would buy back, redeem, and restore something to its original or proper state of existence. The guardian-redeemer has various duties: to redeem the property of his relative and keep it in the family ([Leviticus 25:23–34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2025.23%E2%80%9334)); to redeem a poor relative who has sold himself as a slave to an outsider (vv. 35–55); to seek out the murderer of his kinsman and bring them to justice ([Numbers 35:9–34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2035.9%E2%80%9334)); and to marry a childless widow of a deceased brother to carry on his family line ([Deuteronomy 25:5–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2025.5%E2%80%9310)). The “guardian-redeemer” is the central focus of the book of Ruth (2:20; 3:9, 12; 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14). God refers to Himself as the Redeemer of Israel (see [Isaiah 41:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2041.14); [44:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2044.6), [24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2044.24); [47:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2047.4); [54:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2054.5); [63:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2063.16)).

# God Calling – 4/18/21

# 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 – 4/19/21

# 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 – 4/19/21

**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 – 4/19/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/19/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/19/21

# Jonah's Prayer

**Read:** [**Jonah 2:1–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah+2%3a1%e2%80%939)

1 [[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Jonah+2%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22550a)]From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2He said:

“In my distress I called to the Lord,  
    and he answered me.  
From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,  
    and you listened to my cry.  
3You hurled me into the depths,  
    into the very heart of the seas,  
    and the currents swirled about me;  
all your waves and breakers  
    swept over me.  
4I said, ‘I have been banished  
    from your sight;  
yet I will look again  
    toward your holy temple.’  
5The engulfing waters threatened me,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Jonah+2%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-22554b" \o "See footnote b)]  
    the deep surrounded me;  
    seaweed was wrapped around my head.  
6To the roots of the mountains I sank down;  
    the earth beneath barred me in forever.  
But you, Lord my God,  
    brought my life up from the pit.

7“When my life was ebbing away,  
    I remembered you, Lord,  
and my prayer rose to you,  
    to your holy temple.

8“Those who cling to worthless idols  
    turn away from God’s love for them.  
9But I, with shouts of grateful praise,  
    will sacrifice to you.  
What I have vowed I will make good.  
    I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Jonah 2:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Jonah+2%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-22550) In Hebrew texts 2:1 is numbered 1:17, and 2:1-10 is numbered 2:2-11.
2. [Jonah 2:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++Jonah+2%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-22554) Or waters were at my throat

Most of us are familiar with the story of Jonah, especially the part about the whale. Jonah was a prophet who refused the Lord’s command to go to Nineveh and instead boarded a ship headed in the opposite direction. While Jonah could run, he could not hide from God. When the ship encountered a storm, Jonah was tossed into the sea (1:12). And, sure enough, when he was thrown overboard, “the raging sea grew calm” (1:15).

When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you. Jonah 2:7

In the middle of the sea, Jonah came to the realization that his life was going to end unless he submitted himself to the Lord. The Lord provided a way for Jonah not only to be transported to Nineveh but also an opportunity to cry out to the Lord. Jonah 2:1 tells us that “[f]rom inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God.”

Jonah’s prayer is a psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance. While clinging to life, Scripture was on his mind. In his prayer, he recites the psalms at least three times (Ps. 18:6; 111:5; 120:1). God’s Word was the foundation of his prayer, and it ought to be ours as well. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “The richness of God’s Word ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.”

Jonah testifies to God’s deliverance in verses 3 to 7 in what appears to be almost a play-by-play account of what happened. It climaxes in verse 7 when he finally surrendered his life to the Lord’s will. He realized that he had been clinging to the worthless idol of selfishness and safety. In doing so, he was turning from the grace of God’s love available to all (vv. 8–10). Thankfully, he realized: “Salvation comes from the LORD” (v. 9), and the Lord provided a way for him to share that with the world.

**Apply the Word**

Make sure your prayers are soaked in Scripture. When God’s Word is on your heart and mind, it will also be in your prayers.

### **Pray with Us**

Today we soak our prayer in God’s Word, taking instruction from Romans 8:26: “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/19/21

# Quarantined by Fear

 **Read:** [**Luke 12:22–34**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2012.22%E2%80%9334)

### **Do Not Worry**

22Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+12%3A22%E2%80%9334&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25485a)]? 26Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

27“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

32“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 12:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+12%3A22%E2%80%9334&version=NIV#en-NIV-25485) Or single cubit to your height

Seek his kingdom. [Luke 12:31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2012.31)

In 2020, an outbreak of the coronavirus left the world in fear. People were quarantined, countries were put under lockdown, flights and large events were canceled. Those living in areas with no known cases still feared they might get the virus. Graham Davey, an expert in anxiety, believes that negative news broadcasts are “likely to make you sadder and more anxious.” A meme that circulated on social media showed a man watching the news on TV, and he asked how to stop worrying. In response, another person in the room reached over and flipped off the TV, suggesting that the answer might be a shift in focus!

[Luke 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2012) gives us some advice to help us stop worrying: “Seek his kingdom” (v. 31). We seek God’s kingdom when we focus on the promise that His followers have an inheritance in heaven. When we face difficulty, we can shift our focus and remember that God sees us and knows our needs (vv. 24–30).

Jesus encourages His disciples: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (v. 32). God enjoys blessing us! Let’s worship Him, knowing He cares for us more than the birds of the air and the flowers of the field (vv. 22–29). Even in difficult times, we can read the Scriptures, pray for God’s peace, and trust in our good and faithful God.

By:  [Julie Schwab](https://odb.org/author/jschwab95/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s causing you to fear today? What’s one thing you can do to seek God’s kingdom when you begin to worry?

Loving God, instead of living in fear or worry, help me to focus on Your care for me.

#### **Insight**

The kingdom of God is a major theme of Jesus’ ministry in Luke’s gospel ([Luke 4:43](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%204.43)), and it often inverts the world’s priorities. For example, the kingdom belongs to the poor (6:20) and little children (18:17), but the rich will have trouble accessing it (vv. 24–25). A criminal condemned to death can enter the kingdom through Jesus (23:42–43). Though many are invited to enter, not all will accept the invitation (14:15–24). And of those who do “come from east and west and north and south,” the last will be first and the first will be last (13:29–30). Con Campbell

Visit [ChristianUniversity.org/OT329](https://ChristianUniversity.org/OT329) to learn more about the kingdom of God as presented in the Bible.

# God Calling – 4/19/21

# 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