# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/18/23

# 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 – 4/18/23

**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 – 4/18/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/18/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/18/23

# A Field, a Jar, and a Prayer

# Intentionally Inefficient

**Read:** [**Leviticus 19:1–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3a1%e2%80%9317)

### **Various Laws**

19 The Lord said to Moses, 2“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

3“‘Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

4“‘Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

5“‘When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 6It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. 7If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. 8Whoever eats it will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the Lord; they must be cut off from their people.

9“‘When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

11“‘Do not steal.

“‘Do not lie.

“‘Do not deceive one another.

12“‘Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

13“‘Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

“‘Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

14“‘Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord.

15“‘Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

16“‘Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

“‘Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the Lord.

17“‘Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

Efficiency and productivity are buzzwords you often hear in the business world. Sharp business owners ask, “How can we do what we do better? How can I leverage my resources to maximize profits and efficiency?” This attitude has led many to unbelievable success and is understandably valued in our society.

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along. Galatians 2:10

In Leviticus 19, we read through a series of laws designed to provide Israel with practical examples of holiness in everyday life. One law commanded Israel to be inefficient in their work. At harvest time, Israelite farmers were instructed not to harvest the edges of their fields (v. 9). In a similar way, vineyard owners were not to go back over their vineyard a second time but instead to leave the remaining grapes (v. 10). In other words, Israel was called to not make the most out of their productive land. Why? This would allow the poor and the foreigner to harvest food (v. 10).

God cares deeply about the poor and the vulnerable. Through this practice, God instituted a way in Israel for the poor to work for their own food. It was not a handout but a requirement to work, not a dependency on one individual’s charitable impulse but divine command. Israelite farmers were not giving charity, they were simply obeying the law.

This law reminded Israel that the land was ultimately not theirs, but God’s. It encouraged them to show compassion for the poor and foreign resident and provide a way for them to integrate into society. This provision in the law enabled Ruth to provide food for herself and Naomi when they returned to the land of Israel without husbands or sons to sustain them (Ruth 2).

**Apply the Word**

Take time to think creatively about how you can help the poor and vulnerable, a subject close to God’s heart (Prov. 19:17). God warns us against greed, a perpetual temptation for believers (Luke 12:15; Eph. 4:19).

## **Pray with Us**

Lord, are we guilty of greed? Hard-heartedness? Fear of the future? If there is something holding us back from giving and helping others, convict and change us. Bring to our attention the needy around us.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/18/23

# Future Faithfulness

 **Read:** [**Jeremiah 32:37–44**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2032.37%E2%80%9344)

37I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. 38They will be my people, and I will be their God. 39I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. 40I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. 41I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

42“This is what the Lord says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. 43Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, ‘It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians.’ 44Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+32%3A37%E2%80%9344&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19776a)] declares the Lord.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 32:44](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+32%3A37%E2%80%9344&version=NIV#en-NIV-19776) Or will bring them back from captivity

I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. [Jeremiah 32:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2032.42)

Sara lost her mother when she was just fourteen years old. She and her siblings lost their house soon after and became homeless. Years later, Sara wanted to provide her future children with an inheritance that could be passed down from generation to generation. She worked hard to purchase a house, giving her family the stable home she never had.

Investing in a home for future generations is an act of faith toward a future you don’t yet see. God told the prophet Jeremiah to purchase land just before the violent siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians ([Jeremiah 32:6–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2032.6%E2%80%9312)). To the prophet, God’s instructions didn’t make a lot of sense. Soon all their property and belongings would be confiscated.

But God gave Jeremiah this promise: “As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them” (v. 42). The prophet’s investment in property was a physical sign of God’s faithfulness to someday restore the Israelites to their homeland. Even in the midst of a terrible attack, God promised His people that peace would come again—homes and property would be bought and sold again (vv. 43–44).

Today we can put our trust in God’s faithfulness and choose to “invest” in faith. Although we may not see an earthly restoration of every situation, we have the assurance that He’ll someday make everything right.

By:  [Karen Pimpo](https://odb.org/author/karenpimpo/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What causes you to lose sight of God’s faithfulness? How can you “invest” in light of the restoration He promises?

Dear God, help me to invest today for the future I can’t yet see.

#### **Insight**

Interestingly, while [Deuteronomy 6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%206) commanded Israel to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (v. 5), in order that “it may go well with you” (v. 3), [Jeremiah 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2032) describes God as lovingly caring for His people that way—“with all my heart and soul” (v. 41). Only God could give His people the “singleness of heart and action” to follow Him so that all would “go well for them” (v. 39). God’s “everlasting covenant”—God’s commitment to “never stop doing good to them” (v. 40)—was their only source of hope.

By: [**Monica La Rose**](https://odb.org/author/monicalarose/)

# God Calling – 4/18/23

# 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 – 4/19/23

# 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 – 4/19/23

**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 – 4/19/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/19/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/19/23

# Love Your Neighbor

**Read:** [**Leviticus 19:18–37**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3a18%e2%80%9337)

18“‘Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

19“‘Keep my decrees.

“‘Do not mate different kinds of animals.

“‘Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

“‘Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

20“‘If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3302a)] Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. 21The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the Lord. 22With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the Lord for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.

23“‘When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3305b)] For three years you are to consider it forbidden[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3305c)]; it must not be eaten. 24In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. 25But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the Lord your God.

26“‘Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

“‘Do not practice divination or seek omens.

27“‘Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

28“‘Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.

29“‘Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness.

30“‘Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

31“‘Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

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.

35“‘Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. 36Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3318d)] and an honest hin.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3318e)] I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt.

37“‘Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the Lord.’”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 19:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3302) Or be an inquiry
2. [Leviticus 19:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3305) Hebrew uncircumcised
3. [Leviticus 19:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3305) Hebrew uncircumcised
4. [Leviticus 19:36](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3318) An ephah was a dry measure having the capacity of about 3/5 of a bushel or about 22 liters.
5. [Leviticus 19:36](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18%E2%80%9337+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3318) A hin was a liquid measure having the capacity of about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters.

One day a teacher of the Law asked Jesus, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” (Mark 12:28). Jesus answered that the greatest commandment was: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (v. 30). But then He added a second, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 31). The reason Jesus gave two commands, not just one, is that they go together. You cannot really love God without loving your neighbor and vice versa.

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14

Today’s reading includes the second greatest commandment (Lev. 19:18). Not surprisingly, it is included in a section with a variety of commands, some of which address our relationship with God, while others address our relationship with other people.

The laws relating to God deal with correct worship (vv. 26, 30). These include upholding the food laws and observing the Sabbaths (vv. 26, 30). These are easy enough to understand. Some of the laws were designed to remind Israel that they were a separate and holy people (v. 19). Some of the more bizarre laws relate to Israel remaining distinct from the cultures around them and not participating in pagan worship (vv. 27–31).

Throughout these verses there is a concern to treat others well. Israel was to respect the elderly (v. 32), show hospitality to foreigners (v. 34), and be honest in their work (vv. 35–36). They should live this way because that is how God had treated them. He had also redeemed them from slavery in Egypt (v. 36).

