# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/19/22

# 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 – 4/19/22

**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 – 4/19/22

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

# Scripture Union – 4/19/22

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

# Today in the Word – 4/19/22

# Freedom to Fall

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 34:8–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+34%3a8%e2%80%9317)

### **Freedom for Slaves**

8The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves. 9Everyone was to free their Hebrew slaves, both male and female; no one was to hold a fellow Hebrew in bondage. 10So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. 11But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again.

12Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 13“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said, 14‘Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have served you six years, you must let them go free.’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+34%3A8%E2%80%9317+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19816a)] Your ancestors, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me. 15Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to your own people. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. 16But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again.

17“Therefore this is what the Lord says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the Lord—‘freedom’ to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 34:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+34%3A8%E2%80%9317+&version=NIV#en-NIV-19816) Deut. 15:12

African Americans who want to learn more about their ancestry have, as of 2016, a new database they can consult. The Freedman’s Bureau Project digitized post-Civil War historical records in order to create a searchable database of nearly 1.8 million emancipated slaves.

But now you have turned around and profaned my name. Jeremiah 34:16

When Jerusalem was under siege, the people had vowed to the Lord that they would free all their Hebrew slaves (vv. 8–10). This was a formal covenant agreed to by King Zedekiah and all the people. Why? It started out as an act of repentance and returning to the Lord (v. 15). The Law banned holding fellow Hebrews as slaves for longer than six years. They were to be freed in the seventh year (v. 14; Deut. 15:12). At that time, slavery as an economic practice...was a way for the poor to survive, so God allowed it, which did not mean He approved of it.

They kept their promise and freed the slaves, temporarily. When the Egyptians came on the scene in 588 B.C., the Babylonians temporarily lifted the siege to attack them. At that point, King Zedekiah and the people broke their vow and enslaved the people they had just freed (v. 11). So much for repentance—they went straight back to their rebellious ways! (v. 17).

Through Jeremiah, God condemned them for their faithlessness. He pointedly reminded them that He’d freed their entire nation from slavery (v. 13), so why were their hearts so hard? By breaking their promise, they’d profaned God’s name, the opposite of bringing Him glory (v. 16). As a result, they received from the Lord a sentence of ironic justice—the same “freedom” they’d given their slaves. They were now free to die “by the sword, plague and famine” when the Babylonians returned (v. 17).

**Apply the Word**

As we’ve seen throughout this study, God hates sin, but He loves us. In order to receive His forgiveness, we need to be in the daily habit of confessing our sins to Him (1 John 1:9).

## **Pray with Us**

Righteous God, we approach You with humble repentance. Forgive us for the evil we commit and the right we fail to carry out. Thank You for Your loving correction. We rejoice that our sins are covered by the blood of Christ!

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/19/22

# Come and Worship

**Read:** [**Deuteronomy 31:9–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.9%E2%80%9313)

### **Public Reading of the Law**

9So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. 10Then Moses commanded them: “At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, 11when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. 12Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. 13Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns. [Deuteronomy 31:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.12)

As they sang praise songs together in the multi-generational worship service, many experienced joy and peace. But not a frazzled mother. As she jiggled her baby, who was on the verge of crying, she held the songbook for her five-year-old while trying to stop her toddler from running off. Then an older gentleman sitting behind her offered to walk the toddler around the church and a young woman motioned that she could hold the songbook for the eldest child. Within two minutes, the mother’s experience was transformed and she could exhale, close her eyes, and worship God.

God has always intended that all His people worship Him—men and women, old and young, longtime believers, and newcomers. As Moses blessed the tribes of Israel before they entered the promised land, he urged them all to meet together, “men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns,” so that they could “listen and learn to fear the Lord your God” and to follow His commands ([Deuteronomy 31:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.12)). It honors God when we make it possible for His people to worship Him together, no matter our stage of life.

That morning in church, the mother, the older gentleman, and the young woman each experienced God’s love through giving and receiving. Perhaps the next time you’re at church, you too could either extend God’s love through an offer of help or you could be the one accepting the act of grace.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you experienced the body of Christ as encompassing many generations and people groups? How have you given and received God’s love while at church?

Loving Jesus, You long that all people would feel welcomed when they come to worship You. Help us to be those who notice others and reach out in love.

#### **Insight**

The hopeful picture that Moses paints in [Deuteronomy 31:9–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.9%E2%80%9313) of Israel gathered to hear the law of God foreshadows sadness. Throughout the Old Testament, it’s disheartening to notice that Israel never followed this command that Moses gave the people until after the exile.

We get reports of the abject failure of the priesthood ([1 Samuel 2:22–36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%202.22%E2%80%9336); [8:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%208.1%E2%80%933)), but nowhere until the time of Ezra do we find the priests teaching the people to follow God ([Nehemiah 8:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Neh%208.1%E2%80%933)). This is the first recorded time Israel obeyed Moses’ directions after nearly a millennium.

Then the zeal of Ezra eventually led to the increasingly legalistic approach of the Pharisees. Israel always struggled with the law—first ignoring it and then making it more than it should be. The true task of following God’s law, as Jesus said, is summed up in loving God first and others as ourselves ([Matthew 22:37–39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2022.37%E2%80%9339)).

