# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/25/23

# “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 – 4/25/23

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 – 4/25/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/25/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/25/23

# An Eye for an Eye

**Read:** [**Leviticus 24:10–23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+24%3a10%e2%80%9323)

### **A Blasphemer Put to Death**

10Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out among the Israelites, and a fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. 11The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so they brought him to Moses. (His mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri the Danite.) 12They put him in custody until the will of the Lord should be made clear to them.

13Then the Lord said to Moses: 14“Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. 15Say to the Israelites: ‘Anyone who curses their God will be held responsible; 16anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name they are to be put to death.

17“‘Anyone who takes the life of a human being is to be put to death. 18Anyone who takes the life of someone’s animal must make restitution—life for life. 19Anyone who injures their neighbor is to be injured in the same manner: 20fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury. 21Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death. 22You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the Lord your God.’”

23Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him. The Israelites did as the Lord commanded Moses.

During his tumultuous presidency, Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said, “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.”

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

In today’s reading, Moses encountered a situation where he was not sure what to do. Instead of making a quick decision, he waited, “until the will of the LORD should be made clear to them” (v. 12). This is a good reminder that the law in Israel was not given by Moses, but God. Moses knew he needed to wait for God’s guidance and leading.

The specific situation had to do with a man who had an Egyptian father and Israelite mother (v. 10). This man got into a fight with an Israelite, during which he blasphemed and cursed the name of the Lord (v. 11). This was a serious offense. The Lord commanded that the man be put to death (v. 14).

This specific situation led to a series of laws that have become famous, “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (v. 19). While this may seem harsh, it put a limit on how much retribution was allowed. Often this command was not applied literally. For example, if a slave lost an eye, he was given his freedom (Ex. 21:26). The point was that the punishment should be in proportion to the crime.

The New Testament required that punishment be carried out by civil authorities (Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4). In addition, Jesus called His followers to a higher standard. Instead of an “eye for an eye,” He declared, “do not resist an evil person...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:39, 44).

**Apply the Word**

If you are feeling overwhelmed, it is always good to spend time in prayer. Ask God for His guidance in your life. Ask Him to use the truth of His Word to speak into your situation.

## **Pray with Us**

Like Moses, we are often stumped about the right course of action. Father, speak to us and make apparent Your will. Grow us in knowledge and wisdom so we can make decisions that are pleasing to You.

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/25/23

# Let It Go

 **Read:** [**Romans 13:11–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2013.11%E2%80%9314)

### **The Day Is Near**

11And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3A11%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28281a)]

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Romans 13:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3A11%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-28281) In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

Do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. [Romans 13:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2013.14)

Augustine’s autobiographical Confessions describes his long and winding journey to Jesus. On one occasion, he was riding to the palace to give a flattering speech for the emperor. He was fretting over his deceptive applause lines when he noticed a drunken beggar “joking and laughing.” He realized the drunk already had whatever fleeting happiness his shifty career might bring, and with much less effort. So Augustine stopped striving for worldly success.

But he was still enslaved by lust. He knew he couldn’t turn to Jesus without turning from sin, and he still struggled with sexual immorality. So he prayed, “Grant me chastity . . . but not yet.”

Augustine stumbled along, torn between salvation and sin, until finally he had enough. Inspired by others who had turned to Jesus, he opened a Bible to [Romans 13:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2013.13%E2%80%9314). “Let us behave decently . . .  not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality . . . . Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

That did it. God used those inspired words to break Augustine's chains of lust and brought him “into the kingdom of the Son . . . in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” ([Colossians 1:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.13%E2%80%9314)). Augustine became a bishop who remained tempted by fame and lust, but he now knew whom to see when he sinned. He turned to Jesus. Have you?

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s keeping you from giving your life to Jesus? How might your life change if you let it go?

Dear Father, let nothing come between me and You.

For further study, read Remade in the Image of Jesus at [DiscoverySeries.org](https://discoveryseries.org/courses/remade-in-the-image-of-jesus/).

#### **Insight**

Paul’s warning here is a tacit acknowledgment of our propensity to sin even after we’ve come to Christ. That’s why he warns us to “put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” ([Romans 13:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2013.12)). The passage is reminiscent of another of Paul’s letters in which he refers to putting on armor. There he writes, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes” ([Ephesians 6:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%206.11)). In both passages, the strong implication is that temptations will inevitably come, and we must supplant those sinful desires by following Jesus unreservedly and completely. “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ,” the apostle says, “and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh” ([Romans 13:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2013.14)). The only effective way to neutralize our obsession with sin is to replace our selfish desires with a craving for Christ.

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

# God Calling – 4/25/23

# 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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/26/23

# The Supreme Climb



Take now your son…and offer him…as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you. —[Genesis 22:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+22%3A2)

A person’s character determines how he interprets God’s will (see [Psalm 18:25-26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18:25-26)). Abraham interpreted God’s command to mean that he had to kill his son, and he could only leave this traditional belief behind through the pain of a tremendous ordeal. God could purify his faith in no other way. If we obey what God says according to our sincere belief, God will break us from those traditional beliefs that misrepresent Him. There are many such beliefs which must be removed– for example, that God removes a child because his mother loves him too much. That is the devil’s lie and a travesty on the true nature of God! If the devil can hinder us from taking the supreme climb and getting rid of our wrong traditional beliefs about God, he will do so. But if we will stay true to God, God will take us through an ordeal that will serve to bring us into a better knowledge of Himself.

The great lesson to be learned from Abraham’s faith in God is that he was prepared to do anything for God. He was there to obey God, no matter what contrary belief of his might be violated by his obedience. Abraham was not devoted to his own convictions or else he would have slain Isaac and said that the voice of the angel was actually the voice of the devil. That is the attitude of a fanatic. If you will remain true to God, God will lead you directly through every barrier and right into the inner chamber of the knowledge of Himself. But you must always be willing to come to the point of giving up your own convictions and traditional beliefs. Don’t ask God to test you. Never declare as Peter did that you are willing to do anything, even “to go …both to prison and to death” ([Luke 22:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22:33)). Abraham did not make any such statement— he simply remained true to God, and God purified his faith.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We must keep ourselves in touch, not with theories, but with people, and never get out of touch with human beings, if we are going to use the word of God skilfully amongst them.  Workmen of God, 1341 L

# CCEL – 4/26/23

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.—[SONG 2:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.6)

Underneath are the everlasting arms.—When [Peter] saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?—The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.—Casting all your care upon Him, for he careth for you.—He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.

They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all.

[Deut. 33:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html#Deut.33.27). -[Matt. 14:30,31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.14.html" \l "Matt.14.30). -[Psa. 37:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.23).[Deut. 33:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.12). -[I Pet. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7). -[Zech. 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.2.html" \l "Zech.2.8).[John 10:28,29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.28).

“This do in remembrance of me.” **[1 Corinthians 11:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.11.html" \l "iCor.11.24)**

It seems then, that Christians may forget Christ! There could be no need for this loving exhortation, if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous. Nor is this a bare supposition: it is, alas! too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb, and loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should forget that gracious Saviour; but, if startling to the ear, it is, alas! too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the crime. Forget him who never forgot us! Forget him who poured his blood forth for our sins! Forget him who loved us even to the death! Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault with all of us, that we suffer him to be as a wayfaring man tarrying but for a night. He whom we should make the abiding tenant of our memories is but a visitor therein. The cross where one would think that memory would linger, and unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder, is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness. Does not your conscience say that this is true? Do you not find yourselves forgetful of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart, and you are unmindful of him upon whom your affection ought to be set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should fix your eye steadily upon the cross. It is the incessant turmoil of the world, the constant attraction of earthly things which takes away the soul from Christ. While memory too well preserves a poisonous weed, it suffereth the rose of Sharon to wither. Let us charge ourselves to bind a heavenly forget-me-not about our hearts for Jesus our Beloved, and, whatever else we let slip, let us hold fast to him.

# Word Live – 4/26/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/26/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/26/23

# My Father’s World

**Read:** [**Leviticus 25:1–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+25%3a1%e2%80%937)

### **The Sabbath Year**

25 The Lord said to Moses at Mount Sinai, 2“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the Lord. 3For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. 4But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. 5Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. 6Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, 7as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

My son has access to the hand tools at our house. He is free to use them for his own projects. However, he also needs to be responsible with their use. He must use them safely and not leave them outside after he is finished. I set these rules for him because they are my tools, and he is my son.

