# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/27/21

# 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 – 4/27/21

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 – 4/27/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/27/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/27/21

# A Praying Family

**Read:** [**Acts 10:1–48**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+10%3a1%e2%80%9348)

### **Cornelius Calls for Peter**

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

7When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

### **Peter’s Vision**

9About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

14“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

15The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

16This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. 18They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Acts+10%3A1%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27279a)] men are looking for you. 20So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

21Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

22The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

### **Peter at Cornelius’s House**

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

27While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

30Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ 33So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

34Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

39“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46For they heard them speaking in tongues[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Acts+10%3A1%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27306b)] and praising God.

Then Peter said, 47“Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 10:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Acts+10%3A1%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#en-NIV-27279) One early manuscript two; other manuscripts do not have the number.
2. [Acts 10:46](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Acts+10%3A1%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#en-NIV-27306) Or other languages

Puritan preacher Thomas Brookes once said, “A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of heaven.” Praying as a family can be challenging. But when a family learns to pray together, amazing things can happen. Such was the case for Cornelius and his family as they feared the Jewish God and prayed to Him regularly.

God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Acts 10:31

In Acts 10, we meet Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He and his family prayed regularly to God (v. 2). They would have been part of a small minority of Gentiles who worshiped Yahweh. During one of his prayer times, the Lord gave Cornelius a vision to meet Simon Peter (vv. 3–6). The next day, Peter was praying when he too had a vision from the Lord (v. 9). Peter’s vision was not about food laws, but rather God’s attitude toward the Gentiles. The Lord was signaling a new era for Jesus’ followers that would include Jews and non-Jews into one family. Without Peter’s vision, it is unlikely the apostle would have ventured to Cornelius’s home and met this God-fearing family.

Peter was able to comprehend the Lord’s message because he was in a spirit of prayer. He quickly determined to obey God. Similarly, in prayer, Cornelius and his family sought after the Triune God even though they had very little knowledge of everything that happened in Jerusalem. Because Peter, Cornelius, and his family were all in prayer, they were able to build bridges that broke through division. The saving grace of Jesus was now offered to all. The family table had been extended for all to come and have a place.

>> Do you pray with your family? Spend time together this week asking God to work in your family and to use you for His purpose. Even if you are praying together for the first time when a family prays together, amazing things can happen.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, we come before you as a family and ask you to use us to accomplish your purposes. Unite us and give us opportunities to demonstrate your sacrificial love to those in need.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/27/21

# Learning from Foolishness

[**Ecclesiastes 10:1–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%2010.1%E2%80%9314)

10 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,  
    so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.  
2The heart of the wise inclines to the right,  
    but the heart of the fool to the left.  
3Even as fools walk along the road,  
    they lack sense  
    and show everyone how stupid they are.  
4If a ruler’s anger rises against you,  
    do not leave your post;  
    calmness can lay great offenses to rest.

5There is an evil I have seen under the sun,  
    the sort of error that arises from a ruler:  
6Fools are put in many high positions,  
    while the rich occupy the low ones.  
7I have seen slaves on horseback,  
    while princes go on foot like slaves.

8Whoever digs a pit may fall into it;  
    whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.  
9Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them;  
    whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

10If the ax is dull  
    and its edge unsharpened,  
more strength is needed,  
    but skill will bring success.

11If a snake bites before it is charmed,  
    the charmer receives no fee.

12Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious,  
    but fools are consumed by their own lips.  
13At the beginning their words are folly;  
    at the end they are wicked madness—  
14    and fools multiply words.

No one knows what is coming—  
    who can tell someone else what will happen after them?

The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense. [Ecclesiastes 10:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%2010.2%E2%80%933)

A man walked into a convenience store in Wollongong, Australia, put a $20 bill on the counter and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the $20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer? Fifteen dollars.

We all act foolishly at times—even if, unlike this thief, we’re trying to do the right thing. The key is how we learn from our foolish behavior. Without correction, our poor choices can become habits, which will negatively shape our character. We’ll become “fools . . . [who] lack sense” ([Ecclesiastes 10:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%2010.3)).

Sometimes it’s hard to admit our foolishness because of the extra work it requires. Perhaps we need to reflect on a particular character flaw, and that’s painful. Or maybe we need to admit that a decision was made hastily and next time we should take more care. Whatever the reason, it never pays to ignore our foolish ways.

Thankfully, God can use our foolishness to discipline and shape us. Discipline isn’t “pleasant at the time,” but its training yields good fruit in the long run ([Hebrews 12:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2012.11)). Let’s accept our Father’s discipline for our foolish behavior and ask Him to make us more like the sons and daughters He intends us to be.

By:  [Con Campbell](https://odb.org/author/constantinecampbell/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s a recent foolish choice you’ve made? What do you think God wants you to learn from it?

Thank You, Father, for using my foolishness to train me. May I accept Your discipline graciously as You continue to work in me.

#### **Insight**

In Ecclesiastes, wisdom and folly are often set in sharp contrast. Folly (or the fool) is tied to wickedness (7:17; 10:12) and is the opposite of wisdom (2:19). As Michael Eaton in his commentary on Ecclesiastes states, “[Folly] results from an inner deficiency of the personality (10:2) which becomes obvious to observers (v. 3), especially in the fool’s speech (v. 14).” In Jeremiah we read that the foolish are “skilled in doing evil” (4:22) and lack moral sensitivity: They’re “senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear” (5:21).