**Apply the Word**

As followers of Jesus, we are not under the Mosaic Law. Yet, as Jesus affirmed, the principles behind the Law still reveal the character of God and are authoritative. In this passage, we get a glimpse of God’s love for His people and the world He created (vv. 23–24). We are called to be like Him (Lev. 19:2).

## **Pray with Us**

Your wrath is majestic. Your justice is holy. Your power is incredible. We who are small, weak, and prone to sin rejoice that You are also “gentle and humble in heart” (Matt. 11:29) and abounding in love!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/19/23

# Rent-a-Friend?

 **Read:** [**Ecclesiastes 4:7–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%204.7%E2%80%9312)

7Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

8There was a man all alone;  
    he had neither son nor brother.  
There was no end to his toil,  
    yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.  
“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,  
    “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”  
This too is meaningless—  
    a miserable business!

9Two are better than one,  
    because they have a good return for their labor:  
10If either of them falls down,  
    one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
    and has no one to help them up.  
11Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
    But how can one keep warm alone?  
12Though one may be overpowered,  
    two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

“For whom am I toiling,” he asked, “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?” [Ecclesiastes 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%204.8)

For many around the world, life is getting lonelier. The number of Americans who have no friends has quadrupled since 1990. Certain European countries have up to 20 percent of their population feeling lonely, while in Japan, some elderly folks have resorted to crime so they can have the companionship of inmates in jail.

Entrepreneurs have come up with a “solution” to this loneliness epidemic—rent-a-friend. Hired by the hour, these people will meet you in a café to talk or accompany you to a party. One such “friend” was asked who her clientele was. “Lonely, 30- to 40-year-old professionals,” she said, “who work long hours and don’t have time to make many friends.”

[Ecclesiastes 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%204) describes a person who is all alone, without “son nor brother.” There’s “no end” to this worker’s toil, yet his success isn’t fulfilling (v. 8). “For whom am I toiling . . . ?” he asks, waking up to his plight. Far better to invest in relationships, which will make his workload lighter and provide help in trouble (vv. 9–12). Because, ultimately, success without friendship is “meaningless” (v. 8).

Ecclesiastes tells us that a cord of three strands isn’t quickly broken (v. 12). But neither is it quickly woven. Since true friends can’t be rented, let’s invest the time needed to form them, with God as our third strand, weaving us tightly together.

By:  [Sheridan Voysey](https://odb.org/author/svoysey/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How are you investing time and effort into your friendships? Who could you welcome into your friendship group now?

Father, help me to be a good and loyal friend to others.

#### **Insight**

Most Bible scholars attribute the book of Ecclesiastes to King Solomon. The book begins: “The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1). Those scholars who support Solomon as author date the book to his final years as king (around 940 bc), during what the Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible says was the “golden era of Israelite wisdom.” The book demonstrates the meaninglessness or vanity of a worldview that doesn’t include God. The author concludes his book: “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (12:13–14). Loving and obeying God is the goal and purpose of life. And as today’s passage demonstrates, when we have Him as our third strand in the cord that binds all our friendships and relationships, we can stand strong (4:12).

By: [**Alyson Kieda**](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

# God Calling – 4/19/23

# Life Is A Love Story

You need Me. I need you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/20/23

# Can a Saint Falsely Accuse God?



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

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

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

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

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/20/23

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Word Live – 4/20/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/20/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/20/23

# Consequences, Consequences

**Read:** [**Leviticus 20:1–27**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+20%3a1%e2%80%9327)

### **Punishments for Sin**

20 The Lord said to Moses, 2“Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him. 3I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. 4If the members of the community close their eyes when that man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death, 5I myself will set my face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.

6“‘I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people.

7“‘Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. 8Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.

9“‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. Because they have cursed their father or mother, their blood will be on their own head.

10“‘If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.

11“‘If a man has sexual relations with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

12“‘If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads.

13“‘If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

14“‘If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.

15“‘If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and you must kill the animal.

16“‘If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

17“‘If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They are to be publicly removed from their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible.

18“‘If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them are to be cut off from their people.

19“‘Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible.

20“‘If a man has sexual relations with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless.

21“‘If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.

22“‘Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. 23You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. 24But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations.

25“‘You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. 26You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

27“‘A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.’”

In one country I visited, driving was a terrifying experience. People did not pay attention to stoplights or lanes. Cars would veer into oncoming traffic to make a turn. For me, coming from the suburbs in the United States, it seemed chaotic. I asked a local, “Are there traffic laws?” He responded, “Oh, yes. We have laws, but no one ever enforces them.”

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. Galatians 3:13

Leviticus 18 and 19 presented us with laws covering many different aspects of life. A natural follow-up question is, “What happens if a law was broken?” Today’s reading outlines the consequences of disobedience. The modern reader might be surprised at how many infractions resulted in the death penalty.

The death penalty was reserved for behaviors that fundamentally broke God’s covenant with Israel. Every case of the death penalty can be tied directly to one of the Ten Commandments. For example, sacrificing children to Molek broke the command against murder and against worshiping other gods (vv. 1–5). This was a serious infraction that put the whole community at risk of God’s judgment. Dishonoring one’s parents and adultery also required the death penalty (vv. 9–10).

Israel did not require the death penalty as often as other ancient cultures. For example, it was not required for matters of property like theft. People were considered more important than objects. Even so, the reason for severe consequences was that Israel would be holy, set apart for God (v. 26). Israel was to act differently than the nations around them (v. 23). If they wanted to live in the land under God’s blessing, they needed to follow His covenant regulations (vv. 22–24).

**Apply the Word**

Since the church is not under the Mosaic covenant and is also not a political entity in the way Israel was, these consequences are no longer in force. However, they remind us that God takes sin seriously. It should also make us deeply grateful that Jesus bore the penalty for sin on our behalf (Gal. 3:13).

## **Pray with Us**

As Your church, Jesus, we are called to be holy. You have freed us from the obligations of the Law. Help us be faithful in the mandates that apply to us. By Your grace, let us live above reproach, loving You.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/20/23

# Pressing On in Jesus

 **Read:** [**Philippians 3:12–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.12%E2%80%9316)

12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

### **Following Paul’s Example**

15All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on. [Philippians 3:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.13%E2%80%9314)

On a run in the forest, I tried to find a shortcut and went down an unfamiliar path. Wondering if I was lost, I asked a runner coming the other way if I was on the right track.

“Yup,” he replied confidently. Seeing my doubtful look, he quickly added: “Don’t worry, I’ve tried all the wrong routes! But that’s okay, it’s all part of the run.”

What an apt description of my spiritual journey! How many times have I strayed from God, given in to temptation, and been distracted by the things of life? Yet God has forgiven me each time and helped me to move on—knowing I will certainly stumble again. God knows our tendency to go down the wrong path. But He’s always ready to forgive, again and again, if we confess our sins and allow His Spirit to transform us.

Paul too knew this was all part of the faith journey. Fully aware of his sinful past and current weaknesses, he knew he had yet to obtain the Christlike perfection he desired ([Philippians 3:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.12)). “But one thing I do,” he added, “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on” (vv. 13–14). Stumbling is part of our walk with God: it’s through our mistakes that He refines us. His grace enables us to press on, as forgiven children.

By:  [Leslie Koh](https://odb.org/author/lesliekoh/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What mistakes can you confess to God today? How can His assurance of forgiveness help you to press on in your walk of faith?

