# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/4/20

# The Brave Friendship of God



He took the twelve aside… —[Luke 18:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+18%3A31)

Oh, the bravery of God in trusting us! Do you say, “But He has been unwise to choose me, because there is nothing good in me and I have no value”? That is exactly why He chose you. As long as you think that you are of value to Him He cannot choose you, because you have purposes of your own to serve. But if you will allow Him to take you to the end of your own self-sufficiency, then He can choose you to go with Him “to Jerusalem” ([Luke 18:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:31)). And that will mean the fulfillment of purposes which He does not discuss with you.

We tend to say that because a person has natural ability, he will make a good Christian. It is not a matter of our equipment, but a matter of our poverty; not of what we bring with us, but of what God puts into us; not a matter of natural virtues, of strength of character, of knowledge, or of experience— all of that is of no avail in this concern. The only thing of value is being taken into the compelling purpose of God and being made His friends (see [1 Corinthians 1:26-31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1:26-31)). God’s friendship is with people who know their poverty. He can accomplish nothing with the person who thinks that he is of use to God. As Christians we are not here for our own purpose at all— we are here for the purpose of God, and the two are not the same. We do not know what God’s compelling purpose is, but whatever happens, we must maintain our relationship with Him. We must never allow anything to damage our relationship with God, but if something does damage it, we must take the time to make it right again. The most important aspect of Christianity is not the work we do, but the relationship we maintain and the surrounding influence and qualities produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to give our attention to, and it is the one thing that is continually under attack.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”?  Disciples Indeed, 389 L

# CCEL – 8/4/20

**It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**—[JOHN 19:30.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.19.html" \l "John.19.30)

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.—I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.—We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering an offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.—Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

[Heb. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.2). -[John 17:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.4). -[Heb. 10:10-14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.10). -[Col. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.14).[John 10:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.17). -[John. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.13).

“The people that do know their God shall be strong.” [Daniel 11:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Dan.11.html" \l "Dan.11.32)

Every believer understands that to know God is the highest and best form of knowledge; and this spiritual knowledge is a source of strength to the Christian. It strengthens his faith. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being persons who are enlightened and taught of the Lord; they are said to “have an unction from the Holy One,” and it is the Spirit’s peculiar office to lead them into all truth, and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. Knowledge strengthens love, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree. If we know but little of the excellences of Jesus, what he has done for us, and what he is doing now, we cannot love him much; but the more we know him, the more we shall love him. Knowledge also strengthens hope. How can we hope for a thing if we do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance stands in the front of the glass, and we can see nothing whatever; knowledge removes the interposing object, and when we look through the bright optic glass we discern the glory to be revealed, and anticipate it with joyous confidence. Knowledge supplies us reasons for patience. How shall we have patience unless we know something of the sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which our heavenly Father sends us? Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. How important, then, is it that we should grow not only in grace, but in the “knowledge” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

# Word Live – 8/4/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/4/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/4/20

# A Life-Changing Lesson

**Read:** [**John 3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3)

### Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

3Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3" \l "fen-NIV-26124a" \o "See footnote a)]”

4“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26127b)] gives birth to spirit. 7You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26128c)] must be born again.’ 8The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26129d)]

9“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

10“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? 11Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3" \l "fen-NIV-26134e" \o "See footnote e)] 14Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26135f)] 15that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26136g)]

16For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. 19This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

### John Testifies Again About Jesus

22After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. 23Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. 24(This was before John was put in prison.) 25An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. 26They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”

27To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. 28You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ 29The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30He must become greater; I must become less.”[[h](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#fen-NIV-26151h)]

31The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God[[i](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3" \l "fen-NIV-26155i" \o "See footnote i)] gives the Spirit without limit. 35The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

#### Footnotes:

1. [John 3:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26124) The Greek for again also means from above; also in verse 7.
2. [John 3:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26127) Or but spirit
3. [John 3:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26128) The Greek is plural.
4. [John 3:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26129) The Greek for Spirit is the same as that for wind.
5. [John 3:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26134) Some manuscripts Man, who is in heaven
6. [John 3:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26135) The Greek for lifted up also means exalted.
7. [John 3:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26136) Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 21.
8. [John 3:30](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26151) Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 36.
9. [John 3:34](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3#en-NIV-26155) Greek he

I remember one thing from the third grade: my teacher, Mrs. Howard, liked me. Although long-division was very difficult, I was willing to tackle it because I wanted nothing more than to please Mrs. Howard. One day, I showed up to third grade only to learn that Mrs. Howard had suddenly retired. I was crushed. While those mathematics lessons have faded from my memory, Mrs. Howard’s care for me as a person has stayed with me for a lifetime.

Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. John 3:3

Twenty-nine times in the gospels, Jesus is addressed as “Teacher.” For those students willing to hear, the lessons He taught them would never be lost. In John 3, Nicodemus (a Pharisee in charge of people’s spiritual well-being) recognized that Jesus was a very different kind of teacher. Nicodemus approached Jesus at night and said to Him, “You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God was not with him” (v. 3). Nicodemus was compelled by what he had heard and seen of Jesus to risk the critique of his fellow Pharisees and interact with this teacher who he felt had “come from God” (v. 2). Jesus used this opportunity to teach Nicodemus a life-giving message: he must be born again.

The lesson was confusing at first, and Nicodemus struggled to understand what it meant to be “born again” (v. 3). His questions were sincere, but Jesus observed, “You are Israel’s teacher, and do you not understand these things?” (v. 10). Jesus challenged Nicodemus’s understanding of salvation. This lesson would have lifelong results, not just for Nicodemus, but for all those he would influence. If anyone needed to know truth so he could share it with others, wouldn’t it be “Israel’s teacher?”

**Apply the Word**

Each of us has the opportunity to teach the most powerful life-changing lesson of all: “You must be born again.” You don’t need a teaching degree to share the good news that Jesus saves sinners. And you never retire from sharing the gospel!

### Pray with Us

Thank the Lord for the powerful lesson He gave Nicodemus in today’s reading. May we have a teachable spirit and sensitive heart, open to the truths Christ teaches us in our walk with Him.

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/4/20

# God’s Mercy at Work

 **Read:** [**1 Samuel 24:1–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2024.1%E2%80%9310)

### David Spares Saul’s Life

24 [[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+24%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7841a)]After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the Desert of En Gedi.” 2So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

3He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. 4The men said, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+24%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7844b)] to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’” Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

5Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 6He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.” 7With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

8Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? 10This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 24:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+24%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-7841) In Hebrew texts 24:1-22 is numbered 24:2-23.
2. [1 Samuel 24:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+24%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-7844) Or “Today the Lord is saying

May the Lord judge between you and me. [1 Samuel 24:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2024.12)

My anger percolated when a woman mistreated me, blamed me, and gossiped about me. I wanted everyone to know what she’d done—wanted her to suffer as I’d suffered because of her behavior. I steamed with resentment until a headache pierced my temples. But as I began praying for my pain to go away, the Holy Spirit convicted me. How could I plot revenge while begging God for relief? If I believed He would care for me, why wouldn’t I trust Him to handle this situation? Knowing that people who are hurting often hurt other people, I asked God to help me forgive the woman and work toward reconciliation.

The psalmist David understood the difficulty of trusting God while enduring unfair treatment. Though David did his best to be a loving servant, King Saul succumbed to jealousy and wanted to murder him ([1 Samuel 24:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2024.1%E2%80%932)). David suffered while God worked things out and prepared him to take the throne, but still he chose to honor God instead of seeking revenge (vv. 3–7). He did his part to reconcile with Saul and left the results in God’s hands (vv. 8–22).

When it seems others are getting away with wrongdoing, we struggle with the injustice. But with God’s mercy at work in our hearts and the hearts of others, we can forgive as He’s forgiven us and receive the blessings He’s prepared for us.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How can trusting that God is perfect, loving, good, and in control help you when sin seems to be prevailing? Who do you need to forgive and place in God’s mighty and merciful hands?

Merciful God, please help me trust You to determine how justice prevails.

#### Insight

Twice David spared King Saul’s life—first as recorded in [1 Samuel 24:1–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2024.1%E2%80%9310) and again as described in [1 Samuel 26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2026). The setting in [1 Samuel 24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2024) is a large cave in the wilderness of En Gedi. This cave is one among many in the region, some large enough to hold thousands. Saul and his soldiers were pursuing David with the intent of killing him when Saul stopped to relieve himself in the very cave where David and his six hundred men were hiding. In chapter 26, Saul continues to pursue David. Once again, David is close enough to kill Saul but shows him the mercy that Saul lacks.