# God Calling – 4/27/21

# 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 – 4/28/21

# 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 – 4/28/21

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 – 4/28/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/28/21

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# Today in the Word – 4/28/21

# Transformed by God

**Read:** [**Ephesians 1:15–23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1%3a15%e2%80%9323)

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

15For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, 16I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Ephesians+1%3A15%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29224a)] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 1:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Ephesians+1%3A15%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-29224) Or a spirit

As faculty at a Bible college, we want our students to go beyond just studying the Bible. We want them not just to know about God but also to grow in their relationship with Him. We want them not just to believe in God but to actively follow and live for Him. The same goes for you and me too. Don’t just be informed about Him, be transformed by Him.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you. Ephesians 1:18

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians has at least two prayers in it. In this first chapter of his letter, Paul acknowledges the Ephesians’ faith in Christ Jesus, their love for one another, and thanks the Lord for what He has been doing in their lives (vv. 15–16). This is no small accomplishment, especially when so many others struggle with loving the Lord and loving others. So, Paul’s prayer for them is that through the power of the Spirit, they know God better (v. 17).

In verses 18 and 19, Paul reminds us that total transformation comes when we take part in the riches of the glorious inheritance of the saints in heaven. This world as we know it is not our final resting place. Through Christ, we have been given great hope and great power. Paul explains that the same incredible power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead and seated Him on His heavenly throne lives on in believers (vv. 19–23). The resurrection power of Jesus was not just a one-time display of God’s greatness and glory, it is showcased every time a believer allows the Spirit to transform an area of his or her life.

That is awe-inspiring power, available to you and to me! Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians is magnificent because it applies to us as well. Don’t just pray to pray. Instead, pray to know God and allow His power to transform your life!

>> What areas of your life can you ask God to transform? How can you get to know Him better and walk more closely with Him?

We long to know you intimately and increasingly, Lord God. Our lives are open to you. Invade every aspect of our identities; Flood our minds and devote our hearts to you.

### **Pray with Us**

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/28/21

# Cuddling In

 **Read:** [**Psalm 116:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116.1%E2%80%937)

1I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;  
    he heard my cry for mercy.  
2Because he turned his ear to me,  
    I will call on him as long as I live.

3The cords of death entangled me,  
    the anguish of the grave came over me;  
    I was overcome by distress and sorrow.  
4Then I called on the name of the Lord:  
    “Lord, save me!”

5The Lord is gracious and righteous;  
    our God is full of compassion.  
6The Lord protects the unwary;  
    when I was brought low, he saved me.

7Return to your rest, my soul,  
    for the Lord has been good to you.

Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. [Psalm 116:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116.7)

“Daddy, will you read to me?” my daughter asked. It’s not an unusual question for a child to make of a parent. But my daughter is eleven now. These days, such requests are fewer than they were when she was younger. “Yes,” I said happily, and she curled up next to me on the couch.

As I read to her (from The Fellowship of the Ring), she practically melted into me. It was one of those glorious moments as a parent, when we feel perhaps just an inkling of the perfect love our Father has for us and His deep desire for us to “cuddle in” to His presence and love.

I realized in that moment that I’m a lot like my eleven-year-old. Much of the time, I’m focused on being independent. It’s so easy to lose touch with God’s love for us, a tender and protective love that [Psalm 116](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116) describes as “gracious and righteous . . . full of compassion” (v. 5). It’s a love where, like my daughter, I can curl up in God’s lap, at home in His delight for me.

[Psalm 116:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116.7) suggests that we might need to regularly remind ourselves of God’s good love, and then crawl up into His waiting arms: “Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.” And indeed, He has.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When was the last time you rested quietly in God’s love? What barriers, if any, might keep you from experiencing the Father’s delight for you?

Father, thank You for Your perfect love for me. Help me to remember that love and to rest in Your goodness and delight in me.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 116](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116) is part of a collection of six psalms ([Psalms 113–118](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20113%E2%80%93118)) known as the “Egyptian Hallel,” so called because the element of praising God (Hebrew hālal) occurs throughout. These praise songs were sung during the Passover remembrance of the Israelites’ deliverance from Egyptian slavery: [Psalms 113–114](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20113%E2%80%93114) were recited before the Passover meal and [Psalms 115–118](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20115%E2%80%93118) afterward. The hymn that Jesus and the disciples sang after the Last Supper could’ve been one of these psalms ([Matthew 26:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2026.30)). In [Psalm 116](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116), the author thanks God for delivering him from the jaws of death (vv. 3, 8). Assured of God’s sovereignty over his life even in death, he writes, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants” (v. 15). The grateful psalmist asks: “What can I offer the Lord for all he has done for me?” (v. 12 nlt). He committed himself to “walk before the Lord” (v. 9) and to serve Him (v. 16).

# God Calling – 4/28/21

# 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 – 4/29/21

# 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 – 4/29/21

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 – 4/29/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/29/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/29/21

# Christ in You

**Read:** [**Ephesians 3:14–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+3%3a14%e2%80%9321)

### **A Prayer for the Ephesians**

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom every family[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Ephesians+3%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29267a)] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 3:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Ephesians+3%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-29267) The Greek for family (patria) is derived from the Greek for father (pater).