The earth is the LORD’S, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Psalm 24:1

Israel needed to be reminded regularly that their land was ultimately God’s. God had the authority to set the rules for its use. In today’s reading, God instructed Israel regarding their farming. They were to work the land for six years (v. 3). But in the seventh year, they were to let the land lie in rest (v. 4). They were not to sow crops or prune their vineyards.

Just like people get a sabbath every seventh day, the land was to get a sabbath every seventh year. Whatever produce the land yielded during the sabbath year, it was to serve as food for everyone (vv. 6–7).

Observing the sabbath year meant that people would not maximize the potential profit of their land. This practice taught Israel that God desired both hard work and trust in Him, since they would have to plan for this sabbath year and had no guarantee that the eighth year would yield a bountiful harvest.

One of the reasons for Israel’s exile from the land was that they did not obey this law. During the exile, “the land enjoyed its sabbath rests” (2 Chron. 36:21).

**Apply the Word**

What a great reminder that everything we have ultimately is a gift from the Lord and belongs to Him. The goal of our life should not be to accumulate the maximum amount of wealth we possibly can, but to live in right relationship with God, others, and the world He created. Today is a good day to celebrate the truth that “The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it” (Ps. 24:1).

## **Pray with Us**

“The earth is the LORD’S, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters” (Ps. 24:1–2). Everything we have is a gift from You. Thank You!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/26/23

# Strong and Good

 **Read:** [**Psalm 118:13–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20118.13%E2%80%9314)

13I was pushed back and about to fall,  
    but the Lord helped me.  
14The Lord is my strength and my defense[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A13%E2%80%9314+%2C+22%E2%80%9329&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15884a)];  
    he has become my salvation.

**Read:** [**Psalm 118:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20118.13%E2%80%9314)[**22–29**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20118.22%E2%80%9329)

22The stone the builders rejected  
    has become the cornerstone;  
23the Lord has done this,  
    and it is marvelous in our eyes.  
24The Lord has done it this very day;  
    let us rejoice today and be glad.

25Lord, save us!  
    Lord, grant us success!

26Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
    From the house of the Lord we bless you.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A13%E2%80%9314+%2C+22%E2%80%9329&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15896a)]  
27The Lord is God,  
    and he has made his light shine on us.  
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession  
    up[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A13%E2%80%9314+%2C+22%E2%80%9329&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15897b)] to the horns of the altar.

28You are my God, and I will praise you;  
    you are my God, and I will exalt you.

29Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
    his love endures forever.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 118:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A13%E2%80%9314+%2C+22%E2%80%9329&version=NIV#en-NIV-15896) The Hebrew is plural.
2. [Psalm 118:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A13%E2%80%9314+%2C+22%E2%80%9329&version=NIV#en-NIV-15897) Or *Bind the festal sacrifice with ropes / and take it*

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. [Psalm 118:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20118.22)

The young campus minister was troubled. But he looked conflicted when I dared to ask if he prays . . . for God’s direction . . . for His help. To pray, as Paul urged, without ceasing. In reply, the young man confessed, “I’m not sure I believe anymore in prayer.” He frowned. “Or believe that God is listening. Just look at the world.” That young leader was “building” a ministry in his own strength and, sadly, he was failing. Why? He was rejecting God.

Jesus, as the cornerstone of the church, has always been rejected—starting, in fact, with His own people ([John 1:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.11)). Many still reject Him today, struggling to build their lives, work, even churches on lesser foundations—their own schemes, dreams, and other unreliable ground. Yet, our good Savior alone is our strength and defense ([Psalm 118:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20118.14)). Indeed, “the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (v. 22).

Set at the vital corner of our lives, He provides the only right alignment for anything His believers seek to accomplish for Him. To Him, therefore, we pray, “Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success!” (v. 25). The result? “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (v. 26). May we give thanks to Him because He’s strong and good.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What dream or plans do you have as you build for God? How can you put Christ at the cornerstone of your plan, building it for Him?

I praise You, Jesus, for being the chief cornerstone. Only on You can Your church and my life stand.

#### **Insight**

What is a “cornerstone” ([Psalm 118:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20118.22))? Since early times, it’s been the principal stone placed at the corner of a building that formed its base. Once it was set, it determined every measurement in the construction of the edifice. Everything was aligned to it. As the chief cornerstone, Jesus is the foundation on which the church is built, and His people are to align with Him. He’s “a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation” ([Isaiah 28:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2028.16)). With Him, we become “fellow citizens with God’s people” and “members of his household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” with Christ as our chief cornerstone ([Ephesians 2:19–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.19%E2%80%9320)). We’re His holy temple, and His Spirit lives in us (vv. 21–22). If we trust in Him, “we will never be put to shame” ([1 Peter 2:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.6)).

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

# God Calling – 4/26/23

# I Make The Opportunities

Never doubt. Have no fear. Watch the faintest tremor of fear, and stop all work, everything, and rest before Me until you are joyful and strong again

Deal in the same way with all tired feelings. I was weary too, when on earth, and I separated Myself from My Disciples, and sat and rested on the well. Rested -- and then it was that the Samaritan woman was helped.

Times of withdrawal for rest always precede fresh miracle-working.  Learn of Me.  To accept the limitations of human flesh is to be subject, except as far as sin is concerned, to the same conditions as man.

I had to teach renewal of Spirit -- force rest of body to My Disciples. Then, as your Example, I lay with My Head on a pillow, asleep in the boat. It was not, as they thought, indifference. They cried, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" and I had to teach them that ceaseless activity was no part of My Father's plan.

When Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me," he did not mean that he was to do all things and then rely on Me to find strength. He meant that for all I told him to do he could rely on My supplying the strength.

My Work in the world has been hindered by work, work, work. Many a tireless nervous body has driven a spirit. The spirit should be the master always, and just simply and naturally use the body as need should arise. Rest in Me.

Do not seek to work for Me. Never make opportunities. Live with Me and for Me. I do the work and I make the opportunities.

# "I can of mine own self do nothing." John 5:30

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/27/23

# What Do You Want?



Do you seek great things for yourself? —[Jeremiah 45:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+45%3A5)

Are you seeking great things for yourself, instead of seeking to be a great person? God wants you to be in a much closer relationship with Himself than simply receiving His gifts— He wants you to get to know Him. Even some large thing we want is only incidental; it comes and it goes. But God never gives us anything incidental. There is nothing easier than getting into the right relationship with God, unless it is not God you seek, but only what He can give you.

If you have only come as far as asking God for things, you have never come to the point of understanding the least bit of what surrender really means. You have become a Christian based on your own terms. You protest, saying, “I asked God for the Holy Spirit, but He didn’t give me the rest and the peace I expected.” And instantly God puts His finger on the reason– you are not seeking the Lord at all; you are seeking something for yourself. Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you…” ([Matthew 7:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:7)). Ask God for what you want and do not be concerned about asking for the wrong thing, because as you draw ever closer to Him, you will cease asking for things altogether. “Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” ([Matthew 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:8)). Then why should you ask? So that you may get to know Him.

Are you seeking great things for yourself? Have you said, “Oh, Lord, completely fill me with your Holy Spirit”? If God does not, it is because you are not totally surrendered to Him; there is something you still refuse to do. Are you prepared to ask yourself what it is you want from God and why you want it? God always ignores your present level of completeness in favor of your ultimate future completeness. He is not concerned about making you blessed and happy right now, but He’s continually working out His ultimate perfection for you— “…that they may be one just as We are one…” ([John 17:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:22)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of pronouncing any verdict on the life of faith if you are not living it. Not Knowing Whither, 900 R

# CCEL – 4/27/23

Brethren, the time is short.—[I COR. 7:29.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html" \l "iCor.7.29)

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.—The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Death is swallowed up in victory.—Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.—To live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Cast not away . . . your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.—The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.—The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

[Job. 14:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.14.html" \l "Job.14.1). -[I John 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.17). -[I Cor. 15:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.22),[54](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.54). -[Rom. 14:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.8). -[Phi. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.21).[Heb. 10:35-37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.35). -[Rom. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.12). -[I Pet. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.7).