Thank You, God, for Your mercy. Help me to lead a life that pleases You, knowing that Your Spirit is working in me to transform me into Your Son’s likeness.

Explore classes to help you grow on your [spiritual journey](https://odbu.org/?utm_source=2023+04+11+ODB+Article&utm_medium=Digital+link&utm_campaign=2023+04+11+ODB+Article+-+ODBU+Main&utm_id=2023+04+11+ODB+Article+-+ODBU+Main).

#### **Insight**

The book of Philippians features several connections with [Acts 16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2016). In [Acts 16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2016), Paul was in a Philippian jail because of his witness for Jesus (vv. 19–24), but the apostle didn’t allow his imprisonment to stop his witness for Him (vv. 25–34). Philippians was written from a Roman jail and, once again, the gospel was advanced through Paul, the prisoner ([Philippians 1:12–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%201.12%E2%80%9314)). While the geographical venue was different, the situation was the same—jail time for speaking about Jesus. The apostle was transformed from a Pharisee and persecutor of Christ and His church (3:5–6) to one who wholeheartedly testified, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (1:21). Furthermore, Paul’s passionate pursuit of Jesus warranted the use of the athletic metaphor of an undistracted runner in pursuit of a prize (3:13–14). For Paul, Christ was the prize!

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

# God Calling – 4/20/23

# Heart's Agony

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

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

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

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

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

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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/21/23

# Don’t Hurt the Lord

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Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? —[John 14:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+14%3A9)

Our Lord must be repeatedly astounded at us— astounded at how “un-simple” we are. It is our own opinions that make us dense and slow to understand, but when we are simple we are never dense; we have discernment all the time. Philip expected the future revelation of a tremendous mystery, but not in Jesus, the Person he thought he already knew. The mystery of God is not in what is going to be— it is now, though we look for it to be revealed in the future in some overwhelming, momentous event. We have no reluctance to obey Jesus, but it is highly probable that we are hurting Him by what we ask— “Lord, show us the Father…” ([John 14:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:8)). His response immediately comes back to us as He says, “Can’t you see Him? He is always right here or He is nowhere to be found.” We look for God to exhibit Himself to His children, but God only exhibits Himself in His children. And while others see the evidence, the child of God does not. We want to be fully aware of what God is doing in us, but we cannot have complete awareness and expect to remain reasonable or balanced in our expectations of Him. If all we are asking God to give us is experiences, and the awareness of those experiences is blocking our way, we hurt the Lord. The very questions we ask hurt Jesus, because they are not the questions of a child.

“Let not your heart be troubled…” ([14:1, 27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:1;27)). Am I then hurting Jesus by allowing my heart to be troubled? If I believe in Jesus and His attributes, am I living up to my belief? Am I allowing anything to disturb my heart, or am I allowing any questions to come in which are unsound or unbalanced? I have to get to the point of the absolute and unquestionable relationship that takes everything exactly as it comes from Him. God never guides us at some time in the future, but always here and now. Realize that the Lord is here now, and the freedom you receive is immediate.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” We all have faith in good principles, in good management, in good common sense, but who amongst us has faith in Jesus Christ? Physical courage is grand, moral courage is grander, but the man who trusts Jesus Christ in the face of the terrific problems of life is worth a whole crowd of heroes.  The Highest Good, 544 R

# CCEL – 4/21/23

**Stand fast in the Lord.**—[PHI. 4:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.1)

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.—The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back into perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.—If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed.—He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.—Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.—Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.—He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.

[Job 23:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.11).[Psa. 37:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.28). -[Psa. 121:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html" \l "Ps.121.7).[Heb. 10:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.38). -[I John 2:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.19).[John 8:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.31). -[Matt. 24:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.24.html" \l "Matt.24.13). -[I Cor. 16:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.16.html" \l "iCor.16.13). -[Rev. 3:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.11). -[Rev. 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.5).

“I know that my Redeemer liveth.” **[Job 19:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.19.html" \l "Job.19.25)**

The marrow of Job’s comfort lies in that little word “My”—“My Redeemer,” and in the fact that the Redeemer lives. Oh! to get hold of a living Christ. We must get a property in him before we can enjoy him. What is gold in the mine to me? Men are beggars in Peru, and beg their bread in California. It is gold in my purse which will satisfy my necessities, by purchasing the bread I need. So a Redeemer who does not redeem me, an avenger who will never stand up for my blood, of what avail were such? Rest not content until by faith you can say “Yes, I cast myself upon my living Lord; and he is mine.” It may be you hold him with a feeble hand; you half think it presumption to say, “He lives as my Redeemer;” yet, remember if you have but faith as a grain of mustard seed, that little faithentitles you to say it. But there is also another word here, expressive of Job’s strong confidence, “I know.” To say, “I hope so, I trust so” is comfortable; and there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who hardly ever get much further. But to reach the essence of consolation you must say, “I know.” Ifs, buts, and perhapses, are sure murderers of peace and comfort. Doubts are dreary things in times of sorrow. Like wasps they sting the soul! If I have any suspicion that Christ is not mine, then there is vinegar mingled with the gall of death; but if I know that Jesus lives for me, then darkness is not dark: even the night is light about me. Surely if Job, in those ages before the coming and advent of Christ, could say, “I know,” we should not speak less positively. God forbid that our positiveness should be presumption. Let us see that our evidences are right, lest we build upon an ungrounded hope; and then let us not be satisfied with the mere foundation, for it is from the upper rooms that we get the widest prospect. A living Redeemer, truly mine, is joy unspeakable.

# Word Live – 4/21/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/21/23

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# Today in the Word – 4/21/23

# To Whom Much Is Given

**Read:** [**Leviticus 21:1–24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+21%3a1%e2%80%9324)

### **Rules for Priests**

21 The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean for any of his people who die, 2except for a close relative, such as his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother, 3or an unmarried sister who is dependent on him since she has no husband—for her he may make himself unclean. 4He must not make himself unclean for people related to him by marriage,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+21%3A1%E2%80%9324+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3350a)] and so defile himself.

5“‘Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies. 6They must be holy to their God and must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the food offerings to the Lord, the food of their God, they are to be holy.

7“‘They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. 8Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of your God. Consider them holy, because I the Lord am holy—I who make you holy.

9“‘If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire.

10“‘The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+21%3A1%E2%80%9324+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3356b)] or tear his clothes. 11He must not enter a place where there is a dead body. He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, 12nor leave the sanctuary of his God or desecrate it, because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God. I am the Lord.

13“‘The woman he marries must be a virgin. 14He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, 15so that he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the Lord, who makes him holy.’”

16The Lord said to Moses, 17“Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. 18No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; 19no man with a crippled foot or hand, 20or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. 21No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the Lord. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. 22He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; 23yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the Lord, who makes them holy.’”

24So Moses told this to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 21:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+21%3A1%E2%80%9324+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3350) Or unclean as a leader among his people
2. [Leviticus 21:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+21%3A1%E2%80%9324+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3356) Or not uncover his head

After Peter Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider and endowed with superpowers to become Spider-Man, his Uncle Ben gave him this memorable advice, “With great power comes great responsibility.” These words are similar to Jesus’ statement: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded” (Luke 12:48).