Robert Munger, a Presbyterian minister, once wrote a small booklet titled “My Heart, Christ’s Home.” In story form, he depicts Jesus being welcomed into our heart as a guest. As Jesus explores each room, and even the hidden hall closet, Munger makes the case that when believers invite Jesus into their lives, He ought to occupy every aspect of it. Munger asks, “If your heart were a home, would Jesus Christ be an honored guest or would he be a permanent resident?”

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Ephesians 3:17

In chapter 3 of Ephesians, Paul prays that Christ takes up a permanent residence in their hearts and in their church. How are we supposed to pray for the church? We know we should, but what should our prayers be like? Here Paul shows us how. He asks that the Ephesians be strengthened with power through the Lord’s glorious riches. He acknowledges that if a church is to be strong in the midst of adversity and attacks by the enemy, it can only happen by God’s strength and power (v. 16). He then moves to pray for the church which is the inner being, or inner self. Some portions of Scripture emphasize prayer for our physical self. Here,

Paul prays for something deeper. He prays that Christ may dwell in their faithful hearts (v. 17). The word “dwell” connotes the idea of abiding forever. Paul prays that these believers will be rooted and established in love (v. 17). Using both an agricultural and an architectural term he drives home the point: the deeper the roots the higher the tree. The stronger the foundation the more fortified the structure. He concludes by praying that the depths of the richness of God’s grace, love, and greatness be lifted high in the church and throughout all generations (vv. 18–21).

>> The text of Robert Munger’s booklet is [available online](https://www.usna.edu/Navigators/_files/documents/MHCH.pdf). Read it and spend time in prayer, asking Christ to dwell in your life and in the life of the church. Pray that He will not be just an honored guest but a permanent resident.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, we want you to permeate every area of our lives, for nothing is set apart from you. Consecrate our work, our home, our leisure, and our relationship to you. Teach us to worship you in all we do.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/29/21

# Working Together

 **Read:** [**Exodus 18:13–23**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018.13%E2%80%9323)

13The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 14When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

15Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. 16Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.”

17Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. 18You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied. [Exodus 18:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018.23)

Joe worked more than twelve hours a day, often without taking breaks. Starting a charitable business demanded so much time and energy that he had little left to offer his wife and children when he got home. After the toll of chronic stress landed Joe in the hospital, a friend offered to organize a team to help him. Though he dreaded giving up control, Joe knew he couldn’t keep up his current pace. He agreed to trust his friend—and God—as he delegated responsibilities to the group of people they chose together. A year later, Joe admitted that the charity and his family could never have prospered if he’d refused the help God had sent him.

God didn’t design people to thrive without the support of a loving community. In [Exodus 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018), Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness. He tried serving God’s people as a teacher, a counselor, and a judge all on his own. When his father-in-law visited, he offered Moses advice: “You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out,” said Jethro. “The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” ([Exodus 18:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018.18)). He encouraged Moses to share the workload with faithful people. Moses accepted help and the whole community benefited.

When we trust that God works in and through all His people as we work together, we can find true rest.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you trust God by asking for help or offering help to someone in leadership this week? How has He provided you the support of trustworthy people?

Father God, thank You for never asking me to handle life without Your help or the support of others.

#### **Insight**

In the first half of [Exodus 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018), Moses’ father-in-law is called Jethro (vv. 1, 5, 9, 12). But in [Exodus 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%202), when we first meet the man who will become Moses’ father-in law, he’s called Reuel (vv. 18, 20). Then, [Numbers 10:29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2010.29) refers to “Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law.” Are Jethro and Reuel two different people? Scholars believe that Jethro may have been a title, or that Moses’ father-in-law went by two different names. [Exodus 2:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%202.18), [20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exodus%202.20) and [3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exodus%203.1) use the names interchangeably. And in 2:16 and 3:1 the man is referred to as a “priest of Midian.” This is the man who advises Moses in [Exodus 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2018).

# God Calling – 4/29/21

# 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 – 4/30/21

# 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 – 4/30/21

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 – 4/30/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/30/21

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# Today in the Word – 4/30/21

# A Person of Prayer

**Read:** [**James 5:13–18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+5%3a13%e2%80%9318)

### **The Prayer of Faith**

13Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

17Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Dutch Christian and Holocaust survivor Corrie Ten Boom was known as a woman of prayer. She once said, “What wings are to a bird and sails to a ship, so is prayer to the soul.” As we end our study on powerful prayers from the Bible, one of the unifying themes we have seen is that each praying person exhibited a deep love for the Lord. As believers, we know there is great power in prayer, and a life steeped in prayer can be greatly used by God.

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16

The half-brother of Jesus, Pastor James, knew this too. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem. In his letter to his flock scattered among the nations, he emphasized the importance of prayer in the Christian’s life. In our text today he begins by saying that if anyone is in trouble, happy, or sick, prayer and praise is always the answer (vv. 13–15). He also admonished them to confess their sins to one another and pray for healing. He summarizes his thoughts by saying, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (v. 16).