By: [**Jed Ostoich**](https://odb.org/author/jedostoich/)

# God Calling – 4/19/22

# 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 – 4/20/22

# 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 – 4/20/22

**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 – 4/20/22

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

# Scripture Union – 4/20/22

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# Today in the Word – 4/20/22

# A Horrifying Act

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 36:19–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+36%3a19%e2%80%9331)

19Then the officials said to Baruch, “You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don’t let anyone know where you are.”

20After they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, they went to the king in the courtyard and reported everything to him. 21The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. 22It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. 23Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe’s knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. 24The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. 25Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. 26Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord had hidden them.

27After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah’s dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 28“Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up. 29Also tell Jehoiakim king of Judah, ‘This is what the Lord says: You burned that scroll and said, “Why did you write on it that the king of Babylon would certainly come and destroy this land and wipe from it both man and beast?” 30Therefore this is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. 31I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened.’”

Who is the bestselling novelist in history? Agatha Christie, the mystery writer! Her novels have sold more than one billion copies in English and another one billion in more than 100 other languages. An estimated 32 million Americans have read at least one of her books, including such classics as Death on the Nile and Murder on the Orient Express.

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Psalm 119:97

Only Shakespeare and the Bible have sold more copies. Scripture is of course the most valuable book ever written in more ways than one. But this didn’t stop King Jehoiakim (605 B.C.) from showing disrespect and contempt for the word of the Lord.

God gave Jeremiah a message of judgment to deliver to the king. His friend and secretary, Baruch, wrote it down on a scroll and took it to godly palace officials. Knowing how the king was likely to respond, they took steps to hide the two men and to protect the scroll. Nonetheless, the king ordered it to be brought and read in his presence.

As this was done, King Jehoiakim deliberately took a knife, cut off each section of the scroll as it was read, and burned it in the fire that was warming the room (v. 23). The entire scroll was destroyed in this way. Stunningly, no one was disturbed by the scroll’s content or by the king’s profane actions. We need to feel the depths of sinfulness behind this horrifying act. The king showed absolutely no fear of the Lord (v. 24). In fact, he ordered Jeremiah and Baruch arrested. God, however, protected them, in part through their courageous friends (vv. 19, 25–26).

God caused the king’s actions to come to nothing. The scroll was rewritten (v. 28). The message would come true regardless. And further, Jehoiakim would be severely punished for his evil deed (vv. 29–31).

**Apply the Word**

As believers, we have to love and respect God’s Word (Ps. 119:97; 2 Tim. 3:16). It holds a place of high importance in our lives. Why not invite a friend to know God’s Word by sharing Today in the Word with them?

## **Pray with Us**

Your Word is life. Because we so easily take it for granted, we focus on the gift of Scripture, Your chosen instrument of self-revelation. Filled with eternal truth, Your Word enables us to know You.

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/20/22

# Love Is Worth the Risk

[John 21:15–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2021.15%E2%80%9319)

### Jesus Reinstates Peter

15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

If you love me, keep my commands. [John 14:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.15)

After a friend ended our decade-long friendship without explanation, I began slipping back into my old habit of keeping people at arms’ length. While processing my grief, I pulled a tattered copy of The Four Loves by C. S. Lewis off my shelf. Lewis makes a powerful observation about love requiring vulnerability. He states there’s “no safe investment” when a person risks loving. He suggests that loving “anything [will lead to] your heart being wrung and possibly broken.” Reading those words changed how I read the account of the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection ([John 21:1–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2021.1%E2%80%9314)), after Peter had betrayed Him not once but three times (18:15–27).

Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” (21:15).

After experiencing the sting of betrayal and rejection, Jesus spoke to Peter with courage not fear, strength not weakness, selflessness not desperation. He displayed mercy not wrath by confirming His willingness to love.

Scripture reveals that “Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ ” (v. 17). But when Jesus asked Peter to prove his love by loving others (vv. 15–17) and following Him (v. 19), He invited all His disciples to risk loving unconditionally. Each of us will have to answer when Jesus asks, “Do you love me?” Our answer will impact how we love others.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Why would a loving God ask His beloved children to risk being hurt for the sake of loving others like Jesus did? How can an intimate relationship with God help you feel safe enough to risk loving?

Loving God, please break down every wall that keeps me from being vulnerable so I can love You and others with Spirit-empowered courage, compassion, and consistency.

#### Insight

The two verbs translated “love” in the Greek New Testament are phileō (“to be a friend of” [person or object] or to “have tender affection for”) and agapaō (“love founded in admiration, veneration, esteem”).

Both words are used in [John 21:15–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2021.15%E2%80%9316). Jesus uses agapaō while Peter uses phileō. In verse 17, however, both Jesus and Peter use phileō. Some scholars find significance in the use of these two different words in [John 21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2021) while others don’t. Commentator Craig Keener notes: “The two Greek words for ‘love’ here are used interchangeably elsewhere in John.”

Peter had denied Christ three times (see [John 18:15–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2018.15%E2%80%9318), [25–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2018.25%E2%80%9327)). How gracious of Jesus to prompt him to affirm his love three times. Was Peter’s love authentic? Yes, authentic enough for him to live a life and die a death by which he would glorify God (see 21:18–19).