“God, even our own God.” **[Psalm 67:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.67.html" \l "Ps.67.6)**

It is strange how little use we make of the spiritual blessings which God gives us, but it is stranger still how little use we make of God himself. Though he is “our own God,” we apply ourselves but little to him, and ask but little of him. How seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business, without seeking his guidance! In our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens ourselves, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that he may sustain us! This is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, “I am thine, soul, come and make use of me as thou wilt; thou mayst freely come to my store, and the oftener the more welcome.” It is our own fault if we make not free with the riches of our God. Then, since thou hast such a friend, and he invites thee, draw from him daily. Never want whilst thou hast a God to go to; never fear or faint whilst thou hast God to help thee; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest—there is all that thou canst want. Learn the divine skill of making God all things to thee. He can supply thee with all, or, better still, he can be to thee instead of all. Let me urge thee, then, to make use of thy God. Make use of him in prayer. Go to him often, because he is thy God. O, wilt thou fail to use so great a privilege? Fly to him, tell him all thy wants. Use him constantly by faith at all times. If some dark providence has beclouded thee, use thy God as a “sun;” if some strong enemy has beset thee, find in Jehovah a “shield,” for he is a sun and shield to his people. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use him as a “guide,” for he will direct thee. Whatever thou art, and wherever thou art, remember God is just what thou wantest, and just where thou wantest, and that he can do all thou wantest.

# Word Live – 4/27/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/27/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/27/23

# The Year of Jubilee

**Read:** [**Leviticus 25:8–55**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+25%3a8%e2%80%9355)

### **The Year of Jubilee**

8“‘Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. 9Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. 11The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. 12For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

13“‘In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

14“‘If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. 15You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. 16When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. 17Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

18“‘Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. 19Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. 20You may ask, “What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?” 21I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. 22While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

23“‘The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers. 24Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

25“‘If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold. 26If, however, there is no one to redeem it for them but later on they prosper and acquire sufficient means to redeem it themselves, 27they are to determine the value for the years since they sold it and refund the balance to the one to whom they sold it; they can then go back to their own property. 28But if they do not acquire the means to repay, what was sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and they can then go back to their property.

29“‘Anyone who sells a house in a walled city retains the right of redemption a full year after its sale. During that time the seller may redeem it. 30If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to the buyer and the buyer’s descendants. It is not to be returned in the Jubilee. 31But houses in villages without walls around them are to be considered as belonging to the open country. They can be redeemed, and they are to be returned in the Jubilee.

32“‘The Levites always have the right to redeem their houses in the Levitical towns, which they possess. 33So the property of the Levites is redeemable—that is, a house sold in any town they hold—and is to be returned in the Jubilee, because the houses in the towns of the Levites are their property among the Israelites. 34But the pastureland belonging to their towns must not be sold; it is their permanent possession.

35“‘If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. 36Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. 37You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. 38I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

39“‘If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. 40They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. 41Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. 42Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. 43Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

44“‘Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. 45You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

47“‘If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner’s clan, 48they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: 49An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in their clan may redeem them. Or if they prosper, they may redeem themselves. 50They and their buyer are to count the time from the year they sold themselves up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for their release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired worker for that number of years. 51If many years remain, they must pay for their redemption a larger share of the price paid for them. 52If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, they are to compute that and pay for their redemption accordingly. 53They are to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly.

54“‘Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, 55for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

According to a recent report, there are only 2,668 billionaires in the world. Together, these individuals have accumulated $12.7 trillion in wealth. And 86 of the people in this exclusive club are under the age of 40! Consider the tremendous wealth held by those 2,668 individuals in comparison to the rest of the world’s 7.837 billion people.

Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 25:17

This sharp division between the rich and the poor was not the ideal in ancient Israel. The Jubilee laws were designed to prevent the utter ruin of those who fell into debt. It also prevented individuals within Israel from accumulating large amounts of land perpetually. After every seventh sabbatical year, the year of Jubilee was proclaimed (vv. 8–9). During this year, all land that had been sold was to be returned to its original owner (v. 10). In addition, if any Israelite had to sell themselves into debt-slavery, they were released (vv. 40–41).

Two reasons are given for this legislation. God proclaimed, “The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine” (v. 23). Returning land to the family that had originally been assigned the property when Israel entered the land would be a way to remind Israel of this truth. Similarly, God proclaimed that slaves could not be kept permanently because “the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt” (v. 55). Every Israeli had an equal status as a redeemed servant of God.

Today’s reading reminds us of God’s heart for the poor. He wanted to ensure that at least once in a person’s life there was a chance for a new start. This legislation also served as a check against unbridled greed.

**Apply the Word**

One day all things will be made right. The year of Jubilee gave Israel a foretaste of that day. The Lord Jesus fulfilled aspects of the Jubilee legislation (Luke 4:18–19). He not only cared for the poor but also released them from the debt of sin before God (Luke 7:36–50).

## **Pray with Us**

Our year of Jubilee will be when You return! Lord Jesus, reveal Yourself to us so that we recognize Your face in your Second Coming. You will come in wrath and power, but to us You will be a Savior and a friend!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/27/23

# Watering The Weeds

 **Read:** [**Galatians 5:13–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.13%E2%80%9326)

### **Life by the Spirit**

13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29176a)]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29177b)] 15If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29180c)] you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Galatians 5:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29176) In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24; and in 6:8.
2. [Galatians 5:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29177) Lev. 19:18
3. [Galatians 5:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29180) Or *you do not do what*

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [Galatians 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.16)

This spring, weeds attacked our backyard like something out of Jurassic Park. One got so big that when I tried to pull it out, I feared I might injure myself. Before I could find a spade to whack it down, I noticed that my daughter was actually pouring water on it. “Why are you watering the weeds?!” I exclaimed. “I want to see how big it will get!” she replied with an impish grin.

Weeds aren’t something we intentionally nourish. But as I thought about it, I realized that sometimes we do water the “weeds” in our spiritual lives, feeding desires that strangle our growth.

Paul writes about this in [Galatians 5:13–26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.13%E2%80%9326), where he contrasts living by the flesh with living by the Spirit. He says trying to follow the rules alone won’t establish the kind of “weed-free” life we long for. Instead, to avoid watering the weeds, he instructs us to “walk by the Spirit.” He adds that being in regular step with God is what frees us from the impulse to “gratify the desires of the flesh” (v. 16).

It’s a lifelong process to fully understand Paul’s teaching. But I love the simplicity of his guidance: instead of growing something unwanted by nourishing our own self-focused desires, when we’re cultivating our relationship with God, we grow fruit and reap the harvest of a godly life (vv. 22–25).

By:  [Adam Holz](https://odb.org/author/adamholz/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What areas of your spiritual life need some “weeding”? How can you surrender to God and walk with Him?

Father, sometimes I water the weeds in my life. Help me to instead experience being in step with You as You produce spiritual fruit in my life.

#### **Insight**

Several themes are evident in [Galatians 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205): freedom in Christ, living by love instead of the law, and the vital importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer in Jesus. Most critical of these is the role of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit we can’t enjoy our freedom, nor will we love others. We’ll instead demand our rights and “bite and devour each other” (v. 15). How are we to spurn our selfish ways? “Walk by the Spirit,” says Paul (v. 16). “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (v. 18). This is true freedom.

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

# God Calling – 4/27/23

# Seeing Christ

I am beside you. Can you not feel My Presence?

Contact with Me is not gained by the senses. Spirit-consciousness replaces sight.

When man sees Me with his human sight it does not mean of necessity that his spiritual perception is greater. Nay, rather that for that soul I have to span the physical and the spiritual with a spiritual vision clear to human eyes.

Remember this to cheer My disciples who have never seen Me, and yet have had a clear spiritual consciousness of Me.

"And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exodus 33:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/28/23

# What You Will Get



I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go. —[Jeremiah 45:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+45%3A5)

This is the firm and immovable secret of the Lord to those who trust Him– “I will give your life to you….” What more does a man want than his life? It is the essential thing. “…your life…as a prize…” means that wherever you may go, even if it is into hell, you will come out with your life and nothing can harm it. So many of us are caught up in exhibiting things for others to see, not showing off property and possessions, but our blessings. All these things that we so proudly show have to go. But there is something greater that can never go– the life that “is hidden with Christ in God” ([Colossians 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3:3)).