In this letter, James reminds us that a life steeped in prayer spills over into action. While we are found righteous only because of Jesus, our personal walk ought to reflect Christ’s teachings. When we center our lives on Jesus and live in a way that is worthy of our calling, our prayers become even more powerful and effective. Is it any wonder that some say Mary Queen of Scots dreaded the prayers of Reformer and Pastor John Knox more than the armies of King Philip?

James concludes by pointing to Elijah as a biblical example of a man who lived a godly life and prayed earnestly and effectively (vv. 17–18). The prayers and the lives of faithful men and women are powerful and can accomplish much!

>> May the lessons we’ve learned this month challenge us to become people of prayer. Remember that the life you live is just as important as the prayers you pray.

### **Pray with Us**

When we encounter problems, some of us complain, some rage, and some deny. Lord, help us cultivate an attitude of prayer in all circumstances and praise you as the giver of peace, wisdom, and righteousness.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/30/21

# Milk Comes First

 **Read:** [**Hebrews 5:11–6:2**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%205.11%E2%80%936.2)

### **Warning Against Falling Away**

11We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

6 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+5%3A11%E2%80%936%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30046a)] and of faith in God, 2instruction about cleansing rites,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+5%3A11%E2%80%936%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30047b)] the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Hebrews 6:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+5%3A11%E2%80%936%3A2&version=NIV#en-NIV-30046) Or from useless rituals
2. [Hebrews 6:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+5%3A11%E2%80%936%3A2&version=NIV#en-NIV-30047) Or about baptisms

Solid food is for the mature. [Hebrews 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%205.14)

In the seventh century, what is now called the United Kingdom was many kingdoms often at war. When one king, Oswald of Northumbria, became a believer in Jesus, he called for a missionary to bring the gospel to his region. A man named Corman was sent, but things didn’t go well. Finding the English “stubborn,” “barbarous,” and uninterested in his preaching, he returned home frustrated.

“I am of the opinion,” a monk named Aidan told Corman, “that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been.” Instead of giving the Northumbrians “the milk of more easy doctrine,” Corman had given them teaching they couldn’t yet grasp. Aidan went to Northumbria, adapted his preaching to the people’s understanding, and thousands became believers in Jesus.

Aidan got this sensitive approach to mission from Scripture. “I gave you milk, not solid food,” Paul told the Corinthians, “for you were not yet ready for it” ([1 Corinthians 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.2)). Before right living can be expected from people, Hebrews says, basic teaching about Jesus, repentance, and baptism must be grasped ([Hebrews 5:13–6:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%205.13%E2%80%936.2)). While maturity should follow (5:14), let’s not miss the order. Milk comes before meat. People can’t obey teaching they don’t understand.

The faith of the Northumbrians ultimately spread to the rest of the country and beyond. Like Aidan, when sharing the gospel with others, we meet people where they are.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In simple terms, how would you explain the gospel? How can you avoid expecting people who aren’t believers in Jesus to think or behave as you do?

Jesus, thank You for reaching me in ways I could understand.

#### **Insight**

It’s important for believers in Jesus to be able to explain their faith in easily understood terms, but the writer of Hebrews was in fact urging his readers to “move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity” (6:1). This section of the letter contains a hint of exasperation with these believers. They had stagnated. Yet there’s a strong thread of encouragement throughout Hebrews. The writer is laying out the case for Jesus as superior to everything else (chs. 1–5); now he wants to build up these believers. “We are convinced of better things in your case,” he wrote, “the things that have to do with salvation” (6:9). Later, he exhorts his readers to emulate the faithful who’d gone before them (ch. 11) and to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus” (12:1–2).

# God Calling – 4/30/21

# 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 – 5/1/21

# 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 – 5/1/21

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 – 5/1/21

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

# Scripture Union – 5/1/21

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

# Today in the Word – 5/1/21

# May email and web banners Dear Thessalonians

**Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 1:1**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+1%3a1)

1 Paul, Silas[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+1+Thessalonians+1%3A1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29562a)] and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Thessalonians 1:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+1+Thessalonians+1%3A1&version=NIV#en-NIV-29562) Greek Silvanus, a variant of Silas

A hub of political and economic power. People known for idol worship. Welcome to Thessalonica, the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia. This month we’ll begin by reading Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, probably written from Corinth in about 51 A.D., during Paul’s second missionary journey.

Grace and peace to you. Thessalonians 1:1

The bustling city of Thessalonica had a population as high as 200,000. Located at the intersection of major trade routes, it boasted one of the best harbors on the Aegean Sea. People in the city worshiped Greco- Roman gods and some Egyptian gods, as well as the emperor (Caesar). Many of these religions included acts of sexual immorality among their rituals.

Paul and his team had planted the Thessalonian church, which included some Jews but was mainly made up of Gentiles. He’d only been able to stay in the city a few months because active Jewish resistance to the gospel had forced him out of town (Acts 17:1–9). Paul is clearly identified as the author of this letter (1 Thess. 1:1). Silas and Timothy are named as fellow missionaries. Timothy had apparently just visited Paul with a good report about the Thessalonians (3:6–8), and would likely have carried this epistle back to them.