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

# God Calling – 4/20/22

# 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 – 4/21/22

# 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 – 4/21/22

**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 – 4/21/22

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

# Scripture Union – 4/21/22

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# Today in the Word – 4/21/22

# Pain and Suffering

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 37:11–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+37%3a11%e2%80%9321)

11After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh’s army, 12Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. 13But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him and said, “You are deserting to the Babylonians!”

14“That’s not true!” Jeremiah said. “I am not deserting to the Babylonians.” But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. 15They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.

16Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. 17Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, “Is there any word from the Lord?”

“Yes,” Jeremiah replied, “you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon.”

18Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “What crime have I committed against you or your attendants or this people, that you have put me in prison? 19Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, ‘The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land’? 20But now, my lord the king, please listen. Let me bring my petition before you: Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, or I will die there.”

21King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given a loaf of bread from the street of the bakers each day until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

“I am not a theologian or a scholar,” Elisabeth Elliot once said, “but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary to all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God.”

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 1 Peter 3:14

Pain and suffering were a regular part of the life of Jeremiah. The timeframe in today’s reading is the same as April 19. The Babylonians had temporarily withdrawn from their siege of Jerusalem in order to fight the Egyptians (v. 11). Judah experienced a brief reprieve, during which Jeremiah planned to travel to his hometown care for family business (v. 12). At the city gate, however, he was falsely accused of deserting, arrested, beaten, and imprisoned (vv. 13–15). This might have been due to his unpopular prophecies and advice to surrender rather than resist (Jer. 21:9; see April 13).

King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah privately for a word from the Lord (vv. 16–17), which might have been an implied invitation for the prophet to change his message to gain his freedom. But God had not changed His mind, and Jeremiah remained faithful even under these circumstances. He boldly pointed out the injustice of his imprisonment— he’d committed no crime (vv. 18–19). The king didn’t release him, but perhaps out of guilt he transferred him to a better prison (vv. 20–21).

Suffering and persecution were a theme in Jeremiah’s life. For the true follower of God, suffering and persecution at the hands of the world are inevitable (John 15:18–21).

**Apply the Word**

If you’d like to do further study on Jeremiah, we recommend [Courage to Stand: Jeremiah’s Battle Plan for Pagan Times](https://www.amazon.com/Courage-Stand-Jeremiahs-Battle-Pagan/dp/1581340125) by Philip Graham Ryken. He’s also written [Jeremiah and Lamentations: From Sorrow to Hope](https://www.christianbook.com/jeremiah-and-lamentations-from-sorrow-hope/philip-ryken/9781433548802/pd/548802) in the Preaching the Word commentary series.

## **Pray with Us**

Lord, You warned us that we would face troubles in life. We pray that these trials will prove the genuineness of our faith, “of greater worth than gold,” for the praise, glory, and honor of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6–7).

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/21/22

# Really Alive

 **Read:** [**Revelation 21:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.1%E2%80%937)

### **A New Heaven and a New Earth**

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-31055a)] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-31058b)] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

6He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Revelation 21:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-31055) Isaiah 65:17
2. [Revelation 21:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-31058) Isaiah 25:8

There will be no more death. [Revelation 21:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.4)

Since it was the week after Easter, our five-year-old son, Wyatt, had heard plenty of resurrection talk. He always had questions—usually real stumpers. I was driving, and he was buckled into his seat behind me. Wyatt peered out the window, deep in thought. “Daddy,” he said, pausing and preparing to ask me a tough one. “When Jesus brings us back to life, are we going to be really alive—or just alive in our heads?”

This is the question so many of us carry, whether or not we have the courage to speak it aloud. Is God really going to heal us? Is He really going to raise us from the dead? Is He really going to keep all His promises?

The apostle John describes our certain future as “a new heaven and a new earth” ([Revelation 21:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.1)). In that holy city, “God himself will be with [us] and be [our] God” (v. 3). Because of Christ’s victory, we’re promised a future where there’s no more tears, no evil arrayed against God and His people. In this good future, “There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (v. 4).

In other words, in the future God promises, we’ll be really alive. We’ll be so alive that our life now will seem a mere shadow.

By:  [Winn Collier](https://odb.org/author/wcollier/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you experience death in your life? If God promises that death is doomed and we’re going to really live, how does this renew your hope?

God, You said death will meet its end and You promise me genuine life. Thank You.

#### **Insight**

Today’s passage gives us a glimpse of heaven, describing it as a physical place ([Revelation 21:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.1%E2%80%932)). Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us ([John 14:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.2%E2%80%933)), and this promise is fulfilled in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, ([Revelation 21:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.2)). While it’s a great comfort that heaven is a perfect place (v. 4), the most important thing is that it’s the dwelling place of God (v. 3).

In this final vision of the beginning of eternity (21:1–22:9), John hears Christ declaring, “It is done” (21:6). The New Living Translation renders it, “It is finished!” echoing Christ’s victorious cry from the cross ([John 19:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.30)). Sin’s curse will one day be completely removed and reversed ([Revelation 21:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.4%E2%80%935); see [Genesis 3:16–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%203.16%E2%80%9319)).