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses.Hebrews 4:15

Priests in Israel were given much. They represented the people before God in the tabernacle and could enter the Holy Place. But with special privileges came a higher standard for holiness. Today’s reading outlines three specific areas where priests had greater restrictions than the rest of Israel: mourning rituals, potential marriage partners, and physical defects.

Priests could not make themselves ceremonially unclean in mourning for just anyone. They were allowed this practice only for close blood-relatives (vv. 1–4). The high priest had an even higher standard. He could not publicly mourn for anyone (vv. 10–12). This practice was in sharp contrast to other ancient cultures, such as Egypt, where the care of the dead was a primary concern of priests. These prohibitions may have helped Israel avoid falling into ancestor worship.

Priests also were restricted in their potential spouses. Their spouse needed to represent the holiness of their role and so could not have been previously married or have been engaged in prostitution (v. 7).

Just like sacrificial animals had to be physically whole, priests needed to be as well (vv. 16–21). They could not have physical deformities to serve in the tabernacle. Priests who did not measure up to this standard were still provided for financially along with their families (vv. 22–23).

**Apply the Word**

Praise the Lord that Jesus, our High Priest, perfectly lived up to the highest moral standards during His earthly ministry (Heb. 4:14–15). He continues to serve as our High Priest in the presence of the Father (Heb. 10:12–13). Even now He is sanctifying His people, His bride at the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7–8).

## **Pray with Us**

We could never hope to live up to your standard of holiness. But Lord Jesus, holy and perfect, by sacrificing Yourself, You covered us in Your holy blood. Praise be to You forever!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/21/23

# Discovering Creation

**Read:** [**Psalm 95:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2095.1%E2%80%937)

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;  
    let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
2Let us come before him with thanksgiving  
    and extol him with music and song.

3For the Lord is the great God,  
    the great King above all gods.  
4In his hand are the depths of the earth,  
    and the mountain peaks belong to him.  
5The sea is his, for he made it,  
    and his hands formed the dry land.

6Come, let us bow down in worship,  
    let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;  
7for he is our God  
    and we are the people of his pasture,  
    the flock under his care.

Today, if only you would hear his voice,

In his hand are the depths of the earth. [Psalm 95:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2095.4)

Krubera-Voronja, in the Eurasian country of Georgia, is one of the deepest caves yet explored on planet Earth. A team of explorers have probed the dark and scary depths of its mostly vertical caverns to 2,197 meters—that’s 7,208 feet into the earth! Similar caves, around four hundred of them, exist in other parts of the country and across the globe. More caverns are being discovered all the time and new depth records are being set.

The mysteries of creation continue to unfold, changing and adding to our understanding of the universe we live in and causing us to wonder at the matchless creativity of God’s handiwork. The psalmist invites us all to “sing for joy” and “shout aloud” to the Lord because of His greatness (v. 1). God’s work of creation—all that it contains, whether we’ve yet discovered it or not—is cause for us to bow down in worship (v. 6).

He doesn’t just know the vast, physical places of His creation; He also knows the intimate depths of our hearts. And not unlike in the caverns of Georgia, we’ll go through dark and perhaps scary seasons in life. Yet we know that God holds even those times in His powerful yet tender care. In the words of the psalmist, we’re His people, the “flock under his care” (v. 7).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has God guided you through dark places? In what new place or way is He inviting you to trust Him now?

Creator God, help me to trust in Your care for me even in the darkest places!

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 95](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2095) together with [Psalms 47](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2047), [93](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2093), and [96–99](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2096%E2%80%9399) are known as “enthronement or royal psalms” because they use the image of a king to denote God’s sovereign reign over all creation and over all history. [Psalm 95:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2095.3) proclaims, “the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.” This psalm is easily outlined into two parts: a call to worship God as Creator and King (vv. 1–7a) and a warning not to reject God as King (vv. 7b–11). The Israelites viewed their national leaders as shepherds (see [Ezekiel 34:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2034.1%E2%80%932); [Zechariah 10:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%2010.3)). They also spoke of God as their national leader, calling Him the “Shepherd of Israel” ([Psalm 80:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2080.1)), who “brought his people out like a flock; [leading] them like sheep through the wilderness” (78:52). Here in [Psalm 95](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2095), His people sing in reverent worship, “He is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care” (v. 7).

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 4/21/23

# You Will Conquer

I am with you.  My Presence is a sign of My forgiveness.  I uphold you

You will conquer. Do not fear changes. You can never fear changes when I, your Lord, change not. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. I am beside you. Steadfastness, unchangingness, come to you, too, as you dwell with Me. Rest in Me.

As breathing rightly, from being a matter of careful practice, becomes a habit, unconsciously, yet rightly performed, so if you regularly practice this getting back into My Presence, when the slightest feeling of unrest disturbs your perfect calm and harmony, so this, too, will become a habit, and you will grow to live in that perfect consciousness of My Presence, and perfect calm and harmony will be yours.

Life is a training school. Remember, only the pupil giving great promise of future good work would be so singled out by the Master for strenuous and unwearied discipline, teaching and training,

You are asking both of you to be not as hundreds of My followers, nay as many, many thousands, but to be even as those who reflect Me in all they say and do and are. So, My dear children, take this training, not as harsh, but as the tender loving answer to your petition.

Life can never be the same again for either of you. Once you have drunk of the wine of My giving, the Life Eternal, all earth's attempts to quench your thirst will fail.

"I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Exodus 3:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/22/23

# The Light That Never Fails

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We all, with unveiled face, beholding…the glory of the Lord… —[2 Corinthians 3:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+3%3A18)

A servant of God must stand so very much alone that he never realizes he is alone. In the early stages of the Christian life, disappointments will come— people who used to be lights will flicker out, and those who used to stand with us will turn away. We have to get so used to it that we will not even realize we are standing alone. Paul said, “…no one stood with me, but all forsook me….But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me…” ([2 Timothy 4:16-17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+4:16-17)). We must build our faith not on fading lights but on the Light that never fails. When “important” individuals go away we are sad, until we see that they are meant to go, so that only one thing is left for us to do— to look into the face of God for ourselves.

Allow nothing to keep you from looking with strong determination into the face of God regarding yourself and your doctrine. And every time you preach make sure you look God in the face about the message first, then the glory will remain through all of it. A Christian servant is one who perpetually looks into the face of God and then goes forth to talk to others. The ministry of Christ is characterized by an abiding glory of which the servant is totally unaware— “…Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him” ([Exodus 34:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+34:29)).

We are never called on to display our doubts openly or to express the hidden joys and delights of our life with God. The secret of the servant’s life is that he stays in tune with God all the time.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We should always choose our books as God chooses our friends, just a bit beyond us, so that we have to do our level best to keep up with them. Shade of His Hand, 1216 L

# CCEL – 4/22/23

**If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.**—[LEV. 1:3,4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.1.html" \l "Lev.1.3)

God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.—A ransom for many.

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.—I will love them freely.—The Son of God . . . loved me and gave himself for me.