Paul knew the Thessalonian church needed more teaching than he’d been able to give in his short time there. Therefore, his purpose in writing this letter was—within the larger context of Christ’s Second Coming—to encourage the young church to stand firm and keep growing, to give further instruction on godly living, and to reassure them that one day all believers will be raised to eternal life. Additional themes of the book include the transforming power of the gospel, righteousness, suffering, and the end times.

>> We encourage you to begin this month’s study by reading the first of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians in one sitting. Worried about time? It will take you at most 10–15 minutes!

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, thank you for the teaching we have access to in your Word. Thank you for mature leaders like Paul and Silas whose lives and teaching point us to you.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 5/1/21

# Dwelling in Our Hearts

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 3:14–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.14%E2%80%9321)

### **A Prayer for the Ephesians**

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom every family[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+3%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29267a)] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 3:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+3%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-29267) The Greek for family (patria) is derived from the Greek for father (pater).

I pray that . . . he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. [Ephesians 3:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.16%E2%80%9317)

Sometimes the words of children can jolt us into a deeper understanding of God’s truth. One evening when my daughter was young, I told her about one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith—that God through His Son and Spirit dwells in His children. As I tucked her into bed, I said that Jesus was with her and in her. “He’s in my tummy?” she asked. “Well, you haven’t swallowed Him,” I replied. “But He’s right there with you.”

My daughter’s literal translation of Jesus being “in her tummy” made me stop and consider how when I asked Jesus to be my Savior, He came and took residence within me.

The apostle Paul referred to this mystery when he prayed that the Holy Spirit would strengthen the believers in Ephesus so that Christ would “dwell in [their] hearts through faith” ([Ephesians 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.17)). With Jesus living within, they could grasp how deeply He loved them. Fueled by this love, they would mature in their faith and love others with humility and gentleness while speaking the truth in love (4:2, 25).

Jesus dwelling inside His followers means that His love never leaves those who’ve welcomed Him into their lives. His love that surpasses knowledge (3:19) roots us to Him, helping us to understand how deeply He loves us.

Words written for children can say it best: “Yes, Jesus loves me!”

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does Jesus dwelling inside you give you great comfort? How can you grow closer to God knowing that His power gives you strength?

God, You’re not far off, but are close to me. May I delight in Your love and share it with others.

#### **Insight**

Paul’s typical pattern in his church letters was to include a section of teaching (doctrine) followed by a section of practice (application). In his Ephesian letter, chapters 1–3 form the doctrinal instruction, and chapters 4–6 apply that teaching to everyday living. Today’s reading ([Ephesians 3:14–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.14%E2%80%9321)) bridges those two sections and is one of the magnificent benediction/doxology portions of Scripture. In the benediction (a statement of blessing; vv. 14–19), the apostle prays that the Ephesian believers might comprehend the immeasurable love, greatness, faithfulness, and power of the living God. This benediction then becomes a doxology (a statement of praise; vv. 20–21) that finishes with “to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” What an appropriate way for Paul to conclude the doctrinal section of Ephesians by reminding us how blessed we are and how great God is!

# God Calling – 5/1/21

# 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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/2/21

# The Patience To Wait for the Vision

Though it tarries, wait for it… —[Habakkuk 2:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Habakkuk+2%3A3)

Patience is not the same as indifference; patience conveys the idea of someone who is tremendously strong and able to withstand all assaults. Having the vision of God is the source of patience because it gives us God’s true and proper inspiration. Moses endured, not because of his devotion to his principles of what was right, nor because of his sense of duty to God, but because he had a vision of God. “…he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” ([Hebrews 11:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11:27)). A person who has the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue— he is devoted to God Himself. You always know when the vision is of God because of the inspiration that comes with it. Things come to you with greatness and add vitality to your life because everything is energized by God. He may give you a time spiritually, with no word from Himself at all, just as His Son experienced during His time of temptation in the wilderness. When God does that, simply endure, and the power to endure will be there because you see God.

“Though it tarries, wait for it….” The proof that we have the vision is that we are reaching out for more than we have already grasped. It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually. The psalmist said, “What shall I render to the Lord…? I will take up the cup of salvation…” ([Psalm 116:12-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+116:12-13)). We are apt to look for satisfaction within ourselves and say, “Now I’ve got it! Now I am completely sanctified. Now I can endure.” Instantly we are on the road to ruin. Our reach must exceed our grasp. Paul said, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on…” ([Philippians 3:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3:12)). If we have only what we have experienced, we have nothing. But if we have the inspiration of the vision of God, we have more than we can experience. Beware of the danger of spiritual relaxation.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  Not Knowing Whither, 903 R

# CCEL – 5/2/21

Surely theLordis in this place; and I knew it not.—[GEN. 28:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.28.html" \l "Gen.28.16)

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.—Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded?—Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Ye are the temple of living God.

[Matt. 18:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.18.html" \l "Matt.18.20). -[Matt. 28:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.28.html" \l "Matt.28.20). -[Exo. 33:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.14).[Psa. 139:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.7). -[Jer. 23:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.23).[I Kgs. 8:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iKgs.8.html" \l "iKgs.8.27). -[Isa. 57:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.57.html" \l "Isa.57.15). -[II Cor. 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16).