# God Calling – 8/4/20

# Eternal Life

Oh Jesus, we love Thee so and long to serve Thee.

My children, you are both to do mighty things for Me. Glories and wonders unfold. Life is one glorious whole.

Draw into your beings more and more this wonderful Eternal Life. It is the flow of the Life Eternal through spirit, mind, and body, that cleanses, heals, restores, renews youth, and passes on from you to others, with the same miracle-working power.

"And this is Life Eternal that they may know thee. . . and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." So seek by constant contact to know Me more and more.

Make Me the one abiding Presence of your day of which you are conscious all the time. Seek to do less and to accomplish more, to achieve more. Doing is action. Achievement is successful action.

Remember that Eternal Life is the only lasting life, so that all that is done without being done in the Power of My Spirit, My Life, is passing. All done in that Spirit-Life is undying.

"I give unto to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."  So Eternal Life means security too, safety. Dwell increasingly in the consciousness of that security, that safety.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.  1 John 5:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/5/20

# The Bewildering Call of God



"…and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished."…But they understood none of these things… —[Luke 18:31, 34](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+18%3A31%2C+34)

God called Jesus Christ to what seemed absolute disaster. And Jesus Christ called His disciples to see Him put to death, leading every one of them to the place where their hearts were broken. His life was an absolute failure from every standpoint except God’s. But what seemed to be failure from man’s standpoint was a triumph from God’s standpoint, because God’s purpose is never the same as man’s purpose.

This bewildering call of God comes into our lives as well. The call of God can never be understood absolutely or explained externally; it is a call that can only be perceived and understood internally by our true inner-nature. The call of God is like the call of the sea— no one hears it except the person who has the nature of the sea in him. What God calls us to cannot be definitely stated, because His call is simply to be His friend to accomplish His own purposes. Our real test is in truly believing that God knows what He desires. The things that happen do not happen by chance— they happen entirely by the decree of God. God is sovereignly working out His own purposes.

If we are in fellowship and oneness with God and recognize that He is taking us into His purposes, then we will no longer strive to find out what His purposes are. As we grow in the Christian life, it becomes simpler to us, because we are less inclined to say, “I wonder why God allowed this or that?” And we begin to see that the compelling purpose of God lies behind everything in life, and that God is divinely shaping us into oneness with that purpose. A Christian is someone who trusts in the knowledge and the wisdom of God, not in his own abilities. If we have a purpose of our own, it destroys the simplicity and the calm, relaxed pace which should be characteristic of the children of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Crises reveal character. When we are put to the test the hidden resources of our character are revealed exactly.  Disciples Indeed, 393 R

# CCEL – 8/5/20

**Walk in newness of life.**—[ROM. 6:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.4)

As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.—I beseech you, . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.—This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.—Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

[Rom. 6:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.19). -[Rom. 12:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1).[II Cor. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.17). -[Gal. 6:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.15). -[Eph. 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.17). -[Eph. 4:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.20),[24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.24).

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” [Romans 8:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.28)

Upon some points a believer is absolutely sure. He knows, for instance, that God sits in the stern-sheets of the vessel when it rocks most. He believes that an invisible hand is always on the world’s tiller, and that wherever providence may drift, Jehovah steers it. That re-assuring knowledge prepares him for everything. He looks over the raging waters and sees the spirit of Jesus treading the billows, and he hears a voice saying, “It is I, be not afraid.” He knows too that God is always wise, and, knowing this, he is confident that there can be no accidents, no mistakes; that nothing can occur which ought not to arise. He can say, “If I should lose all I have, it is better that I should lose than have, if God so wills: the worst calamity is the wisest and the kindest thing that could befall to me if God ordains it.” “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” The Christian does not merely hold this as a theory, but he knows it as a matter of fact. Everything has worked for good as yet; the poisonous drugs mixed in fit proportions have worked the cure; the sharp cuts of the lancet have cleansed out the proud flesh and facilitated the healing. Every event as yet has worked out the most divinely blessed results; and so, believing that God rules all, that he governs wisely, that he brings good out of evil, the believer’s heart is assured, and he is enabled calmly to meet each trial as it comes. The believer can in the spirit of true resignation pray, “Send me what thou wilt, my God, so long as it comes from thee; never came there an ill portion from thy table to any of thy children.”

“Say not my soul, ‘From whence can God relieve my care?’

Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere.

His method is sublime, his heart profoundly kind,

God never is before his time, and never is behind.”

# Word Live – 8/5/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/5/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/5/20

# Learning Through Experience

**Read:** [**Mark 6:30–44**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3a30%e2%80%9344)

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

30The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

32So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. 36Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

37But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3a30%e2%80%9344#fen-NIV-24445a)]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

38“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

39Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42They all ate and were satisfied, 43and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Mark 6:37](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3a30%e2%80%9344#en-NIV-24445) Greek take two hundred denarii

As a child, for me, a trip to the dentist meant sitting in an electric chair that went up and down, choosing between cinnamon or bubblegum toothpaste, and taking home a plastic bag of goodies. My positive childhood experiences at the dentist gave me valuable knowledge and a good attitude toward oral hygiene that would last a lifetime.

He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Mark 6:34

Experience can be a powerful teacher. The New Testament Greek word ginosko means “to come to know” or understand. Jesus masterfully used real-life experiences to help His followers learn enduring lessons. In Mark 6:30–44 the disciples returned to Jesus after being given power to heal and cast out demons. Jesus and the disciples tried to rest, but large crowds continued to follow them. Notice Christ’s attitude of compassion as He taught late into the day. Verse 34 tells us that Jesus “had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

The crowds were so enthralled with His teaching that no one thought about how food would be obtained. Jesus told his disciples to meet the people’s need and feed them. Taking inventory, they found only five loaves and two fish (v. 41). In Jesus’ hands, that meager supply multiplied to feed more than 5,000 people.

Imagine, if you will, that dinner- time conversation! I am sure people swapped many stories the following days due to this once-in-a-lifetime experience. What’s most important about experiential learning is that it leads to greater understanding. The truth of Mark 6 is not just that dinner supplies could be miraculously fashioned out of thin air. The disciples and the crowd witnessed an all-powerful God who was able to meet their needs. They saw a demonstration of God’s love for people.

**Apply the Word**

What experiences in your life have taught truth to you? What have you learned about God through the way He has cared for your needs? Write down that story so you will remember and share it today!

### Pray with Us

During your prayer time, remember circumstances when God showed His loving care for you. Praise Him for meeting your needs and in this way, teaching you about His character and His sovereignty.

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/5/20

# Loved, Beautiful, Gifted

 **Read:** [**Romans 8:15–17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.15%E2%80%9317)

15The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A15%E2%80%9317&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28132a" \o "See footnote a)] And by him we cry, “Abba,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A15%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28132b)] Father.” 16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Romans 8:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A15%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-28132) The Greek word for adoption to sonship is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture; also in verse 23.
2. [Romans 8:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A15%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-28132) Aramaic for father

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. [Romans 8:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.16)

Malcolm appeared confident as a teenager. But this confidence was a mask. In truth, a turbulent home left him fearful, desperate for approval, and feeling falsely responsible for his family’s problems. “For as far back as I remember,” he says, “every morning I would go into the bathroom, look in the mirror, and say out loud to myself, ‘You are stupid, you are ugly, and it’s your fault.’”

Malcolm’s self-loathing continued until he was twenty-one, when he had a divine revelation of his identity in Jesus. “I realized that God loved me unconditionally and nothing would ever change that,” he recalls. “I could never embarrass God, and He would never reject me.” In time, Malcolm looked in the mirror and spoke to himself differently. “You are loved, you are beautiful, you are gifted,” he said, “and it’s not your fault.”

Malcolm’s experience illustrates what God’s Spirit does for the believer in Jesus—He frees us from fear by revealing how profoundly loved we are ([Romans 8:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.15), [38–39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Romans%208.38%E2%80%9339)), and confirms that we are children of God with all the benefits that status brings (8:16–17; 12:6–8). As a result, we can begin seeing ourselves correctly by having our thinking renewed (12:2–3).

Years later, Malcolm still whispers those words each day, reinforcing who God says he is. In the Father’s eyes he’s loved, beautiful, and gifted. And so are we.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What words come to mind when you see yourself in the mirror? How different are they from Scripture’s depiction of what God sees in you?

Father, thank You for loving me, gifting me, and making me Your child. May Your Spirit work in me today to truly, deeply believe it.