Are you prepared to let God take you into total oneness with Himself, paying no more attention to what you call the great things of life? Are you prepared to surrender totally and let go? The true test of abandonment or surrender is in refusing to say, “Well, what about this?” Beware of your own ideas and speculations. The moment you allow yourself to think, “What about this?” you show that you have not surrendered and that you do not really trust God. But once you do surrender, you will no longer think about what God is going to do. Abandonment means to refuse yourself the luxury of asking any questions. If you totally abandon yourself to God, He immediately says to you, “I will give your life to you as a prize….” The reason people are tired of life is that God has not given them anything— they have not been given their life “as a prize.” The way to get out of that condition is to abandon yourself to God. And once you do get to the point of total surrender to Him, you will be the most surprised and delighted person on earth. God will have you absolutely, without any limitations, and He will have given you your life. If you are not there, it is either because of disobedience in your life or your refusal to be simple enough.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“I have chosen you” (John 15:16). Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you.  My Utmost for His Highest, October 25, 837 R

# CCEL – 4/28/23

Behold the Lamb of God.—[JOHN 1:29.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.29)

It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: . . . manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God . . . that your faith and hope might be in God.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

[Heb. 10:4-7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.4). -[Isa. 53:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.7).[I Pet. 1:18-21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.18).[Rev. 5:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.5.html" \l "Rev.5.12).

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.” **[Psalm 119:49](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.49)**

Whatever your especial need may be, you may readily find some promise in the Bible suited to it. Are you faint and feeble because your way is rough and you are weary? Here is the promise—“He giveth power to the faint.” When you read such a promise, take it back to the great Promiser, and ask him to fulfil his own word. Are you seeking after Christ, and thirsting for closer communion with him? This promise shines like a star upon you—“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Take that promise to the throne continually; do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this—“Lord, thou hast said it, do as thou hast said.” Are you distressed because of sin, and burdened with the heavy load of your iniquities? Listen to these words—“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will no more remember thy sins.” You have no merit of your own to plead why he should pardon you, but plead his written engagements and he will perform them. Are you afraid lest you should not be able to hold on to the end, lest, after having thought yourself a child of God, you should prove a castaway? If that is your state, take this word of grace to the throne and plead it: “The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of my love shall not depart from thee.” If you have lost the sweet sense of the Saviour’s presence, and are seeking him with a sorrowful heart, remember the promises: “Return unto me, and I will return unto you;” “For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.” Banquet your faith upon God’s own word, and whatever your fears or wants, repair to the Bank of Faith with your Father’s note of hand, saying, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”

# Word Live – 4/28/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/28/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/28/23

# Clear Expectations

**Read:** [**Leviticus 26:1–42**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+26%3a1%e2%80%9342)

### **Reward for Obedience**

26 “‘Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the Lord your God.

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

3“‘If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, 4I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. 5Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land.

6“‘I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. 7You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. 8Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.

9“‘I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. 10You will still be eating last year’s harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. 11I will put my dwelling place[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+26%3A1%E2%80%9342+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3536a)] among you, and I will not abhor you. 12I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. 13I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.

### **Punishment for Disobedience**

14“‘But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, 15and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, 16then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. 17I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.

18“‘If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. 19I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. 20Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of your land yield their fruit.

21“‘If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. 22I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.

23“‘If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, 24I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. 25And I will bring the sword on you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. 26When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

27“‘If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, 28then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. 29You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. 30I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+26%3A1%E2%80%9342+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3555b)] on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. 31I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. 32I myself will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. 33I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. 34Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.

36“‘As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them. 37They will stumble over one another as though fleeing from the sword, even though no one is pursuing them. So you will not be able to stand before your enemies. 38You will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you. 39Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also because of their ancestors’ sins they will waste away.

40“‘But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors—their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward me, 41which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, 42I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 26:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+26%3A1%E2%80%9342+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3536) Or *my tabernacle*
2. [Leviticus 26:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+26%3A1%E2%80%9342+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3555) Or *your funeral offerings*

In 2006, a team of landscape architects conducted a simple study on the impact of a fenced-in playground. They had a preschool teacher take her students to a playground without a fence. The children all huddled around the teacher and did not utilize the full playground space. They then took the same class to a fenced in playground and observed that the children felt freer to explore the entire space. Having a clear boundary led to a greater sense of freedom and security. Through

If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. Leviticus 26:3–4

Through the law, God provided Israel with clear expectations. They did not have to wonder what God required of them. This gave them a sense of security and freedom in their relationship with God. However, God’s instructions also came with consequences. Today’s reading outlines the blessings for Israel if they obeyed the covenant and curses if they did not.

If Israel obeyed the covenant, they would be richly blessed. They would have abundant harvests and safety from their enemies (vv. 3–10). Their greatest blessing would be the presence of God in the midst of His people (vv. 11–12).

If Israel disobeyed, the consequences were just as clear. They would be struck with disease, famine, and defeat by their enemies (vv. 14–17). Most grievously, they would be exiled from the land and from access to God’s presence at the tabernacle (vv. 33–35). However, even if they broke the covenant and experienced the full brunt of God’s judgment, He would not give up on them. The chapter ends on a note of hope. God would remember His covenant with Abraham (vv. 42–45). If the people repent, they would be restored (vv. 40–41).

**Apply the Word**

We worship a God who is both gracious and forgiving. God has given us clear rules to follow, but He has also provided a way for forgiveness and restoration. If you do not know Jesus as your personal Savior, we invite you to turn to Him today. In Him, you will find hope and a future.

## **Pray with Us**

When Israel disobeyed, You fulfilled Your promises to punish them. When they repented, You restored them. In the same way, You promise to forgive us when we repent. When we throw ourselves on Your mercy, we are saved!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/28/23

# Laughing Out Loud

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**Genesis 21:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2021.1%E2%80%937)

### **The Birth of Isaac**

21 Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. 2Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3Abraham gave the name Isaac[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-517a)] to the son Sarah bore him. 4When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. 5Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” 7And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Genesis 21:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+21%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-517) *Isaac* means *he laughs.*

God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. [Genesis 21:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2021.6)

Comedian John Branyan said, “We didn’t think up laughter; that wasn’t our idea. That was given to us by [God who] knew we were going to need it to get through life. [Because] He knew we were going to have hardship, He knew we were going to have struggles, He knew . . . stuff was going to happen. . . . Laughter is a gift.”

A quick look at the creatures God made can bring laughter, whether because of their oddities (such as duck-billed platypuses) or antics (such as playful otters). He made mammals that live in the ocean and long-legged birds that can’t fly. God clearly has a sense of humor; and because we’re created in His image, we too have the joy of laughter.

We first see the word laughter in the Bible in the story of Abraham and Sarah. God promised this elderly couple a child: “A son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir” ([Genesis 15:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2015.4)). And God had said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars . . . . So shall your offspring be” (v. 5). When Sarah finally gave birth at ninety, Abraham named their son Isaac, which means “laughter.” As Sarah exclaimed, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me” (21:6). It amazed her that she could nurse a child at her age! God transformed her skeptical laughter when she’d heard she’d give birth (18:12) into laughter of sheer joy.

Thank God for the gift of laughter!

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When has laughter been “good medicine”? How can finding humor in your life help even in the most difficult times?

Dear God, thank You for giving me the gift of laughter.

#### **Insight**

[Genesis 17:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2017.17) is the first time that laughter is mentioned in the book of Genesis when Abraham laughs at the idea that his wife could have a child at age ninety. Some commentators have argued that Abraham’s laughter was one of joy; others believe it was skeptical laughter. Sarah is also described as laughing at the idea after overhearing visitors sent from God prophesy that she and Abraham would have a son (18:12–15). Later, the same Hebrew word is used to express the reaction of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. It’s translated “mocking” by the niv (21:9) but “laughing” in the esv, making the reason why Sarah reacted so angrily unclear and a matter of debate among scholars. Some have argued that Ishmael’s laughter was mocking or abusive behavior, while others suggest that Ishmael’s laughter was perceived by Sarah as Ishmael being a threat to Isaac’s role in the family.