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

# God Calling – 4/21/22

# 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 – 4/22/22

# 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 – 4/22/22

**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 – 4/22/22

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

# Scripture Union – 4/22/22

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# Today in the Word – 4/22/22

# The Worst Year

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 39:1–14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3a1%e2%80%9314)

39 1In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. 2And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. 3Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon. 4When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king’s garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19928a)]

5But the Babylonian[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19929b)] army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. 6There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7Then he put out Zedekiah’s eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

8The Babylonians[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19932c)] set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. 9Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city, along with those who had gone over to him, and the rest of the people. 10But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people, who owned nothing; and at that time he gave them vineyards and fields.

11Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard: 12“Take him and look after him; don’t harm him but do for him whatever he asks.” 13So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, Nebushazban a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officers of the king of Babylon 14sent and had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him back to his home. So he remained among his own people.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 39:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#en-NIV-19928) Or the Jordan Valley
2. [Jeremiah 39:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#en-NIV-19929) Or Chaldean
3. [Jeremiah 39:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39%3A1%E2%80%9314+&version=NIV#en-NIV-19932) Or Chaldeans

536 A.D. might have been the worst year in world history. A volcanic eruption in Iceland spread ash across the northern hemisphere, leading to a dark fog that covered Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia for eighteen months. Temperatures fell so much that it snowed in China during the summer. Crops failed and people starved. Further eruptions and the bubonic plague piled disaster upon disaster.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

For the Jews, 586 B.C. was the worst year in Israel’s history. Following two-and-a-half years of siege, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian army (vv. 1–3). The city of David was conquered, her gates destroyed, her walls torn down. The Temple of Solomon, a symbol of God’s presence and favor, was burned to the ground. King Zedekiah tried to flee but was captured and forced to watch his sons killed before the enemy blinded him (vv. 4–7). The people of the city, excluding only the poorest, were taken into exile (vv. 8–10).

When the city fell, Jeremiah was still imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard. His prophecies were known to the Babylonians, perhaps through his letter to the first group of exiles (Jer. 29; see April 16). As a result, he was given freedom to go wherever he wished (vv. 11–14). He was put into the custody of Gedaliah, the imperial governor. Although apparently friendly to Jeremiah, he was soon assassinated (Jer. 41:1–3). The fall of Jerusalem is so significant it’s narrated four times: 2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 39 and 52. As a prophet, Jeremiah was vindicated since his messages were fulfilled, but as a Jew, he was overcome with grief. Now you know why he is called “the weeping prophet.”

**Apply the Word**

Jeremiah displayed uncompromising loyalty to the Lord. He obediently proclaimed God’s truth, even when the message was distressing and resulted in suffering. How about us? Are we committed to Christ no matter what?

## **Pray with Us**

We are amazed by Jeremiah’s faithfulness to his thankless and heartbreaking role as a prophet. Lord, give us faithfulness like Jeremiah’s, so that we too will obey even when we have no hope of earthly rewards.

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/22/22

# Gratitude on Earth Day

 **Read:** [**Genesis 2:4–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202.4%E2%80%9310)

### **Adam and Eve**

4This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

5Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-36a)] and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, 6but streams[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-37b)] came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. 7Then the Lord God formed a man[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-38c)] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Genesis 2:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#en-NIV-36) Or land; also in verse 6
2. [Genesis 2:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#en-NIV-37) Or mist
3. [Genesis 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4%E2%80%9310+%2C+15&version=NIV#en-NIV-38) The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam (see verse 20).

[**Genesis 2:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202.4%E2%80%9310)[**15**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%202.15)

15The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. [Genesis 2:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202.15)

Earth Day is an annual event observed on April 22. In recent years, more than one billion people in about two hundred countries have taken part in educational and service activities. Each year, Earth Day is a reminder of the importance of caring for our amazing planet. But the mandate to care for the environment is far older than this annual event—it goes all the way back to creation.

In Genesis, we learn that God created the entire universe and formed the earth as a place for humans to dwell. Not only did He fashion the mountain peaks and lush plains, God also created the garden of Eden, a beautiful place providing food, shelter, and beauty for its inhabitants ([Genesis 2:8–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202.8%E2%80%939)).

After breathing life into His most important creation, humans, God placed them in this garden (vv. 8, 22) and gave them the responsibility “to work it and take care of it” (v. 15). After Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, caring for God’s creation became more difficult (3:17–19), but to this day God Himself cares for our planet and its creatures ([Psalm 65:9–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2065.9%E2%80%9313)) and asks us to do the same ([Proverbs 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2012.10)).

Whether we live in crowded cities or rural areas, we all have ways we can care for the areas God has entrusted to us. And as we tend the earth, may it be an act of gratitude to Him for this beautiful planet.

By:  [Lisa M. Samra](https://odb.org/author/lisasamra/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What part of creation takes your breath away? How might you care for the part of the earth God has entrusted to you?

Creator God, You’ve entrusted to us a marvelous planet that sustains and astonishes me. Please help me to respond to Your gift by caring for it as a way to express thankfulness for Your provision.

#### **Insight**

Ancient Hebrew literature often conveyed meaning through intentional wordplays. In [Genesis 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202), the Hebrew word translated “man”—’adam ([Genesis 2:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%202.7)) is very similar to the Hebrew word translated “ground” (vv. 5–7)—’adamah. If a modern translation attempted to capture this wordplay, it might translate “man” (’adam) as “earthling” and “ground” (’adamah) as “earth.” By pairing these words, the passage communicates key insights into human nature. Humanity was formed from the earth or ground (v. 7) and so is intimately connected to it. But humanity was also given a unique relationship to God, who gave human beings the “breath of life” (v. 7). Formed from the earth, human beings are also those to whom creation’s care is entrusted (v. 15).