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

[Gen. 22:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.22.html" \l "Gen.22.8). -[John 1:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html#John.1.29). -[Heb. 10:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.10). -[Matt. 20:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.20.html" \l "Matt.20.28).[John 10:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.18). -[Hos. 14:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.14.html" \l "Hos.14.4). -[Gal. 2:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.20).[II Cor. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21). -[Eph. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.6).

“Him hath God exalted.” **[Acts 5:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.5.html" \l "Acts.5.31)**

Jesus, our Lord, once crucified, dead and buried, now sits upon the throne of glory. The highest place that heaven affords is his by undisputed right. It is sweet to remember that the exaltation of Christ in heaven is a representative exaltation. He is exalted at the Father’s right hand, and though as Jehovah he had eminent glories, in which finite creatures cannot share, yet as the Mediator, the honours which Jesus wears in heaven are the heritage of all the saints. It is delightful to reflect how close is Christ’s union with his people. We are actually one with him; we are members of his body; and his exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon his throne, even as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne; he has a crown, and he gives us crowns too; he has a throne, but he is not content with having a throne to himself, on his right hand there must be his queen, arrayed in “gold of Ophir.” He cannot be glorified without his bride. Look up, believer, to Jesus now; let the eye of your faith behold him with many crowns upon his head; and remember that you will one day be like him, when you shall see him as he is; you shall not be so great as he is, you shall not be so divine, but still you shall, in a measure, share the same honours, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which he possesses. Be content to live unknown for a little while, and to walk your weary way through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; for by-and-by you shall reign with Christ, for he has “made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever.” Oh!, wonderful thought for the children of God! We have Christ for our glorious representative in heaven’s courts now, and soon he will come and receive us to himself, to be with him there, to behold his glory, and to share his joy.

# Word Live – 4/22/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/22/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/22/23

# The Heart of Worship

**The Heart of Worship – Matt Redman:-** [**https://youtu.be/0XsB0ltXmRs**](https://youtu.be/0XsB0ltXmRs)

**Read:** [**Leviticus 22:17–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+22%3a17%e2%80%9333)

### **Unacceptable Sacrifices**

17The Lord said to Moses, 18“Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘If any of you—whether an Israelite or a foreigner residing in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the Lord, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, 19you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. 20Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. 21When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the Lord to fulfill a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. 22Do not offer to the Lord the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as a food offering presented to the Lord. 23You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+22%3A17%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3393a)] or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, but it will not be accepted in fulfillment of a vow. 24You must not offer to the Lord an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn or cut. You must not do this in your own land, 25and you must not accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects.’”

26The Lord said to Moses, 27“When a calf, a lamb or a goat is born, it is to remain with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as a food offering presented to the Lord. 28Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day.

29“When you sacrifice a thank offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 30It must be eaten that same day; leave none of it till morning. I am the Lord.

31“Keep my commands and follow them. I am the Lord. 32Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the Lord, who made you holy 33and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 22:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+22%3A17%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3393) The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.

It is often tempting to cut corners. A high school student might read the CliffsNotes version of A Tale of Two Cities instead of slogging through the entire novel. A carpenter might not use all the safety features on his table saw because it is quicker to use it without them.

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

In today’s reading, the Lord warns Israel against cutting corners in worship. For burnt offerings or offerings to fulfill a vow, the worshiper must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep, or goats (vv. 19–20). For a fellowship offering, a male or female animal was acceptable, but it must be without blemish (v. 21). This was a problem in ancient Israel. The prophet Malachi admonished, “When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you?” (Mal. 1:8). In optional sacrifices like freewill offerings, some deformities were allowed (v. 23).

Another way Israel might have tried to save money would be to offer a newborn animal that had not yet cost anything to feed or care for. Moses instructs that the animal must be at least a week old (v. 27). God is to be treated with reverence and respect. Offering only the best sacrifices reminded Israel of the holiness of God (v. 32).

Today’s passage reminds us that Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice, “you were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18–19). In response, we offer ourselves to God as a “living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Rom. 12:1).

**Apply the Word**

What should be the focus of worship? It is not that we walk away feeling satisfied, or even worse, entertained. The most important part of worship is that it is acceptable and pleasing to God. Worship like that will be the most satisfying to us as well.

## Pray with Us

Father, draw us closer. May we know You so well that we delight in the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that please You. Draw us closer in our worship; draw us closer.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/22/23

# The Power of Forgiveness

 **Read:** [**Matthew 18:23–35**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2018.23%E2%80%9335)

23“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A23%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23752a)] was brought to him. 25Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A23%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23756b)] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Matthew 18:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A23%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#en-NIV-23752) Greek ten thousand talents; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wages.
2. [Matthew 18:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A23%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#en-NIV-23756) Greek a hundred denarii; a denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see 20:2).

You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. [Psalm 86:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086.5)

A 2021 news reports told of seventeen missionaries that had been kidnapped by a gang. The gang threatened to kill the group (including children) if their ransom demands weren’t met. Incredibly, all the missionaries were either released or escaped to freedom. On reaching safety, they sent a message to their captors: “Jesus taught us by word and by His own example that the power of forgiving love is stronger than the hate of violent force. Therefore, we extend forgiveness to you.”

Jesus made it clear that forgiveness is powerful. He said, “If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” ([Matthew 6:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.14)). Later, in answering Peter, Christ told how often we should forgive: “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (18:22; see vv. 21–35). And on the cross, He demonstrated godly forgiveness when He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” ([Luke 23:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.34)).

Forgiveness at its fullest can be realized when both parties move toward healing and reconciliation. And while it doesn’t remove the effects of harm done or the need to be discerning in how to address painful or unhealthy relationships, it can lead to restored ones—testifying to God’s love and power. Let’s look for ways to “extend forgiveness” for His honor.

By:  [Dave Branon](https://odb.org/author/davebranon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When is forgiveness hardest? How can you trust the Holy Spirit to help you forgive?

Jesus, help me to reach out to those who need me to forgive them as a testimony of Your power and goodness.

Learn more about how to [forgive yourself and others](https://odbu.org/topic/sf107-01-lecture/?utm_source=2023+04+22+ODB+Article&utm_medium=Digital+link&utm_campaign=2023+04+22+ODB+Article+-+70x7&utm_id=2023+04+22+ODB+Article+-+70x7).

#### **Insight**

“To err is human, to forgive, divine,” wrote poet Alexander Pope. Indeed, it is divine. We tend to fall into one of two traps with forgiveness. The first is the belief that what we do doesn’t matter because we can ask for forgiveness later. The second is that we limit God’s forgiveness. The point of the parable in [Matthew 18:23–35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2018.23%E2%80%9335) is that God forgives lavishly and infinitely, yet we must accept His forgiveness and behave accordingly. We’re to forgive others as we’ve been forgiven. True forgiveness is unnatural to us. Only through Jesus can we truly forgive.

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

# God Calling – 4/22/23

# Complain Not -- Laugh

Trust in Me. Do as I say each moment and all indeed shall be well. Follow out My commands: Divine control, unquestioning obedience -- these are the only conditions of supply being ample for your own needs and those of others.

The tasks I set you may have seemingly no connection with supply. The commands are Mine and the supply is Mine and I make My own conditions, differing in each case -- but in the case of each disciple, adapted to the individual need.