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

# God Calling – 4/28/23

# The Roundabout Way

Through briers, through waste places, through glades, up mountain heights, down into valleys, I lead. But ever with the Leadership goes the Helping Hand.

Glorious to follow where your Master goes. But remember that the varied path does not always mean that you need the varied training.

We are seeking lost sheep -- we are bringing the Kingdom into places where it has not been known before. So realize that you are joining Me on My quest -- My undying quest, tracking down the souls.

I am not choosing ways that will fret and tire -- just to fret and tire; we are out to save. You may not always see the soul we seek. I know.

"Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." Luke 15:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/29/23

# Gracious Uncertainty



…it has not yet been revealed what we shall be… —[1 John 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+John+3%3A2)

Our natural inclination is to be so precise– trying always to forecast accurately what will happen next– that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think that we must reach some predetermined goal, but that is not the nature of the spiritual life. The nature of the spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty. Consequently, we do not put down roots. Our common sense says, “Well, what if I were in that circumstance?” We cannot presume to see ourselves in any circumstance in which we have never been.

Certainty is the mark of the commonsense life– gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, not knowing what tomorrow may bring. This is generally expressed with a sigh of sadness, but it should be an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. As soon as we abandon ourselves to God and do the task He has placed closest to us, He begins to fill our lives with surprises. When we become simply a promoter or a defender of a particular belief, something within us dies. That is not believing God– it is only believing our belief about Him. Jesus said, “…unless you…become as little children…” ([Matthew 18:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:3)). The spiritual life is the life of a child. We are not uncertain of God, just uncertain of what He is going to do next. If our certainty is only in our beliefs, we develop a sense of self-righteousness, become overly critical, and are limited by the view that our beliefs are complete and settled. But when we have the right relationship with God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy. Jesus said, “…believe also in Me” ([John 14:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:1)), not, “Believe certain things about Me”. Leave everything to Him and it will be gloriously and graciously uncertain how He will come in– but you can be certain that He will come. Remain faithful to Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of bartering the Word of God for a more suitable conception of your own.  Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 4/29/23

Consider how great things He hath done for you.—[I SAM. 12:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.24)

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.—The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.—He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

[Deut. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.2),[5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.5).[Psa. 119:75](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.75),[71](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.71),[67](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.67). -[Psa. 118:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.118.html" \l "Ps.118.18). -[Psa. 103:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.10),[14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.14).

“Thou art my hope in the day of evil.” **[Jeremiah 17:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.17.html" \l "Jer.17.17)**

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. True, it is written in God’s Word, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;” and it is a great truth, that religion is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience tells us that if the course of the just be “As the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” yet sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer’s sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light. There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian career; they have walked along the “green pastures” by the side of the “still waters,” but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the Land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, “Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen.” Oh! say not so, thou who art walking in darkness. The best of God’s saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of his children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his harp from the willows. Perhaps the Lord allotted you at first a smooth and unclouded path, because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God’s full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten bough of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

# Word Live – 4/29/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/29/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/29/23

# Promises Kept

# Read: [Leviticus 27:1–34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3a1%e2%80%9334)

# Redeeming What Is the Lord’s

27 The Lord said to Moses, 2“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate a person to the Lord by giving the equivalent value, 3set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3574a)] of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3574b)]; 4for a female, set her value at thirty shekels[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3575c)]; 5for a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3576d)] and of a female at ten shekels[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3576e)]; 6for a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3577f)] of silver and that of a female at three shekels[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3577g)] of silver; 7for a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3578h)] and of a female at ten shekels. 8If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, the person being dedicated is to be presented to the priest, who will set the value according to what the one making the vow can afford.

9“‘If what they vowed is an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the Lord, such an animal given to the Lord becomes holy. 10They must not exchange it or substitute a good one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one; if they should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy. 11If what they vowed is a ceremonially unclean animal—one that is not acceptable as an offering to the Lord—the animal must be presented to the priest, 12who will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, that is what it will be. 13If the owner wishes to redeem the animal, a fifth must be added to its value.

14“‘If anyone dedicates their house as something holy to the Lord, the priest will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, so it will remain. 15If the one who dedicates their house wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the house will again become theirs.

16“‘If anyone dedicates to the Lord part of their family land, its value is to be set according to the amount of seed required for it—fifty shekels of silver to a homer[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-3587i" \o "See footnote i)] of barley seed. 17If they dedicate a field during the Year of Jubilee, the value that has been set remains. 18But if they dedicate a field after the Jubilee, the priest will determine the value according to the number of years that remain until the next Year of Jubilee, and its set value will be reduced. 19If the one who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the field will again become theirs. 20If, however, they do not redeem the field, or if they have sold it to someone else, it can never be redeemed. 21When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will become holy, like a field devoted to the Lord; it will become priestly property.

22“‘If anyone dedicates to the Lord a field they have bought, which is not part of their family land, 23the priest will determine its value up to the Year of Jubilee, and the owner must pay its value on that day as something holy to the Lord. 24In the Year of Jubilee the field will revert to the person from whom it was bought, the one whose land it was. 25Every value is to be set according to the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel.

26“‘No one, however, may dedicate the firstborn of an animal, since the firstborn already belongs to the Lord; whether an ox[[j](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3597j)] or a sheep, it is the Lord’s. 27If it is one of the unclean animals, it may be bought back at its set value, adding a fifth of the value to it. If it is not redeemed, it is to be sold at its set value.

28“‘But nothing that a person owns and devotes[[k](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3599k)] to the Lord—whether a human being or an animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the Lord.

29“‘No person devoted to destruction[[l](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3600l)] may be ransomed; they are to be put to death.

30“‘A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. 31Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. 32Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to the Lord. 33No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.’”

34These are the commands the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Leviticus 27:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3574) That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams; also in verse 16
2. [Leviticus 27:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3574) That is, about 2/5 ounce or about 12 grams; also in verse 25
3. [Leviticus 27:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3575) That is, about 12 ounces or about 345 grams
4. [Leviticus 27:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3576) That is, about 8 ounces or about 230 grams
5. [Leviticus 27:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3576) That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams; also in verse 7
6. [Leviticus 27:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3577) That is, about 2 ounces or about 58 grams
7. [Leviticus 27:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3577) That is, about 1 1/4 ounces or about 35 grams
8. [Leviticus 27:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3578) That is, about 6 ounces or about 175 grams
9. [Leviticus 27:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3587) That is, probably about 300 pounds or about 135 kilograms
10. [Leviticus 27:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3597) The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.
11. [Leviticus 27:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3599) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord.
12. [Leviticus 27:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+27%3A1%E2%80%9334+&version=NIV#en-NIV-3600) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.

The book of 1 Samuel opens with the story of Hannah. Unable to have children, Hannah was suffering. In her “deep anguish,” she vowed to the Lord that if He gave her a son she would give him back to the Lord “for all the days of his life” (1 Sam. 1:9–11).

I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Psalm 116:14

Vows were common in ancient Israel. They often involved dedicating something to the Lord, whether a person, an animal, or real estate. Vows were also entirely voluntary. Nowhere in Scripture does God command the making of vows. However, if a person did vow, it was vital to fulfill it (Eccl. 5:5–6; Mal.1:13–14). Leviticus 27 outlines ways in which vows could be fulfilled.

A person dedicated to the Lord could serve at the tabernacle or be redeemed through paying a price (vv. 1–7). The price was set by the age and gender. This was not an assessment of someone’s intrinsic worth. The Bible is clear that all, male and female, are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27). Rather, it was an assessment of a person’s value as a worker. Provision was made for the poor so they could make this kind of vow and could afford to fulfill it (v. 8).

Rules also outlined different situations that could arise in the dedication of property or animals (vv. 9–28). The basic principle at work was that a person needed to be faithful to give what they vowed. Scripture recognizes the human tendency, after the excitement of the moment when a vow was made, to go back on it once the request is answered or the moment of crisis passes. Fulfilling a vow was a joyous occasion (Ps. 61:8; 65:1). It was a time when people could recount God’s faithfulness and celebrate in His presence (Ps. 66:13–15).

**Apply the Word**

Have you ever promised God something in a moment of desperate need? Did you fulfill your vow? Today’s reading is a reminder to take our vows seriously. When God does answer prayer, it is appropriate to celebrate through testifying about it to others.