#### Insight

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit—also known as “the “Spirit of God” or “the Spirit of Christ”—is the scriptural evidence that we’re saved. Paul makes clear that if anyone doesn’t have the Holy Spirit “they do not belong to Christ” ([Romans 8:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.9)). The Spirit gives us new birth and new life ([John 3:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.5%E2%80%936); [6:63](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%206.63); [Titus 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Titus%203.5)) and is the seal and deposit guaranteeing our salvation ([2 Corinthians 1:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.22); [5:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Corinthians%205.5); [Ephesians 1:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%201.13%E2%80%9314)). Assuring us that we’re God’s children, He enables us to affectionately call out to God, “Abba, Father” ([Romans 8:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.14%E2%80%9315); [Galatians 4:5–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%204.5%E2%80%937)). When we’re “led by the Spirit” and “live by the Spirit,” He’ll make us more like Christ ([Galatians 5:16–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.16%E2%80%9325)). Equipping us with spiritual gifts, He empowers us for ministry ([Acts 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%201.8); [1 Corinthians 12:4–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012.4%E2%80%937)). The indwelling Spirit helps us to pray, interceding for and with us ([Romans 8:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.26)).

# God Calling – 8/5/20

# Hour Of Need

Lord, come to us and heal us.

I am your Healer, your Joy, your Lord. You bid Me, your Lord, come. Did you not know that I am here? With noiseless footfall I draw near to you.

Your hour of need is the moment of My Coming.

Could you know My Love, could you measure My Longing to help, you would know that I need no agonized pleading.

Your need is My Call.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.  Jeremiah 17:14

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.  Ephesians 5:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/6/20

# The Cross in Prayer



In that day you will ask in My name… —[John 16:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+16%3A26)

We too often think of the Cross of Christ as something we have to get through, yet we get through for the purpose of getting into it. The Cross represents only one thing for us— complete, entire, absolute identification with the Lord Jesus Christ— and there is nothing in which this identification is more real to us than in prayer.

“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 we ask? The point of prayer is not to get answers from God, but to have perfect and complete oneness with Him. If we pray only because we want answers, we will become irritated and angry with God. We receive an answer every time we pray, but it does not always come in the way we expect, and our spiritual irritation shows our refusal to identify ourselves truly with our Lord in prayer. We are not here to prove that God answers prayer, but to be living trophies of God’s grace.

“…I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you…” ([John 16:26-27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:26-27)). Have you reached such a level of intimacy with God that the only thing that can account for your prayer life is that it has become one with the prayer life of Jesus Christ? Has our Lord exchanged your life with His vital life? If so, then “in that day” you will be so closely identified with Jesus that there will be no distinction.

When prayer seems to be unanswered, beware of trying to place the blame on someone else. That is always a trap of Satan. When you seem to have no answer, there is always a reason— God uses these times to give you deep personal instruction, and it is not for anyone else but you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 8/6/20

**Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth.**—[PROV. 3:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.12)

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.—I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.—My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.—As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.—Now no chastening for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.—Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

[Deut. 32:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.32.html" \l "Deut.32.39). -[Jer. 29:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.29.html" \l "Jer.29.11). -[Isa. 55:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.8).[Hos. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.2.html" \l "Hos.2.14). -[Deut. 8:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.5). -[Heb. 12:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.11). -[I Pet. 5:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.6).[Psa. 119:75](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.75).

“Watchman, what of the night?” [Isaiah 21:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.21.html" \l "Isa.21.11)

What enemies are abroad? Errors are a numerous horde, and new ones appear every hour: against what heresy am I to be on my guard? Sins creep from their lurking places when the darkness reigns; I must myself mount the watch-tower, and watch unto prayer. Our heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, and when as yet the evil designed us is but in the desire of Satan, he prays for us that our faith fail not, when we are sifted as wheat. Continue O gracious Watchman, to forewarn us of our foes, and for Zion’s sake hold not thy peace.

“Watchman, what of the night?” What weather is coming for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love; and now that Popery and infidelity are both threatening, let us observe the signs of the times and prepare for conflict.

“Watchman, what of the night?” What stars are visible? What precious promises suit our present case? You sound the alarm, give us the consolation also. Christ, the polestar, is ever fixed in his place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, when comes the morning? The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of his coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if thou come not in person to thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy.

“Now all the earth is bright and glad

With the fresh morn;

But all my heart is cold, and dark and sad:

Sun of the soul, let me behold thy dawn!