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

# God Calling – 4/22/22

# 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 – 4/23/22

# 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 – 4/23/22

**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 – 4/23/22

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

# Scripture Union – 4/23/22

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

# Today in the Word – 4/23/22

# A Mixed Blessing

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 40:1–6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+40%3a1%e2%80%936)

### **Jeremiah Freed**

40 The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had released him at Ramah. He had found Jeremiah bound in chains among all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried into exile to Babylon. 2When the commander of the guard found Jeremiah, he said to him, “The Lord your God decreed this disaster for this place. 3And now the Lord has brought it about; he has done just as he said he would. All this happened because you people sinned against the Lord and did not obey him. 4But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don’t come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please.” 5However, before Jeremiah turned to go,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+40%3A1%E2%80%936+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-19947a)] Nebuzaradan added, “Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the towns of Judah, and live with him among the people, or go anywhere else you please.”

Then the commander gave him provisions and a present and let him go. 6So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people who were left behind in the land.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 40:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+40%3A1%E2%80%936+&version=NIV#en-NIV-19947) Or Jeremiah answered

The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. was a tragic turning point in Israel’s history. It was also the climax of Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry. God’s judgment had come to pass. He’d obeyed God and spoken truth, but the fulfillment of his messages grieved him deeply. In response, he wrote the book of Lamentations. These poems connect the justice, sovereignty, and love of God and ultimately affirm that His mercies are “new every morning” (Lam. 3:21–26).

Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. Lamentations 3:22

The Babylonians had heard of Jeremiah and his prophecies (vv. 2–3), which turned out to be a mixed blessing for him. He wasn’t forced into exile. They set him free to go wherever he liked (v. 4).

What were his options? He could travel to the enemy city of Babylon, where his fellow Jews were being taken, but many of them viewed him as a kind of traitor or collaborator because he’d foretold their defeat. Or he could stay, with Jerusalem occupied, the Temple burned, the walls torn down, and the land empty of all but the poorest people. It must have felt like a lose-lose choice. What happened? Simply put, his ministry continued. The word of the Lord continued to come to him (v. 1). He decided to stay and advise Gedaliah, the newly appointed imperial governor. The Babylonians gave him “provisions and a present,” that is, the means to survive in a conquered country stripped of its people and resources (vv. 5–6).

The bottom line? God continued to watch over, protect, and provide for His prophet. The Babylonians thought they were in control, but it was the Lord. The pagan world superpower was following God’s plan exactly. This is why Jeremiah could continue to trust in the Lord even while lamenting the loss of all he’d ever known.

**Apply the Word**

No matter what you’re facing or experiencing today, God is in control in your life as well. Say with Jeremiah: “The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him” (Lam 3:25).

## **Pray with Us**

With Jeremiah we pray, “‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’...It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lam. 3:24, 26). Even when we experience earth’s pain, our hope remains eternal.

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/23/22

# What Counts

 **Read:** [**Romans 14:13–23**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2014.13%E2%80%9323)

3Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

19Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

22So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. [Romans 14:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2014.19)

My friend recounted how she’d pointedly been asked by a fellow believer and colleague which political party she belonged to. His aim in asking the question seemed to be to predict whether he agreed with her on any number of issues currently dividing their community. In an effort to find common ground between them, she simply replied, “Since we’re both believers, I’d rather focus on our unity in Christ.”

People were also divided in Paul’s day, though over different issues. Topics such as what foods were permissible to eat and what days were considered holy brought disagreement among the Christians in Rome. Despite being “fully convinced in their own mind” on whichever position they held, Paul reminds them of their common ground: living for Jesus ([Romans 14:5–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2014.5%E2%80%939)). Instead of passing judgment on one another, he encouraged them to “do what leads to peace and to mutual edification” (v. 19).

In an era when many countries, churches, and communities are divided over issues large and small, we can point one another to the unifying truth of Christ’s work on the cross to secure our life with Him eternally. Paul’s reminder that we ought not “destroy the work of God” (v. 20) with our individual positions is as timely today as it was 2,000 years ago. Instead of passing judgment on one another, we can act in love and live in a way that honors our brothers and sisters.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When did a difference of opinion cause division between you and another believer? If you resolved your differences, how did you do so?

Jesus, thank You for saving me. Forgive me for the times I get distracted by lesser issues and allow division to occur between myself and other believers. Help me to bring unity through focusing on You.

#### **Insight**

Two of the most difficult responsibilities for believers in Christ are seen in Paul’s challenge in [Romans 14:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2014.19)—we’re to pursue the things that make for peace and the things that edify one another. The first is difficult because there are many divisive elements in the life of the church. A heart of peace, which is the fruit of wisdom (as seen in [James 3:13–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.13%E2%80%9318)), is necessary if we’re to display relationships that honor God. The goal of edification is difficult because it’s easy to look out only for our own interests. Keeping our responsibilities to one another is essential if we’re to display Jesus in our world.