## **Pray with Us**

You have compassion on all You have made. “All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations” (Ps. 145:10, 13).

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/29/23

# Always Trustworthy

 **Read:** [**Psalm 145:9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145.9)**−13**

9The Lord is good to all;  
    he has compassion on all he has made.  
10All your works praise you, Lord;  
    your faithful people extol you.  
11They tell of the glory of your kingdom  
    and speak of your might,  
12so that all people may know of your mighty acts  
    and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.  
13Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
    and your dominion endures through all generations.

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises  
    and faithful in all he does.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+145%3A9-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16334a)]

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 145:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+145%3A9-13&version=NIV#en-NIV-16334) One manuscript of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text do not have the last two lines of verse 13.

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises. [Psalm 145:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145.13)

I’m a worrier. Early mornings are the worst because I’m alone with my thoughts. So I taped this quote from Hudson Taylor on my bathroom mirror, where I can see it when I’m feeling vulnerable: “There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what He says and will do all He has promised.”

Taylor’s words came from years of walking with God and remind us of who He is and all He can do through our times of illness, poverty, loneliness, and grief. He didn’t merely know that God is trustworthy─he’d experienced His trustworthiness. And because he’d trusted God’s promises and obeyed Him, thousands of Chinese people gave their lives to Jesus.

Experiencing God and His ways helped David know that He’s trustworthy. He wrote [Psalm 145](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145), a song of praise to the God he’d experienced to be good, compassionate, and faithful to all His promises. When we trust and follow God, we realize (or understand better) that He is who He says He is and that He’s faithful to His word (v. 13). And, like David, we respond by praising Him and telling others about Him (vv. 10−12).

When we face worrisome times, God can help us not to falter in our walk with Him, for He is trustworthy ([Hebrews 10:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010.23)).

By:  [Karen Huang](https://odb.org/author/karenhuang/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What have you been worried about lately, and which of God’s promises can you hold on to? How does knowing that Hudson Taylor’s and King David’s faith wasn’t in vain encourage you and give you hope?

Dear God, thank You for being trustworthy and keeping Your promises to me. Please help me to remember Your faithfulness as I trust and obey You each day.

#### **Insight**

The book of Psalms, the hymnbook of the Israelites, is a collection of 150 songs that were sung by God’s people as part of their personal and corporate worship. [Psalm 145](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145) is the last psalm in the final collection of songs penned by David (see [Psalms 138–145](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20138%E2%80%93145)). In this song of praise, he proclaims God as “my God the King” (145:1). David speaks of His “majesty” (v. 5) and “goodness” (v. 7). He exalts God in his greatness, mentioning His “mighty acts” (v. 4), “awesome works” and “great deeds” (v. 6), and “abundant goodness” and “righteousness” (v. 7). David also praises the King’s attributes: He’s “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. . . . He has compassion on all he has made” (vv. 8–9). He’s “trustworthy in all he promises” (v. 13) and “righteous in all his ways” (v. 17). Twice, David says God is “faithful in all he does” (vv. 13, 17).

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

# God Calling – 4/29/23

# Disharmony

Seek and ye shall find. Shall find that inner knowledge that makes the problems of life plain.

The difficulties of life are caused by disharmony in the individual. There is no discord in My Kingdom, only a something unconquered in My disciples. The rule of My Kingdom is perfect order, perfect harmony, perfect supply, perfect love, perfect honesty, perfect obedience -- all power, all conquest, all success,

But so often My servants lack power, conquest, success, supply, harmony, and think I fail in My promises because these are not manifested in their lives.

These are but the outward manifestations that result from the obedience, honesty, order, love -- and they come, not in answer to urgent prayer, but naturally as light results from a lighted candle.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/30/23

# Spontaneous Love



Love suffers long and is kind… —[1 Corinthians 13:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+13%3A4)

Love is not premeditated– it is spontaneous; that is, it bursts forth in extraordinary ways. There is nothing of precise certainty in Paul’s description of love. We cannot predetermine our thoughts and actions by saying, “Now I will never think any evil thoughts, and I will believe everything that Jesus would have me to believe.” No, the characteristic of love is spontaneity. We don’t deliberately set the statements of Jesus before us as our standard, but when His Spirit is having His way with us, we live according to His standard without even realizing it. And when we look back, we are amazed at how unconcerned we have been over our emotions, which is the very evidence that real spontaneous love was there. The nature of everything involved in the life of God in us is only discerned when we have been through it and it is in our past.

The fountains from which love flows are in God, not in us. It is absurd to think that the love of God is naturally in our hearts, as a result of our own nature. His love is there only because it “has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit…” ([Romans 5:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:5)).

If we try to prove to God how much we love Him, it is a sure sign that we really don’t love Him. The evidence of our love for Him is the absolute spontaneity of our love, which flows naturally from His nature within us. And when we look back, we will not be able to determine why we did certain things, but we can know that we did them according to the spontaneous nature of His love in us. The life of God exhibits itself in this spontaneous way because the fountains of His love are in the Holy Spirit.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

When you are joyful, be joyful; when you are sad, be sad. If God has given you a sweet cup, don’t make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don’t try and make it sweet; take things as they come.  Shade of His Hand, 1226 L

# CCEL – 4/30/23

Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.—[I JOHN 2:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.5)

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.—If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

[Heb. 13:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.20).[I John 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.3). -[John 14:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.23). -[I John 3:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.6). -[I John 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.17).

“And all the children of Israel murmured.” **[Numbers 14:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.14.html" \l "Num.14.2)**

There are murmurers amongst Christians now, as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who, when the rod falls, cry out against the afflictive dispensation. They ask, “Why am I thus afflicted? What have I done to be chastened in this manner?” A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Can he treat thee more hardly than thou deservest? Consider what a rebel thou wast once, but he has pardoned thee! Surely, if he in his wisdom sees fit now to chasten thee, thou shouldst not complain. After all, art thou smitten as hardly as thy sins deserve? Consider the corruption which is in thy breast, and then wilt thou wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh thyself, and discern how much dross is mingled with thy gold; and dost thou think the fire too hot to purge away so much dross as thou hast? Does not that proud rebellious spirit of thine prove that thy heart is not thoroughly sanctified? Are not those murmuring words contrary to the holy submissive nature of God’s children? Is not the correction needed? But if thou wilt murmur against the chastening, take heed, for it will go hard with murmurers. God always chastises his children twice, if they do not bear the first stroke patiently. But know one thing—“He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” All his corrections are sent in love, to purify thee, and to draw thee nearer to himself. Surely it must help thee to bear the chastening with resignation if thou art able to recognize thyFather's hand. For “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” “Murmur not as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

# Word Live – 4/30/23

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

# Scripture Union – 4/30/23

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

# Today in the Word – 4/30/23

# God Made a Way

**Read:** [**Hebrews 10:1–18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3a1%e2%80%9318)

### **Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All**

10 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,  
    but a body you prepared for me;  
6with burnt offerings and sin offerings  
    you were not pleased.  
7Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—  
    I have come to do your will, my God.’”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30141a)]

8First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. 9Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. 14For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

15The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16“This is the covenant I will make with them  
    after that time, says the Lord.  
I will put my laws in their hearts,  
    and I will write them on their minds.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30150b)]

17Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts  
    I will remember no more.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30151c)]

18And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Hebrews 10:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#en-NIV-30141) Psalm 40:6-8 (see Septuagint)
2. [Hebrews 10:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#en-NIV-30150) Jer. 31:33
3. [Hebrews 10:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10%3A1%E2%80%9318+&version=NIV#en-NIV-30151) Jer. 31:34

It is easy to take aspects of our modern world for granted. For example, we have refrigeration to store and preserve food and ready access to clean running water. Unless you’ve lived without these conveniences, you might not appreciate how wonderful they are.

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Hebrews 10:12

Many aspects of the book of Leviticus probably seem foreign and strange to Christians today. One of the reasons is that we have never participated in animal sacrifice or abided by Jewish dietary laws. Since Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Old Testament sacrificial system, we are no longer under it. But studying the law provides a richer understanding of God’s gift to us in Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews rejoices in the comparison between the sacrifice of Jesus and the sacrificial system outlined in Leviticus. He notes that the sacrifices in Leviticus always pointed beyond themselves. As Hebrews teaches, “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (v. 4). But Jesus, through His once-for- all sacrifice, cleansed us from sin and made us holy (v. 10). Instead of having a priest present offerings day after day, Jesus fully achieved our atonement for sin (v. 11). After His resurrection, He sat down at the right hand of God. His work was complete (v. 12).