Have no fear, go forward. Joy -- radiant Joy must be yours. Change all disappointment, even if only momentary, into Joy. Change each complaint into laughter.

Rest -- Love -- Joy -- Peace -- Work, and the most powerful of these are Love and Joy.

"Serve the Lord with gladness....be thankful unto him, and bless his name." Psalm 100:2, 4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/23/23

# Do You Worship The Work?



We are God’s fellow workers… —[1 Corinthians 3:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+3%3A9)

Beware of any work for God that causes or allows you to avoid concentrating on Him. A great number of Christian workers worship their work. The only concern of Christian workers should be their concentration on God. This will mean that all the other boundaries of life, whether they are mental, moral, or spiritual limits, are completely free with the freedom God gives His child; that is, a worshiping child, not a wayward one. A worker who lacks this serious controlling emphasis of concentration on God is apt to become overly burdened by his work. He is a slave to his own limits, having no freedom of his body, mind, or spirit. Consequently, he becomes burned out and defeated. There is no freedom and no delight in life at all. His nerves, mind, and heart are so overwhelmed that God’s blessing cannot rest on him.

But the opposite case is equally true– once our concentration is on God, all the limits of our life are free and under the control and mastery of God alone. There is no longer any responsibility on you for the work. The only responsibility you have is to stay in living constant touch with God, and to see that you allow nothing to hinder your cooperation with Him. The freedom that comes after sanctification is the freedom of a child, and the things that used to hold your life down are gone. But be careful to remember that you have been freed for only one thing– to be absolutely devoted to your co-Worker.

We have no right to decide where we should be placed, or to have preconceived ideas as to what God is preparing us to do. God engineers everything; and wherever He places us, our one supreme goal should be to pour out our lives in wholehearted devotion to Him in that particular work. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might…” ([Ecclesiastes 9:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+9:10)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is perilously possible to make our conceptions of God like molten lead poured into a specially designed mould, and when it is cold and hard we fling it at the heads of the religious people who don’t agree with us. Disciples Indeed, 388 R

# CCEL – 4/23/23

**The Lord was my stay.**—[PSA. 18:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.18.html" \l "Ps.18.18)

Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.—The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.—Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.—The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.—So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.—For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

By the grace of God I am what I am.

[Jer. 3:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.3.html" \l "Jer.3.23). -[Psa. 18:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.18.html" \l "Ps.18.2). -[Isa. 12:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.12.html" \l "Isa.12.6).[Psa. 34:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.7),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.17). -[Deut. 33:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.27). -[Heb. 13:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.6). -[Psa. 18:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.18.html" \l "Ps.18.31),[32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.18.html" \l "Ps.18.32).[I Cor. 15:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.10).

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” **[Romans 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37)**

We go to Christ for forgiveness, and then too often look to the law for power to fight our sins. Paul thus rebukes us, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Take your sins to Christ’s cross, for the old man can only be crucified there: we are crucified with him. The only weapon to fight sin with is the spear which pierced the side of Jesus. To give an illustration—you want to overcome an angry temper; how do you go to work? It is very possible you have never tried the right way of going to Jesus with it. How did I get salvation? I came to Jesus just as I was, and I trusted him to save me. I must kill my angry temper in the same way. It is the only way in which I can ever kill it. I must go to the cross with it, and say to Jesus, “Lord, I trust thee to deliver me from it.” This is the only way to give it a death-blow. Are you covetous? Do you feel the world entangle you? You may struggle against this evil so long as you please, but if it be your besetting sin, you will never be delivered from it in any way but by the blood of Jesus. Take it to Christ. Tell him, “Lord, I have trusted thee, and thy name is Jesus, for thou dost save thy people from their sins: Lord, this is one of my sins; save me from it!” Ordinances are nothing without Christ as a means of mortification. Your prayers, and your repentances, and your tears—the whole of them put together—are worth nothing apart from him. “None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good;” or helpless saints either. You must be conquerors through him who hath loved you, if conquerors at all. Our laurels must grow among his olives in Gethsemane.

# Word Live – 4/23/23

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# Scripture Union – 4/23/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/23/23

# Rest for the Weary

**Read:** [**Leviticus 23:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3a1%e2%80%935)

### **The Appointed Festivals**

23 The Lord said to Moses, 2“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

#### **The Sabbath**

3“‘There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the Lord.

#### **The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread**

4“‘These are the Lord’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: 5The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.

We often like to tell people just how busy we are. “I’m so busy; I can hardly keep up!” As one author described the struggle, “I wanted to figure out why I was so busy, but I couldn’t find the time to do it.” One of the reasons we keep ourselves so busy is that we find a sense of value and worth in constantly being productive.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

One of the most distinctive elements of Israel’s faith was their practice of Sabbath. The command is rooted in Creation. Over six days God created the universe and on the seventh He rested (Gen. 2:2–3). It was important enough that God illustrated this command by example.

Today’s reading reminded Israel of one of the purposes of Sabbath: it was to be a “day of sacred assembly” (Lev. 23:3). The community would come together in rest and fellowship with each other and with the Lord. Sabbath reminds us that life is not about being productive all the time. After all, God is the Lord of time.

The practice of keeping the Sabbath puts a check on our ambition. It reminds us that we can take the time to rest in God’s presence because we trust Him to provide for us. It reminds us that it is not our work or frantic activity that makes us holy, but our relationship with God. Without this principle, work can become an idol or an oppressor. The Sabbath was to be for everyone; men and women, children, servants, foreigners residing in Israel, and even animals (Ex. 20:10).

As members of the New Covenant, we are not required to observe Sabbath in the same way Israel did (Col. 2:16). However, having a pattern of work and rest is still authoritative for us. Jesus invites His followers to find their rest in Him (Matt. 11:28).

**Apply the Word**

Take a few moments to evaluate your own life and pattern of rest and work. Do you devote regular time to rest in the Lord? How can you set aside that time this week?

## **Pray with Us**

Bless our rest, we pray. Help us relinquish, if only for a time, the endless tasks we must accomplish. Instead, we want to reflect on You, rejoicing in the peace of a quiet morning. As we rest our bodies, please rest our souls.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/23/23

# Loving Like Jesus

**Read:** [**1 John 3:11–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.11%E2%80%9318)

### **More on Love and Hatred**

11For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. 13Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30593a)] if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

16This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 John 3:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-30593) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in verse 16.

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. [1 John 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.18)

While waiting for a train at a station in Atlanta, Georgia, a young man wearing dress pants and a button-down shirt sat on a bench. As he struggled with his tie, an older woman encouraged her husband to help. When the elderly man hunched over and began teaching the young man how to knot the tie, a stranger took a photo of the trio. When this photo went viral online, many viewers left comments about the power of random acts of kindness.

For believers in Jesus, kindness to others reflects the self-sacrificing care that He showed for people like us. It’s an expression of God’s love and what He desired His disciples to live out: “We should love one another” ([1 John 3:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.11) emphasis added). John equates hating a brother or sister to murder (v. 15). Then he turns to Christ as an example of love in action (v. 16).