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

# God Calling – 4/23/22

# 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 – 4/24/22

# 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 – 4/24/22

**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 – 4/24/22

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# Scripture Union – 4/24/22

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

# Today in the Word – 4/24/22

# Conspiracy Theory

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 43:1–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+43%3a1%e2%80%937)

43 When Jeremiah had finished telling the people all the words of the Lord their God—everything the Lord had sent him to tell them— 2Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, “You are lying! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, ‘You must not go to Egypt to settle there.’ 3But Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+43%3A1%E2%80%937+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-20001a)] so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon.”

4So Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers and all the people disobeyed the Lord’s command to stay in the land of Judah. 5Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered. 6They also led away all those whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan—the men, the women, the children and the king’s daughters. And they took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah along with them. 7So they entered Egypt in disobedience to the Lord and went as far as Tahpanhes.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 43:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+43%3A1%E2%80%937+&version=NIV#en-NIV-20001) Or Chaldeans

Basketball player Kyrie Irving made a stir before the 2017 NBA All-Star Game by revealing that he believed in a flat earth. Flat-earthers, as they are called, are convinced that the earth is flat instead of round. Kyrie, along with a number of others, see the available scientific evidence for a round earth as a government deception.

Keep falsehood and lies far from me. Proverbs 30:8

People love conspiracy theories, maybe because they seem more exciting than the truth. That was the case with the Jewish people in today’s reading. They had accused Baruch of inciting Jeremiah to betray them to the Babylonians (v. 3). This idea was ridiculous. Both Jeremiah and Baruch were loyal Jews. The people knew Jeremiah was a true prophet, even if they didn’t like his message. They also knew Baruch had been his faithful friend and secretary for many years. There was no motive for this deception since the Babylonians had already let them go free. Even more, the Babylonians didn’t need their cooperation since they’d won the battle and could do whatever they wished.

What was really happening? The people were once again rejecting the word of the Lord. Following Gedaliah’s assassination, they’d come to Jeremiah asking what to do next. They promised to do whatever God said (Jer. 42:1–6). He told them to stay in the land, and God would bless them. If they went to Egypt, they would die (Jer. 42:7–22).

As we might expect, they broke their vow (vv. 4–7). They chose a conspiracy theory over a direct message from God. Even worse, they doubled down on rebellion and disobedience. They arrogantly (v. 2) accused Jeremiah of lying and Baruch of plotting with the Babylonians, then kidnapped them and fled to Egypt.

**Apply the Word**

It’s easy to ask, “Will they ever learn?” The real question is: Will we ever learn? What is God trying to show us but we’re eyes-closed oblivious? What is He trying to teach us but we’re stubbornly resisting?

## **Pray with Us**

Where have we become hardened against You, All-Knowing God? Pierce us with repentance. Search the darkest places of our hearts and bring our sins to light. Cleanse our thoughts and desires.

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/24/22

# Feeling Dusty

 **Read:** [**Psalm 103:13–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.13%E2%80%9319)

13As a father has compassion on his children,  
    so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;  
14for he knows how we are formed,  
    he remembers that we are dust.  
15The life of mortals is like grass,  
    they flourish like a flower of the field;  
16the wind blows over it and it is gone,  
    and its place remembers it no more.  
17But from everlasting to everlasting  
    the Lord’s love is with those who fear him,  
    and his righteousness with their children’s children—  
18with those who keep his covenant  
    and remember to obey his precepts.

19The Lord has established his throne in heaven,  
    and his kingdom rules over all.

He remembers that we are dust. [Psalm 103:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.14)

When Warren mentioned during our weekly ministry team call that he was “feeling dusty,” I sensed that this was his way of referencing the physical challenges associated with aging and ill-health. For Warren and his wife, both in their late sixties, 2020 included doctors’ visits, surgical procedures, and the rearranging of their home to accommodate in-home care. They were on the other side of the prime of life and they were feeling it.

One doesn’t have to live long before sensing our inadequacies, imperfections, and weaknesses—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. God, in the person of His Son, Jesus, stepped into our fallen world and cares for those who experience the liabilities of human existence ([Psalm 103:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.13)). Furthermore, David wrote, “He knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust” (v. 14). The term dust takes us back to Genesis: “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (2:7).

Are you feeling dusty these days? Welcome to the realities of earthly living. Remember, however, that when we feel most vulnerable, we’re not left alone. Our compassionate God “knows” and “remembers.” He demonstrated His love to us by sending His Son to provide forgiveness for earthly people like you and me. Whatever life may bring, may we trust in Him.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What situations make you aware of your human limitations? How have you seen the hand of God in the midst of your weaknesses?

Father, though in various ways I feel my limitations—my dustiness—help me to be strong in faith and trust You.

#### **Insight**

A key word in [Psalm 103:13–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.13%E2%80%9319) is compassion (Hebrew racham). God is described as having the compassion of a father toward His children (v. 13). This description echoes God’s description of Himself in [Exodus 34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2034), where He reveals His glory to Moses and says, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished” (vv. 6–7). Compassion is the first adjective God uses to describe Himself when He allowed Moses to see Him in a way that no one else had. It’s one of His defining characteristics of His relationship with us.