When we trust in Jesus’ death to atone for our sin, we receive forgiveness and are made holy (v. 14). Even more astounding, the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us. God’s presence is now not screened behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. We have access to the Father!

**Apply the Word**

We hope this study of Leviticus helped you more fully understand and appreciate the salvation we have been given through Jesus. Studying the sacrificial system and the role of the priests reveals to us the wonder of what Jesus has done. A perfect God can only be in fellowship with holy people. Through Jesus, God made a way for us to become holy.

## **Pray with Us**

We worship Jesus, Emmanuel, the perfect sacrifice! You have given us fruitful life in this world and eternal life in the world to come. Your will is perfect. Your compassion is unending. Your love is mighty!

### BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 4/30/23

# Wagging Tails and Tongues

 **Read:** [**Proverbs 18:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2018.1%E2%80%938)

18 An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends  
    and against all sound judgment starts quarrels.

2Fools find no pleasure in understanding  
    but delight in airing their own opinions.

3When wickedness comes, so does contempt,  
    and with shame comes reproach.

4The words of the mouth are deep waters,  
    but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream.

5It is not good to be partial to the wicked  
    and so deprive the innocent of justice.

6The lips of fools bring them strife,  
    and their mouths invite a beating.

7The mouths of fools are their undoing,  
    and their lips are a snare to their very lives.

8The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;  
    they go down to the inmost parts.

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels. [Proverbs 18:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2018.8)

The newspaper declared that Pep had taken the life of the cat belonging to the governor’s wife—but he didn’t do it. The only thing he may have been guilty of was chewing the sofa at the governor’s mansion.

Pep was a rambunctious young Labrador retriever owned by Pennsylvania’s governor Gifford Pinchot in the 1920s. The dog actually was sent to Eastern State Penitentiary, where his mug shot was taken with a prisoner identification number. When a newspaper reporter heard about it, he made up the cat story. Because his report appeared in the newspaper, many believed Pep really was a cat-killer.

Israel’s King Solomon knew well the power of misinformation. He wrote, “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts” ([Proverbs 18:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2018.8)). Sometimes our fallen human nature causes us to want to believe things about others that aren’t true.

Yet even when others believe untruths about us, God can still use us for good. In reality, the governor sent Pep to prison so he could be a friend to the inmates there—and he served for many years as a pioneer therapy dog.

God’s purposes for our lives still stand, regardless of what others say or think. When others gossip about us, remember that His opinion—and His love for us—is what matters most.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does it encourage you to know that God isn’t affected by what someone may say or think about you? How will you celebrate His perfect love today?

Abba, Father, thank You for making me Your child. Help me to share Your love with others today.

#### **Insight**

Using a food metaphor, Solomon describes the words of a gossip as “choice morsels” ([Proverbs 18:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2018.8)). This could literally be translated as “things greedily devoured,” a delicious treat. We love to hear and share gossip because it’s tasty and enjoyable. The Good News Translation describes it well: “Gossip is so tasty—how we love to swallow it!” Like food ingested into our inner organs, gossip is easily assimilated into our innermost thoughts. Thus, gossip is readily remembered and retained. Speaking of the damage gossip does to relationships, Solomon warns, “A gossip separates close friends” (16:28). Gossip is like fuel to a scorching fire that destroys everything in its path (26:20–21; [James 3:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.5%E2%80%936)). Because “a gossip betrays a confidence,” we’re advised to “avoid anyone who talks too much” ([Proverbs 20:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2020.19)). For the person who gossips to you will likely gossip about you.

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

# God Calling – 4/30/23

# Springtime

Rejoice in the Spring time of the year. Let there be Spring time in your hearts. The full time of fruit is not yet but there is the promise of the blossom.

Know surely that your lives too are full of glad promise. Such blessings are to be yours. Such joys, such wonders.

All is indeed well. Live in My Sunshine and My Love.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Psalm 4:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/1/23

# Faith— Not Emotion



We walk by faith, not by sight. —[2 Corinthians 5:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A7)

For a while, we are fully aware of God’s concern for us. But then, when God begins to use us in His work, we begin to take on a pitiful look and talk only of our trials and difficulties. And all the while God is trying to make us do our work as hidden people who are not in the spotlight. None of us would be hidden spiritually if we could help it. Can we do our work when it seems that God has sealed up heaven? Some of us always want to be brightly illuminated saints with golden halos and with the continual glow of inspiration, and to have other saints of God dealing with us all the time. A self-assured saint is of no value to God. He is abnormal, unfit for daily life, and completely unlike God. We are here, not as immature angels, but as men and women, to do the work of this world. And we are to do it with an infinitely greater power to withstand the struggle because we have been born from above.

If we continually try to bring back those exceptional moments of inspiration, it is a sign that it is not God we want. We are becoming obsessed with the moments when God did come and speak with us, and we are insisting that He do it again. But what God wants us to do is to “walk by faith.” How many of us have set ourselves aside as if to say, “I cannot do anything else until God appears to me”? He will never do it. We will have to get up on our own, without any inspiration and without any sudden touch from God. Then comes our surprise and we find ourselves exclaiming, “Why, He was there all the time, and I never knew it!” Never live for those exceptional moments— they are surprises. God will give us His touches of inspiration only when He sees that we are not in danger of being led away by them. We must never consider our moments of inspiration as the standard way of life— our work is our standard.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The attitude of a Christian towards the providential order in which he is placed is to recognize that God is behind it for purposes of His own.  Biblical Ethics, 99 R

# CCEL – 5/1/23

The fruit of the Spirit is peace.—[GAL. 5:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

God hath called us to peace.—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.—Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Great peace have they which love thy law.

[Rom. 8:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.6).[I Cor. 7:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html" \l "iCor.7.15). -[John 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.27). -[Rom. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.13).[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12). -[Isa. 26:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3).[Isa. 32:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.32.html" \l "Isa.32.17). -[Prov. 1:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.1.html" \l "Prov.1.33).[Psa. 119:165](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.165).

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” **[Song of Solomon 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.13)**

Lo, the flowery month is come! March winds and April showers have done their work, and the earth is all bedecked with beauty. Come my soul, put on thine holiday attire and go forth to gather garlands of heavenly thoughts. Thou knowest whither to betake thyself, for to thee “the beds of spices” are well known, and thou hast so often smelt the perfume of “the sweet flowers,” that thou wilt go at once to thy well-beloved and find all loveliness, all joy in him. That cheek once so rudely smitten with a rod, oft bedewed with tears of sympathy and then defiled with spittle—that cheek as it smiles with mercy is as fragrant aromatic to my heart. Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting, O Lord Jesus, and therefore I will find my dearest delight in praising thee. Those cheeks were furrowed by the plough of grief, and crimsoned with red lines of blood from thy thorn-crowned temples; such marks of love unbounded cannot but charm my soul far more than “pillars of perfume.” If I may not see the whole of his face I would behold his cheeks, for the least glimpse of him is exceedingly refreshing to my spiritual sense and yields a variety of delights. In Jesus I find not only fragrance, but a bed of spices; not one flower, but all manner of sweet flowers. He is to me my rose and my lily, my heartsease and my cluster of camphire. When he is with me it is May all the year round, and my soul goes forth to wash her happy face in the morning-dew of his grace, and to solace herself with the singing of the birds of his promises. Precious Lord Jesus, let me in very deed know the blessedness which dwells in abiding, unbroken fellowship with thee. I am a poor worthless one, whose cheek thou hast deigned to kiss! O let me kiss thee in return with the kisses of my lips.

# Word Live – 5/1/23

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

# Scripture Union – 5/1/23

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

# Today in the Word – 5/1/23

# Daily Devotional | The End of an EraThe End of an Era

**Read:** [**1 Kings 1**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1)

### **Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King**

1 When King David was very old, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. 2So his attendants said to him, “Let us look for a young virgin to serve the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm.”

3Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4The woman was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no sexual relations with her.

5Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, “I will be king.” So he got chariots and horses[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8723a)] ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. 6(His father had never rebuked him by asking, “Why do you behave as you do?” He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)

7Adonijah conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. 8But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David’s special guard did not join Adonijah.

9Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, 10but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon.

11Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, “Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king, and our lord David knows nothing about it? 12Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 13Go in to King David and say to him, ‘My lord the king, did you not swear to me your servant: “Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne”? Why then has Adonijah become king?’ 14While you are still there talking to the king, I will come in and add my word to what you have said.”

15So Bathsheba went to see the aged king in his room, where Abishag the Shunammite was attending him. 16Bathsheba bowed down, prostrating herself before the king.

“What is it you want?” the king asked.

17She said to him, “My lord, you yourself swore to me your servant by the Lord your God: ‘Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne.’ 18But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, do not know about it. 19He has sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and has invited all the king’s sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant. 20My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.”

22While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. 23And the king was told, “Nathan the prophet is here.” So he went before the king and bowed with his face to the ground.

24Nathan said, “Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? 25Today he has gone down and sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep. He has invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. Right now they are eating and drinking with him and saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ 26But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. 27Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

### **David Makes Solomon King**

28Then King David said, “Call in Bathsheba.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before him.

29The king then took an oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, 30I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place.”

31Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground, prostrating herself before the king, and said, “May my lord King David live forever!”

32King David said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” When they came before the king, 33he said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. 34There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ 35Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

36Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. 37As the Lord was with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David!”

38So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon mount King David’s mule, and they escorted him to Gihon. 39Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” 40And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

41Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. On hearing the sound of the trumpet, Joab asked, “What’s the meaning of all the noise in the city?”

42Even as he was speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. Adonijah said, “Come in. A worthy man like you must be bringing good news.”

43“Not at all!” Jonathan answered. “Our lord King David has made Solomon king. 44The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king’s mule, 45and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That’s the noise you hear. 46Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. 47Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make Solomon’s name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!’ And the king bowed in worship on his bed 48and said, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.’”

49At this, all Adonijah’s guests rose in alarm and dispersed. 50But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51Then Solomon was told, “Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’”

52Solomon replied, “If he shows himself to be worthy, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die.” 53Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, “Go to your home.”

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Kings 1:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1+&version=NIV#en-NIV-8723) Or *charioteers*

Investors dislike uncertainty. Who wants to entrust their hard-earned money to an opportunity that is shrouded in mystery? We want clarity if we can get it. As the curtain rises on 1 Kings, we see a great deal of uncertainty about who will sit on the throne of David. Now an old man, King David was too fragile to keep himself warm. More importantly we discover that he had not set his house in order: no one knew who would be king after him. Nature abhors a vacuum and so does politics!

I will surely carry out to this very day what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel. 1 Kings 1:30

David’s inaction created an opportunity for his son Adonijah to make a play for the throne. Nathan and Bathsheba caught wind of the plot and reminded the king of the promise he had made. Awakened to the crisis, David appointed Solomon as his successor. His kingdom, and we readers as well, gave a sigh of relief, for Solomon was loved of the Lord (2 Sam. 12:24–25).

David had been a beloved ruler who set the human standard for kingship in Israel. Yet we must acknowledge that he was a flawed man. These flaws created problems for others. His inability to discipline his children, his murder of Uriah, his abuse of power with Bathsheba, and more, meant that his people could not count on even their best leader to provide perfect leadership. As good as David was, God’s people needed better.

God had promised David that his kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 7). More than just a long line of kings, this promise pointed to Jesus, the forever King who would “ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and righteousness” (Ps. 45:4). At the start of the New Testament, we note that the succession plan took a great step forward to Jesus Christ.

**Apply the Word**

While we are often disappointed and disillusioned by human-appointed leaders, one day our Forever King will sit on the throne. There will be no uncertainly then! We will be led by the best leader possible.

## **Pray with Us**

On every occasion when a human being disappoints us, may we be reminded that our hope is in You alone, Lord. Keep our eyes on You so we will never lose faith.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

# Our Daily Bread – 5/1/23

# Seeds of Faith

**Read:** [**1 Peter 3:8–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%203.8%E2%80%9316)

### **Suffering for Doing Good**

8Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10For,

“Whoever would love life  
    and see good days  
must keep their tongue from evil  
    and their lips from deceitful speech.  
11They must turn from evil and do good;  
    they must seek peace and pursue it.  
12For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
    and his ears are attentive to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30437a)]

13Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30439b)]; do not be frightened.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30439c)] 15But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Peter 3:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-30437) Psalm 34:12-16
2. [1 Peter 3:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-30439) Or *fear what they fear*
3. [1 Peter 3:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3%3A8%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-30439) Isaiah 8:12

Always be prepared to give an answer . . . for the hope that you have. [1 Peter 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%203.15)

Last spring, the night before our lawn was to be aerated, a violent windstorm blew the seeds off our maple tree in one fell swoop. So when the aerating machine broke up the compacted soil by pulling small “cores” out of the ground, it planted hundreds of maple seeds in my yard. Just two short weeks later, I had the beginnings of a maple forest growing up through my lawn!

As I (frustratedly) surveyed the misplaced foliage, I was struck by the prolific abundance of new life a single tree had spawned. Each of the miniature trees became a picture for me of the new life in Christ that I—as merely one person—can share with others. We each will have countless opportunities to “give the reason for the hope that [we] have” ([1 Peter 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%203.15)) in the course of our lives.

When we “suffer for what is right” with the hope of Jesus (v. 14), it’s visible to those around us and might just become a point of curiosity to those who don’t yet know God personally. If we’re ready when they ask, then we may share the seed through which God brings forth new life. We don’t have to share it with everyone all at once—in some kind of spiritual windstorm. Rather, we gently and respectfully drop the seed of faith into a heart ready to receive it.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who in your life is sharing or asking about the reason for your hope? What will you share with them?

Jesus, thank You for growing the seed of faith in my life. Help me to share the reason for my hope—You—with those who ask and may they grow in their love for You.

Learn more about [sharing and defending your faith.](https://odbu.org/topic/ca101-01-lecture/?utm_source=2023+05+01+ODB+Article&utm_medium=Digital+link&utm_campaign=2023+05+01+ODB+Article+-+Apologetics+Basics&utm_id=2023+05+01+ODB+Article+-+Apologetics+Basics)

#### **Insight**

Peter’s first letter was primarily written to believers in Jesus who’d been scattered among the five provinces of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), no doubt because of the persecution waged against the church at Jerusalem (see 1:1–2). However, it’s clear that the churches addressed were a mix of Jews and gentiles. The Bible Knowledge Commentary offers this insight: “This epistle could be understood as a handbook written for ambassadors to a hostile foreign land. The author, knowing persecution would arise, carefully prescribed conduct designed to bring honor to the One they represented. The purpose then of 1 Peter was to encourage believers to face persecution so that the true grace of Jesus Christ would be evidenced in them (5:12).” One of Peter’s major themes is that when believers in Christ suffer for Him, they’re to focus on the eternal and not on temporal suffering (3:8–4:19).

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

# God Calling – 5/1/23

# Delay Is Not Denial

Read the lessons of Divine control in Nature's laws.

Nature is but the expression of Eternal Thought in Time. Study the outward form - grasp the Eternal Thought, and if you can read the thoughts of the Father, then indeed you know Him.

Leave Me out of nothing. Love all My ways with you. Know indeed that "All is well."  Delay is but the wonderful and all-loving restraint of your Father - not reluctance, not desire to deny - but the Divine control of a Father who can scarcely brook the delay.

Delay has to be - sometimes.  Your lives are so linked up with those of others, so bound by circumstances that to let your desire have instant fulfillment might in many cases cause another, as earnest prayer, to go unanswered.

But think for a moment of the Love and thoughtful care that seek to harmonize and reconcile all your desires and longings and prayers.

Delay is not denial - not even withholding. It is the opportunity for God to work out your problems and accomplish your desires in the most wonderful way possible for you.

Oh! children, trust Me. Remember that your Maker is also your Servant, quick to fulfill, quick to achieve, faithful in accomplishment.  Yes.  All is well.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than  your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.  Isaiah 55:9