“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.” **[John 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.15)**

It is a sweet and blessed event which will occur to all believers in God’s own time—the going home to be with Jesus. In a few more years the Lord’s soldiers, who are now fighting “the good fight of faith” will have done with conflict, and have entered into the joy of their Lord. But although Christ prays that his people may eventually be with him where he is, he does not ask that they may be taken at once away from this world to heaven. He wishes them to stay here. Yet how frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, “O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest;” but Christ does not pray like that, he leaves us in his Father’s hands, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each be gathered into our Master’s garner. Jesus does not plead for our instant removal by death, for to abide in the flesh is needful for others if not profitable for ourselves. He asks that we may be kept from evil, but he never asks for us to be admitted to the inheritance in glory till we are of full age. Christians often want to die when they have any trouble. Ask them why, and they tell you, “Because we would be with the Lord.” We fear it is not so much because they are longing to be with the Lord, as because they desire to get rid of their troubles; else they would feel the same wish to die at other times when not under the pressure of trial. They want to go home, not so much for the Saviour’s company, as to be at rest. Now it is quite right to desire to depart if we can do it in the same spirit that Paul did, because to be with Christ is far better, but the wish to escape from trouble is a selfish one. Rather let your care and wish be to glorify God by your life here as long as he pleases, even though it be in the midst of toil, and conflict, and suffering, and leave him to say when “it is enough.”

# Word Live – 5/2/21

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

# Scripture Union – 5/2/21

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

# Today in the Word – 5/2/21

# Thankful Remembrances

**Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 1:2–3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+1%3a2%e2%80%933)

### **Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians’ Faith**

2We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 3We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gratitude helps build community. That’s why California educator Mike Fauteux built an online tool to promote more gratitude in schools. Called GiveThx, this app provides a way for students to write thank-you notes to each other. Teachers can even start “gratitude waves” aimed at particular students who might need extra encouragement.

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 1 Thessalonians 1:2

Paul remembered his Thessalonian friends with thankfulness to the Lord (v. 2). Specifically, his prayers focused on their “work produced by faith,” their “labor prompted by love,” and their “endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3). Faith, hope, and love are often mentioned together in Paul’s epistles (see 1 Cor. 13:13). Here these qualities are treated as causes and paired with effects. That is, faith leads to work or good deeds (Eph. 2:8–10; James 2:14–17), love leads to labor for the Lord, and hope in Christ’s return leads to endurance or perseverance through difficulties and persecution.

Paul was thankful that these causes and effects were true in the lives of the Thessalonians. He prayed that this would become even more true as the church continued to mature. The verb “remember” is more substantial in Greek and Hebrew than in English. Biblical remembering is not merely the mental activity of recalling something. It includes action. For example, when God said to Noah, “I will remember,” it means He will keep His promise (Gen. 9:12–17). When we are told, “Remember your Creator,” it means we should worship and obey God throughout our entire lives (Eccl. 12:1–7). So when Paul said, “We remember,” it means that in addition to praying for them, he stood by, ready to help them grow in discipleship. How? By writing this letter.

Who can you remember today? We can remember others by consistently lifting them up to the Lord in prayer. And consider how your “remembrances” can be accompanied by concrete godly actions.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, as we remember those you have placed on our hearts, stoke our faith into works on their behalf, stir our love into service, and strengthen our hope into prayerful endurance.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 5/2/21

# What Can’t Be Seen

 **Read:** [**Hebrews 11:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1%E2%80%936)

### **Faith in Action**

11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for.

3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30178a)] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Hebrews 11:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11%3A1%E2%80%936&version=NIV#en-NIV-30178) Gen. 5:24

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. [Hebrews 11:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1)

Historians say the Atomic Age began on July 16, 1945, when the first nuclear weapon was detonated in a remote desert of New Mexico. But Greek philosopher Democritus (c. 460–370 bc) was exploring the existence and power of the atom long before the invention of anything that could even see these tiny building blocks of the universe. Democritus comprehended more than he could see and atomic theory was the result.

The Scriptures tell us that the essence of faith is embracing what can’t be seen. [Hebrews 11:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1) affirms, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” This assurance isn’t the result of wishful or positive thinking. It’s confidence in the God we can’t see but whose existence is the truest reality in the universe. His reality is displayed in His creative works ([Psalm 19:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2019.1)) and made visible by revealing His invisible character and ways in His Son, Jesus, who came to show the Father’s love to us ([John 1:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.18)).

This is the God in whom “we live and move and have our being,” as the apostle Paul put it ([Acts 17:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2017.28)). As such, “we live by faith, not by sight” ([2 Corinthians 5:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.7)). Yet we don’t walk alone. The unseen God walks with us every step of the way.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In a world where seeing is believing, in what ways do you struggle to live by faith in God? What has strengthened your faith, and in what areas do you need to rest in Him more fully?

Father, sometimes it’s a struggle to believe what I can’t see. Nevertheless, You’ve promised Your faithful love and that You’ll never leave me or forsake me. Help me to rest in that promise.