By: [**J.R. Hudberg**](https://odb.org/author/jrhudberg/)

# God Calling – 4/24/22

# 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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/25/22

# “Ready in Season”

Be ready in season and out of season. —[2 Timothy 4:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Timothy+4%3A2)

Many of us suffer from the unbalanced tendency to “be ready” only “out of season.” The season does not refer to time; it refers to us. This verse says, “Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season.” In other words, we should “be ready” whether we feel like it or not. If we do only what we feel inclined to do, some of us would never do anything. There are some people who are totally unemployable in the spiritual realm. They are spiritually feeble and weak, and they refuse to do anything unless they are supernaturally inspired. The proof that our relationship is right with God is that we do our best whether we feel inspired or not.

One of the worst traps a Christian worker can fall into is to become obsessed with his own exceptional moments of inspiration. When the Spirit of God gives you a time of inspiration and insight, you tend to say, “Now that I’ve experienced this moment, I will always be like this for God.” No, you will not, and God will make sure of that. Those times are entirely the gift of God. You cannot give them to yourself when you choose. If you say you will only be at your best for God, as during those exceptional times, you actually become an intolerable burden on Him. You will never do anything unless God keeps you consciously aware of His inspiration to you at all times. If you make a god out of your best moments, you will find that God will fade out of your life, never to return until you are obedient in the work He has placed closest to you, and until you have learned not to be obsessed with those exceptional moments He has given you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus; and yet He says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love for Him.   So Send I You, 1301 L

# CCEL – 4/25/22

Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins—[MATT. 1:21.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.21)

Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.—That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.—He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.—He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, . . . to give repentance.—Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.—Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

[I John 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.5). -[I Pet. 2:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.24). -[Heb. 7:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.25).[Isa. 53:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.5). -[Luke 24:46,47](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.46). -[Heb. 9:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html" \l "Heb.9.26).[Acts 5:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.5.html#Acts.5.31). -[Acts 13:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.13.html" \l "Acts.13.38). -[I John 2:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.12).

“Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.” **[Song of Solomon 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.10)**

Lo, I hear the voice of my Beloved! He speaks to me! Fair weather is smiling upon the face of the earth, and he would not have me spiritually asleep while nature is all around me awaking from her winter’s rest. He bids me “Rise up,” and well he may; for I have long enough been lying among the pots of worldliness. He is risen, I am risen in him, why then should I cleave unto the dust? From lower loves, desires, pursuits, and aspirations, I would rise towards him. He calls me by the sweet title of “My love,” and counts me fair; this is a good argument for my rising. If he has thus exalted me, and thinks me thus comely, how can I linger in the tents of Kedar and find congenial associates among the sons of men? He bids me “Come away.” Further and further from everything selfish, grovelling, worldly, sinful, he calls me; yea, from the outwardly religious world which knows him not, and has no sympathy with the mystery of the higher life, he calls me. “Come away” has no harsh sound in it to my ear, for what is there to hold me in this wilderness of vanity and sin? O my Lord, would that I could come away, but I am taken among the thorns, and cannot escape from them as I would. I would, if it were possible, have neither eyes, nor ears, nor heart for sin. Thou callest me to thyself by saying “Come away,” and this is a melodious call indeed. To come to thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labour, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes. But Lord, how can a stone rise, how can a lump of clay come away from the horrible pit? O raise me, draw me. Thy grace can do it. Send forth thy Holy Spirit to kindle sacred flames of love in my heart, and I will continue to rise until I leave life and time behind me, and indeed come away.

# Word Live – 4/25/22

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# Scripture Union – 4/25/22

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

# Today in the Word – 4/25/22

# Will They Ever Learn?

**Read:** [**Jeremiah 44:7–23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+44%3a7%e2%80%9323)

7“Now this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Why bring such great disaster on yourselves by cutting off from Judah the men and women, the children and infants, and so leave yourselves without a remnant? 8Why arouse my anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves and make yourselves a curse[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+44%3A7%E2%80%9323+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-20019a)] and an object of reproach among all the nations on earth. 9Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your ancestors and by the kings and queens of Judah and the wickedness committed by you and your wives in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem? 10To this day they have not humbled themselves or shown reverence, nor have they followed my law and the decrees I set before you and your ancestors.

11“Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy all Judah. 12I will take away the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt to settle there. They will all perish in Egypt; they will fall by the sword or die from famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine. They will become a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach. 13I will punish those who live in Egypt with the sword, famine and plague, as I punished Jerusalem. 14None of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, to which they long to return and live; none will return except a few fugitives.”

15Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present—a large assembly—and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah, 16“We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord! 17We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. 18But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine.”

19The women added, “When we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did not our husbands know that we were making cakes impressed with her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?”

20Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, 21“Did not the Lord remember and call to mind the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land? 22When the Lord could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things you did, your land became a curse and a desolate waste without inhabitants, as it is today. 23Because you have burned incense and have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed him or followed his law or his decrees or his stipulations, this disaster has come upon you, as you now see.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Jeremiah 44:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+44%3A7%E2%80%9323+&version=NIV#en-NIV-20019) That is, your name will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that you are cursed; also in verse 12; similarly in verse 22.

Are you wise or foolish? The book of Proverbs has a lot to say about foolish and sinful choices: “The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty” (Prov. 22:3). And these actions have consequences: “The waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them” (Prov. 1:32).