It doesn’t have to be an extravagant display of sacrifice. Selfless love simply requires us to acknowledge the value of all God’s image-bearers by placing their needs above our own . . . every day. Those seemingly ordinary moments when we care enough to notice the needs of others and do what we can to help are selfless when we’re motivated by love. When we see beyond our personal space, step out of our comfort zones to serve others, and give—especially when we don’t have to give—we’re loving like Jesus.

By:  [Xochitl Dixon](https://odb.org/author/xochitldixon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you experienced selfless love from someone? How can you love others selflessly this week?

Loving Father, please help me see people with a heart ready to extend compassion and selfless love wherever You send me.

#### **Insight**

Jesus spoke a new commandment to “love one another” ([John 13:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.34)). This command is actually “an old one” ([1 John 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%202.7)), for God had commanded every Israelite to “love [their] neighbor as [themselves]” ([Leviticus 19:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2019.18)). The “new” commandment raised the bar to the highest standard of love: “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” ([John 13:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.34)). The apostle John here reminded believers to model this sacrificial love of Jesus—“Jesus Christ laid down his life for us” ([1 John 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.16)). True love is sacrificial giving and spontaneous generosity (v. 17). John exhorts us to be loving in our speech and in our actions (v. 18). Such love is the clearest evidence that one has new life (v. 14) and “is a child of God” (4:7 nlt); anyone who “does not love does not know God, for God is love” (v. 8 nlt).

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 4/23/23

# Too Much Talk

Guidance you are bound to have as you live more and more with Me. It follows without doubt.

But these times are not times when you ask to be shown and led, they are times of feeling and realizing My Presence. Does the branch continually ask the Vine to supply it with sap, to show it in what direction to grow? No, that comes naturally from the very union with the Vine, and I said, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches."

From the branches hang the choice grapes, giving joy and nourishment to all, but no branch could think that the fruit, the grapes, were of its shaping and making.

No! the grapes are the fruit of the Vine, the Parent-Plant.  The work of the branch is to provide a channel for the life-flow.

So, My children, union with Me is the one great overwhelming necessity. All else follows so naturally, and union with Me may be the result of just consciousness of My Presence. Be not too ready to speak to others.  Never make yourselves do this.

Pray always that the need may be apparent, if you are to do this, and the guidance very plain. My Spirit has been driven out by the words of men.  Words, words, words.  Many have called Me Lord, Lord, who have not done the things that I said.

Discourage too much talk. Deeds live, and re-echo down the ages -- words perish. As Paul: Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, . . . And have not charity, I am nothing....

Remember that rarely to the human heart do I speak in words. Man will see Me in My works done through you, meet Me in the atmosphere of Love and self-effacement.  Do not feel that you have to speak

When man ceased to commune with his God simply and naturally, he took refuge in words—words.  Babel resulted.  Then God wanted to do away with man from the earth.  Rely less on words.  Always remember that speech is of the senses.  So make it your servant, never your Master.

"And that ye study to be quiet." 1 Thessalonians 4:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/24/23

# The Warning Against Desiring Spiritual Success

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Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you… —[Luke 10:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+10%3A20)

Worldliness is not the trap that most endangers us as Christian workers; nor is it sin. The trap we fall into is extravagantly desiring spiritual success; that is, success measured by, and patterned after, the form set by this religious age in which we now live. Never seek after anything other than the approval of God, and always be willing to go “outside the camp, bearing His reproach” ([Hebrews 13:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+13:13)). In [Luke 10:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10:20), Jesus told the disciples not to rejoice in successful service, and yet this seems to be the one thing in which most of us do rejoice. We have a commercialized view— we count how many souls have been saved and sanctified, we thank God, and then we think everything is all right. Yet our work only begins where God’s grace has laid the foundation. Our work is not to save souls, but to disciple them. Salvation and sanctification are the work of God’s sovereign grace, and our work as His disciples is to disciple others’ lives until they are totally yielded to God. One life totally devoted to God is of more value to Him than one hundred lives which have been simply awakened by His Spirit. As workers for God, we must reproduce our own kind spiritually, and those lives will be God’s testimony to us as His workers. God brings us up to a standard of life through His grace, and we are responsible for reproducing that same standard in others.

Unless the worker lives a life that “is hidden with Christ in God” ([Colossians 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3:3)), he is apt to become an irritating dictator to others, instead of an active, living disciple. Many of us are dictators, dictating our desires to individuals and to groups. But Jesus never dictates to us in that way. Whenever our Lord talked about discipleship, He always prefaced His words with an “if,” never with the forceful or dogmatic statement— “You must.” Discipleship carries with it an option.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ can afford to be misunderstood; we cannot. Our weakness lies in always wanting to vindicate ourselves. The Place of Help

# CCEL – 4/24/23

**The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.**—[GEN. 21:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.21.html" \l "Gen.21.1)

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.—David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.—God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.—I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.—There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: all came to pass.

He is faithful that promised.—Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

[Psa. 62:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.62.html" \l "Ps.62.8). -[I Sam. 30:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.30.html" \l "iSam.30.6). -[Gen. 50:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.50.html" \l "Gen.50.24). -[Acts. 7:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.7.html" \l "Acts.7.34),[36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.7.html" \l "Acts.7.36). -[Josh. 21:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Josh.21.html" \l "Josh.21.45).[Heb. 10:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.23). -[Num. 23:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.23.html" \l "Num.23.19). -[Matt. 24:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.24.html" \l "Matt.24.35). -[Isa. 40:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.8).

“And because of all this we make a sure covenant.” **[Nehemiah 9:38](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.9.html" \l "Neh.9.38)**

There are many occasions in our experience when we may very rightly, and with benefit, renew our covenant with God. After recovery from sickness when, like Hezekiah, we have had a new term of years added to our life, we may fitly do it. After any deliverance from trouble, when our joys bud forth anew, let us again visit the foot of the cross, and renew our consecration. Especially, let us do this after any sin which has grieved the Holy Spirit, or brought dishonour upon the cause of God; let us then look to that blood which can make us whiter than snow, and again offer ourselves unto the Lord. We should not only let our troubles confirm our dedication to God, but our prosperity should do the same. If we ever meet with occasions which deserve to be called “crowning mercies” then, surely, if he hath crowned us, we ought also to crown our God; let us bring forth anew all the jewels of the divine regalia which have been stored in the jewel-closet of our heart, and let our God sit upon the throne of our love, arrayed in royal apparel. If we would learn to profit by our prosperity, we should not need so much adversity. If we would gather from a kiss all the good it might confer upon us, we should not so often smart under the rod. Have we lately received some blessing which we little expected? Has the Lord put our feet in a large room? Can we sing of mercies multiplied? Then this is the day to put our hand upon the horns of the altar, and say, “Bind me here, my God; bind me here with cords, even forever.” Inasmuch as we need the fulfilment of new promises from God, let us offer renewed prayers that our old vows may not be dishonoured. Let us this morning make with him a sure covenant, because of the pains of Jesus which for the last month we have been considering with gratitude.

# Word Live – 4/24/23

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# Scripture Union – 4/24/23

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# Today in the Word – 4/24/23

# Remember!

**Read:** [**Leviticus 23:5–43**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3a5%e2%80%9343)

5The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. 6On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord’s Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. 7On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 8For seven days present a food offering to the Lord. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.’”