#### **Insight**

After a call to perseverance in the faith in [Hebrews 10:23–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2010.23%E2%80%9325), the author begins chapter 11 with a definition—typical of a discourse on a particular subject—defining faith as “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (v. 1). Both Greek words used to define faith—confidence (Greek hypostasis, “a giving of substance to”) and assurance (Greek elenchos, “a proving of”)—emphasize faith as an active way of life in response to what we know to be true. Though much of the future that faith hopes and longs for remains unfulfilled and unseen, people of faith move forward in response to God’s leading and their experience of His faithfulness. [Hebrews 11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011) traces through Jewish history heroes who exemplify this lifestyle of active faith, culminating with Jesus, the ultimate Hero of faith (12:2–3).

# God Calling – 5/2/21

# Souls That Smile

To conquer adverse circumstances, conquer yourselves. The answer to the desire of My Disciples to follow Me was "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

To accomplish much, be much.  In all cases the doing, to be well-doing, must be the mere unconscious expression of the being.

Fear not, fear not, all is well. Let the day be full of little prayers to Me, little turnings toward me. The smiles of the soul at one it loves.

Men call the Father the First Cause. Yes! See Him as the First Cause of every warm ray, every color in the sunset, every gleam on the water, every beautiful flower, every planned pleasure.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.  Ephesians 4:32

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/3/21

# Vital Intercession



…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit… —[Ephesians 6:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ephesians+6%3A18)

As we continue on in our intercession for others, we may find that our obedience to God in interceding is going to cost those for whom we intercede more than we ever thought. The danger in this is that we begin to intercede in sympathy with those whom God was gradually lifting up to a totally different level in direct answer to our prayers. Whenever we step back from our close identification with God’s interest and concern for others and step into having emotional sympathy with them, the vital connection with God is gone. We have then put our sympathy and concern for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.

It is impossible for us to have living and vital intercession unless we are perfectly and completely sure of God. And the greatest destroyer of that confident relationship to God, so necessary for intercession, is our own personal sympathy and preconceived bias. Identification with God is the key to intercession, and whenever we stop being identified with Him it is because of our sympathy with others, not because of sin. It is not likely that sin will interfere with our intercessory relationship with God, but sympathy will. It is sympathy with ourselves or with others that makes us say, “I will not allow that thing to happen.” And instantly we are out of that vital connection with God.

Vital intercession leaves you with neither the time nor the inclination to pray for your own “sad and pitiful self.” You do not have to struggle to keep thoughts of yourself out, because they are not even there to be kept out of your thinking. You are completely and entirely identified with God’s interests and concerns in other lives. God gives us discernment in the lives of others to call us to intercession for them, never so that we may find fault with them.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/3/21

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—[MATT. 5:48.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.48)

I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.—Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.—Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.—Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

[Gen. 17:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.17.html" \l "Gen.17.1). -[Lev. 20:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.20.html" \l "Lev.20.26).[I Cor. 6:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.20).[Col. 2:l0](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[Tit. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.14). –[II Pet. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.14).[Psa. 119:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.1). –[Jas.1:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.25). -[Psa. 139:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.23).

“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” **[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.33)**

Art thou asking the reason of this, believer? Look upward to thy heavenly Father, and behold him pure and holy. Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like him? Wilt thou easily be conformed to his image? Wilt thou not require much refining in the furnace of affliction to purify thee? Will it be an easy thing to get rid of thy corruptions, and make thee perfect even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect? Next, Christian, turn thine eye downward. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? Thou wast once a servant of Satan, and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan will let thee alone? No, he will be always at thee, for he “goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Expect trouble, therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee. Then look around thee. Where art thou? Thou art in an enemy’s country, a stranger and a sojourner. The world is not thy friend. If it be, then thou art not God’s friend, for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. Be assured that thou shalt find foe-men everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou art resting on the battlefield; when thou walkest, suspect an ambush in every hedge. As mosquitoes are said to bite strangers more than natives, so will the trials of earth be sharpest to you. Lastly, look within thee, into thine own heart and observe what is there. Sin and self are still within. Ah! if thou hadst no devil to tempt thee, no enemies to fight thee, and no world to ensnare thee, thou wouldst still find in thyself evil enough to be a sore trouble to thee, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Expect trouble then, but despond not on account of it, for God is with thee to help and to strengthen thee. He hath said, “I will be with thee in trouble; I will deliver thee and honour thee.”

# Word Live – 5/3/21

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

# Scripture Union – 5/3/21

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

# Today in the Word – 5/3/21

# The Life-Changing Gospel

**Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 1:4–10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+1%3a4%e2%80%9310)

4For we know, brothers and sisters[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++1+Thessalonians+1%3A4%E2%80%9310+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29565a)] loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 Thessalonians 1:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+++++1+Thessalonians+1%3A4%E2%80%9310+&version=NIV#en-NIV-29565) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 27.

Welsh missionary Timothy Richard arrived in China in 1870. For 45 years, he preached the gospel; distributed Scripture and Christian literature; organized famine relief; and founded schools, orphanages, and training programs. When this faithful servant died in 1919, he was recognized as one of the most influential missionaries in church history.

You became a model to all the believers. 1 Thessalonians 1:7

For missionaries, success is measured by the transforming power of the gospel. Paul rejoiced that the gospel had been warmly received by the Thessalonians and had a transforming impact (v. 5). The evidence of their saving faith could be seen in how dramatically they’d changed: They’d turned from pagan idols and trusted Christ alone (v. 9). They’d rejected their pagan lifestyle and become imitators of Paul and his team, and thus of Christ (v. 6). They’d joyfully stood fast even when their beliefs led to “severe suffering.”