We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD! Jeremiah 44:16

Even though Jeremiah was kidnapped and taken to Egypt by the disobedient Jewish remnant, his prophetic ministry continued. Through the object lesson of the buried stones (Jer. 43:8–10), he continued to tell his people that their disobedience was sinful. Their idolatry would result in the righteous wrath of God (Jer. 44:7–10). Egypt could not protect them, for Babylon would conquer them as well. They would never return home; instead, they would die in Egypt (vv. 11–14). But, even now, the hope of humble repentance was held out to them (v. 10).

The people’s response was further arrogance and insolence (vv. 15–19). We might paraphrase their response this way: We will not listen. We will not obey. We reject God’s warning. We will continue doing as we please. The punishment that has fallen on us is not from God but because of times in the past when we stopped worshiping idols. They were likely referring to King Josiah’s revival, which lasted from about 621 to 609 B.C. In any case, they proclaimed their loyalty to the Queen of Heaven, that is, Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of fertility.

If we are looking at these events in chronological order, verses 20–23 are Jeremiah’s last words: He condemned their idolatry and confirmed God’s judgment on their sins. Tradition tells us that Jeremiah was stoned to death by his fellow Jews in Egypt.

**Apply the Word**

Today’s title is a question many parents ask (with a sigh) about their children. We need love, patience, and self-control to parent like God does. Pray today for more of these virtues!

## **Pray with Us**

Dear God, You are the ultimate example of love, patience, and self-control. Help us emulate You in our dealings with our children, employees, and others under our authority.

### BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 4/25/22

# Pulled to Safety

[**2 Samuel 22:13–20**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.13%E2%80%9320)

13Out of the brightness of his presence  
    bolts of lightning blazed forth.  
14The Lord thundered from heaven;  
    the voice of the Most High resounded.  
15He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,  
    with great bolts of lightning he routed them.  
16The valleys of the sea were exposed  
    and the foundations of the earth laid bare  
at the rebuke of the Lord,  
    at the blast of breath from his nostrils.

17“He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
    he drew me out of deep waters.  
18He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
    from my foes, who were too strong for me.  
19They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
    but the Lord was my support.  
20He brought me out into a spacious place;  
    he rescued me because he delighted in me.

He reached down from on high and took hold of me. [2 Samuel 22:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.17)

A little girl waded in a shallow creek while her father watched. Her rubber boots reached her knees. As she sloshed downstream, the water deepened until it flowed over the top of her waders. When she couldn’t take another step, she yelled, “Daddy, I’m stuck!” In three strides, her father was at her side, pulling her to the grassy bank. She yanked her boots off and laughed as water poured onto the ground.

After God rescued the psalmist David from his enemies, he took a moment to sit down, “pull off his boots,” and allow the relief to flood his soul. He wrote a song to express his feelings. “I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and have been saved from my enemies,” he said ([2 Samuel 22:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.4)). He praised God as his rock, fortress, shield, and stronghold (vv. 2–3), and then went on to narrate a poetic response of God’s response: The earth trembled. God came down from heaven. Lightning bolts flew from His presence. His voice thundered, and He drew him out of deep water (vv. 8, 10, 13–15, 17).

Maybe today you feel opposition around you. Maybe you’re stuck in sin that makes it hard to advance spiritually. Reflect on how God has helped you in the past, and then praise Him and ask Him to do it again! Thank Him especially for rescuing you by bringing you into His kingdom ([Colossians 1:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.13)).

By:  [Jennifer Benson Schuldt](https://odb.org/author/jenniferbschuldt/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why is it easy to overlook the good things God’s done for you in the past when you’re in the midst of trouble? How does praising God increase your faith in Him?

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for coming to my aid so many times. Help me to know I can face any battle with You by my side.

#### **Insight**

[Second Samuel 22:13–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.13%E2%80%9320) is a small portion of a larger song, or psalm, of David (vv. 2–51) that corresponds to the fifty verses of [Psalm 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018). In both, the sense is basically the same; only the wording differs slightly.

In this song of thanksgiving, David begins with a lengthy introduction detailing his past distress (including threats to his life). The psalmist then calls on “the Lord” ([2 Samuel 22:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2022.7)). The Lord appears in a theophany (a visible manifestation of God) in verses 8–16. God’s sudden appearance and actions are described in terms of what might be an erupting volcano with lightning and thunder or a similar catastrophe that results in a violent earthquake. The Lord swoops in as a mighty warrior. And in verses 17–20, David describes his deliverance, concluding with the words: “He rescued me because he delighted in me” (v. 20).

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

# God Calling – 4/25/22

# Bless Your Enemies

Say often, "God bless . . . ," of any whom you find in disharmony with you, or whom you desire to help. Say it, willing that showers of blessings and joy and success may fall upon them.

Leave to Me that necessary correcting or training; you must only desire joy and blessing for them. At present your prayers are that they should be taught and corrected.

Oh! If My children would leave My work to Me and occupy themselves with the task I give them. Love, love, love. Love will break down all your difficulties. Love will build up all your successes.

God the destroyer of evil, God the creator of good -- is Love. To Love one another is to use God in your life. To use God in your life is to bring into manifestation all harmony, beauty, joy, and happiness.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew 5:44