#### **Offering the Firstfruits**

9The Lord said to Moses, 10“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. 11He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. 12On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the Lord a lamb a year old without defect, 13together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3416a)] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil—a food offering presented to the Lord, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3416b)] of wine. 14You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

#### **The Festival of Weeks**

15“‘From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. 16Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. 17From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the Lord. 18Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the Lord, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings—a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. 19Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3422c)] and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. 20The priest is to wave the two lambs before the Lord as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the Lord for the priest. 21On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

22“‘When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God.’”

#### **The Festival of Trumpets**

23The Lord said to Moses, 24“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. 25Do no regular work, but present a food offering to the Lord.’”

#### **The Day of Atonement**

26The Lord said to Moses, 27“The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3430d)] and present a food offering to the Lord. 28Do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God. 29Those who do not deny themselves on that day must be cut off from their people. 30I will destroy from among their people anyone who does any work on that day. 31You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. 32It is a day of sabbath rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.”

#### **The Festival of Tabernacles**

33The Lord said to Moses, 34“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord’s Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. 35The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. 36For seven days present food offerings to the Lord, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the Lord. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.

37(“‘These are the Lord’s appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings to the Lord—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. 38These offerings are in addition to those for the Lord’s Sabbaths and[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3441e)] in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the Lord.)

39“‘So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the Lord for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest. 40On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. 41Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. 42Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters 43so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 23:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3416) That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms; also in verse 17
2. [Leviticus 23:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3416) That is, about 1 quart or about 1 liter
3. [Leviticus 23:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3422) Or purification offering
4. [Leviticus 23:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3430) Or and fast; similarly in verses 29 and 32
5. [Leviticus 23:38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A5%E2%80%9343+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3441) Or These festivals are in addition to the Lord’s Sabbaths, and these offerings are

One of the most frequent commands in Scripture is “Remember!” God knows we are prone to forget. In Scripture, forgetting is considered a moral failure (Deut. 4:23). God is not concerned with everyday forgetfulness like trying to remember where you put your car keys. Rather, He is concerned with deep relational forgetfulness, forgetting who He is and what He has done (Deut. 6:12).

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26

To help Israel remember, God instituted a calendar. Israel’s life would be punctuated by breaks in the year where people would stop their normal work. They would remember God’s deliverance from Egypt through the 10 plagues at Passover (Lev. 23:5). They would remember the haste in which they left Egypt in the Festival of Unleavened Bread (v. 6). They would remember God’s provision at harvest time in the Festivals of Firstfruits and Weeks (vv. 9–20). The first day of the seventh month was a holy day of rest and remembrance marked by the blowing of a ram’s horn (vv. 23–25). The Day of Atonement was a solemn day of fasting and mourning over sin while the priest atoned for the sin of the people (vv. 26–32). Finally, the Festival of Tabernacles commemorated the Lord’s provision after the Exodus (vv. 33–44). These events reminded Israel of who God is and helped pass on that knowledge to their children (v. 43).

These festivals provide important background for many New Testament practices. The Last Supper was held on Passover (Matt. 26:17). The Holy Spirit descended upon the church at Pentecost (Acts 2). Paul describes Jesus as the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep,” pointing to the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). When we celebrate communion, we remember what Christ has done and anticipate His second coming (1 Cor. 11:25–26).

**Apply the Word**

Why not make a remembering calendar of your own? In what ways has God shown His goodness to you and your loved ones? Maybe in addition to celebrating birthdays or anniversaries, we can also celebrate remembering!

## **Pray with Us**

Lord, we remember all the ways You have provided for us, comforted us, and opened our eyes to the truth. We are indebted to You for every good thing, and it is a joy to be indebted to a loving God like You!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/24/23

# String Too Short to Use

**Read:** [Exodus 16:21–30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2016.21%E2%80%9330)

21Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. 22On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+16%3A21%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1970a)] for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. 23He said to them, “This is what the Lord commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’”

24So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. 25“Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a sabbath to the Lord. You will not find any of it on the ground today. 26Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

27Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. 28Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+16%3A21%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1976b)] refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? 29Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day; no one is to go out.” 30So the people rested on the seventh day.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Exodus 16:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+16%3A21%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-1970) That is, possibly about 6 pounds or about 2.8 kilograms
2. [Exodus 16:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+16%3A21%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-1976) The Hebrew is plural.

I will rain down bread from heaven for you. [Exodus 16:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2016.4)

Aunt Margaret’s frugality was legendary. After she passed away, her nieces began the nostalgically bittersweet task of sorting her belongings. In a drawer, neatly arrayed inside a small plastic bag, they discovered an assortment of small pieces of string. The label read: “String too short to use.”

What would motivate someone to keep and categorize something they knew to be of no use? Perhaps this person once knew extreme deprivation.

When the Israelites fled slavery in Egypt, they left behind a life of hardship. But they soon forgot God’s miraculous hand in their exodus and started complaining about the lack of food.

God wanted them to trust Him. He provided manna for their desert diet, telling Moses, “The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day” ([Exodus 16:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2016.4)). God also instructed them to gather twice as much on the sixth day, because on the Sabbath no manna would fall (vv. 5, 25). Some of the Israelites listened. Some didn’t, with predictable results (vv. 27–28).

In times of plenty and times of desperation, it’s tempting to try to cling, to hoard, in a desperate attempt at control. There’s no need to take everything into our own frantic hands. No need to “save scraps of string”—or to hoard anything at all. Our faith is in God, who has promised, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” ([Hebrews 13:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2013.5)).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what ways do you sometimes take things into your own hands? How has God proven Himself to be faithful to you in the past?

Father, help me to take You at Your word and to trust You with everything.

#### **Insight**

About a month after the Israelites left Egypt ([Exodus 16:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2016.1)), they ran out of food (v. 3). God provided them with “bread from heaven” (v. 4) in the morning and “meat to eat in the evening” (v. 8). Not knowing what this bread was, they asked, “What is it?” (v. 15). They called it “manna” (v. 31) because it sounded like the Hebrew for “What is it?” Manna consisted of “thin flakes,” was “white like coriander seed” (an herb), and “tasted like wafers made with honey” (vv. 14, 31). [Numbers 11:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2011.8) says that “it tasted like something made with olive oil.”

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 4/24/23

# I Go Before

You can never perish, My children, because within you is the Life of Life. The Life that down the ages has kept My servants, in peril, in adversity, in sorrow.

Once you are born of the Spirit, that is your Life's breath. You must never doubt, never worry, but step by step, the way to freedom must be trodden. See that you walk it with Me.

This means no worry, no anxiety, but it does not mean no effort. When My Disciples told Me that they had toiled all night and taken nothing, I did not fill the boat with fishes without effort on their part. No! My Command stood. "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

Their lives were endangered, the ship nearly sank, the help of their fellows had to be summoned, and there were broken nets to mend. Any one of these troubles might have made them feel My help was not for them. And yet as they sat on the shore and mended those nets, they would see My Love and Care.

Man rises by effort

The man who reaches the mountain height by the help of train or car has learned no climber's lesson. But remember this does not mean no Guide -- this does not mean that My Spirit is not supplying wisdom and strength. How often, when sometimes you little know it, do I go before you to prepare the way, to soften the heart here, to overrule there.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." John 10:28