In fact, these men and women had become a model for believers throughout the region (v. 7). The clarity of their witness was like a bell—“the Lord’s message rang out from you” (v. 8). They did all this while waiting expectantly for the return of Christ. He “rescues us from the coming wrath” (v. 10), that is, the Tribulation, as we learn later.

Ultimately, the gospel was proclaimed and had power because of God (v. 4). There was no reason for the Thessalonians to feel prideful. God had chosen them for His own sovereign purposes. This contrasted with the false gods of Thessalonica, who did not love their worshipers. The relationship was rather one of appeasing and granting favors. Just as the believers’ transformed lives testified to their saving faith in Christ, then, they also testified to God’s unique love and sovereign election.

>> Have you trusted in Christ for salvation (Acts 16:31)? If not, we encourage you to take this decisive step today. If yes, rejoice with us in the love and power of our Savior! Together, we live faithfully, in expectation of His return!

### **Pray with Us**

New believers and veterans alike, we all rejoice in God’s power to save. Lord, transform us like you did the Thessalonians. Make your grace and power clear in our lives so that all may see!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 5/3/21

# Jesus’ Unpopular Ideas

 **Read:** [**Matthew 5:38–48**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.38%E2%80%9348)

### **Eye for Eye**

38“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A38%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23273a)] 39But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

### **Love for Enemies**

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A38%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23278b)] and hate your enemy.’ 44But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 5:38](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A38%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#en-NIV-23273) Exodus 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21
2. [Matthew 5:43](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A38%E2%80%9348&version=NIV#en-NIV-23278) Lev. 19:18

Give to the one who asks you. [Matthew 5:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.42)

For fifteen years, Mike Burden held hate-filled meetings in the memorabilia shop he ran in his small town. But in 2012 when his wife began to question his involvement, his heart softened. He realized how wrong his racist views were and didn’t want to be that person any longer. The militant group retaliated by kicking his family out of the apartment they’d been renting from one of the members.

Where did he turn for help? Surprisingly, he went to a local black pastor with whom he’d clashed. The pastor and his church provided housing and groceries for Mike’s family for some time. When asked why he agreed to help, Pastor Kennedy explained, “Jesus Christ did some very unpopular things. When it’s time to help, you do what God wants you to do.” Later Mike spoke at Kennedy’s church and apologized to the black community for his part in spreading hatred.

Jesus taught some unpopular ideas in the Sermon on the Mount: “Give to the one who asks you . . . . Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” ([Matthew 5:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.42), [44](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%205.44)). That’s the upside-down way of thinking God calls us to follow. Though it looks like weakness, it’s actually acting out of God’s strength.

The One who teaches us is the One who gives the power to live out this upside-down life in whatever way He asks of us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How are you living out Jesus’ words of giving to those who ask and loving your enemies? What would you like to change?

God, help me to love others as You love me. Show me how to do that today.

#### **Insight**

The “law of retribution” (“lex talionis”), which teaches an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth ([Exodus 21:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2021.24); [Leviticus 24:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2024.20); [Deuteronomy 19:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2019.21)), is sometimes mistakenly understood to promote personal retaliation. But in its Old Testament legal context, the law isn’t intended to encourage personal retribution but instead to limit the human tendency to exact revenge. Rather than permit individual vigilante actions of retaliation, a court of law was to ensure that punishment should fit the crime. It gave the right for an offended person to take someone to court rather than seek revenge. Jesus doesn’t “correct” this Old Testament teaching—designed to preserve peace and justice—but calls those belonging to the kingdom of God to live by the principle of nonresistance or nonretaliation at the personal (not legal) level. This means that believers in Christ shouldn’t descend to the low standard of the perpetrator, returning evil for evil.

# God Calling – 5/3/21

# Kill Self Now

Self dethroned - that is the lesson, but in its place put Love for Me, knowledge of Me.

Self, not only dethroned, but dead. A dead self is not an imprisoned self.  An imprisoned self is more potent to harm. In all training - (in Mine of you, and in yours of others) - let self die.

But for each blow to the life of self you must at the same time embrace and hold fast the new Life, Life with Me.

It is not a dead self that men have to fear, but a thwarted, captive, imprisoned self.  That self is infinitely more self-centered than the self allowed full play.  But to you, My children, I teach a higher science-law than even freedom of the self.  I teach death to the self.  No repressions, just death.  Petty self-life exchanged for Divine Life

And now I can make more clear to you what I would say about forgiveness of injuries.

But what you do not see is that you, the self in you, can never forgive injuries.  The very thought of them means self in the foreground, then the injury, instead of appearing less, appears greater. It is one of My commands that as you seek My forgiveness, so you must forgive.

No, My children, as all true Love is of God and is God, so all true forgiveness is of God and is God. The self cannot forgive. Kill self.

Cease trying to forgive those who fretted or wronged you.  It is a mistake to think about it.  Aim at killing the self now - in your daily life, and then, and not until then, you will find there is nothing that even remembers injury, because the only one injured, the self, is dead.

As long as it recurs to your mind you deceive yourself if you think it forgiven.

Many deceive themselves in this.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.  Romans 6:6