Come, Jesus, Lord,

O quickly come, according to thy word.”

# Word Live – 8/6/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/6/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/6/20

# Asking the ‘Why’

**Read:** [**Matthew 6:25–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334)

### Do Not Worry

25“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334#fen-NIV-23310a)]?

28“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Matthew 6:27](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a25%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-23310) Or single cubit to your height

Why is the sun hot? Why must I take a bath? Why can’t I do it by myself? Anyone who has worked with preschoolers understands that their inquisitive minds want a lot of answers. Helping children have age-appropriate understanding is important. Teachers know that understanding the “why” can build knowledge and trusting relationships.

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Matthew 6:28

Jesus knows that we are often like children who need to learn basic lessons. He repeatedly asks His followers the why questions, helping them think deeply about their own beliefs, words, and actions. Seven times in Matthew’s Gospel Jesus asks “Why?” His “whys” are often followed by a “what” question because the why often reveals the what. Both questions, when asked together, reveal man’s need.

In Matthew 6:25–34, Christ teaches by asking both why and what: “And why do you worry about clothes? . . . So do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’” (Vv. 28–31). Jesus explains that just as God clothes the flowers with splendor, He also cares for the needs of His children. God is our heavenly Father who sees and cares for our needs. Asking this simple why question Jesus teaches us what is important: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (v. 33).

At times I fail to ask questions out of concern that I might offend someone or perhaps because the situation is none of my business. However, Christ calls us to be lovingly involved in one another’s “business” by asking important questions that lead people to a personal knowledge of Him. He knows that we, like preschoolers, need direction and guidance.

**Apply the Word**

Pay attention to the open doors to conversations that God might be placing in front of you. Be ready to ask the “why” and “what” questions that will help others have a greater understanding of God’s work in their lives.

### Pray with Us

As you pray today, think about the Why? and What? questions Christ asked in today’s reading from Matthew, chapter 6. How would you answer these questions?

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/6/20

# In the Father’s Ways

 **Read:** [**1 Samuel 8:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%208.1%E2%80%939)

### Israel Asks for a King

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel’s leaders.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-7371a" \o "See footnote a)] 2The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. 3But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

4So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7375b)] us, such as all the other nations have.”

6But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. 7And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. 8As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. 9Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Samuel 8:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-7371) Traditionally judges
2. [1 Samuel 8:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+8%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-7375) Traditionally judge; also in verses 6 and 20

They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. [1 Samuel 8:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%208.3)

In the 1960s, the bustling community of North Lawndale, on Chicago’s West Side, was a pilot community for interracial living. A handful of middle-class African Americans bought homes there on “contract”—that combined the responsibilities of home ownership with the disadvantages of renting. In a contract sale, the buyer accrued no equity, and if he missed a single payment, he would immediately lose his down payment, all his monthly payments, and the property itself. Unscrupulous sellers sold at inflated prices, then the families were evicted when they missed a payment. Another family would buy on contract, and the cycle fueled by greed just kept going.

Samuel appointed his sons judges over Israel, and they were driven by greed. His sons “did not follow his ways” ([1 Samuel 8:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%208.3)). In contrast to Samuel’s integrity, his sons “turned aside after dishonest gain” and used their position to their own advantage. This unjust behavior displeased the elders of Israel and God, putting in motion a cycle of kings that fills the pages of the Old Testament (vv. 4–5).

To refuse to walk in God’s ways allows room for the perversion of those values, and as a result injustice flourishes. To walk in His ways means honesty and justice are clearly seen not only in our words but in our deeds as well. Those good deeds are never an end in themselves but always that others may see and honor our Father in heaven.

By:  [John Blase](https://odb.org/author/johnblase/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What current example of injustice are you aware of? What is one way you can work toward justice in that example?

God, injustice surrounds us on every side, often overwhelming our hearts. Help me to stand with those who suffer and commit my life to walking in Your ways.

To learn more about the life and time of Samuel, visit [bit.ly/2pJSpwu.](https://bit.ly/2pJSpwu)

#### Insight

A subtheme of this small section of Scripture—the evil practice of taking bribes and perverting justice as Samuel’s sons were doing ([1 Samuel 8:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%208.3))—was a big concern of God’s prophets. The prophet Isaiah told the people of Judah, “Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts” ([Isaiah 1:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%201.23)). Ezekiel noted, “In you are people who accept bribes to shed blood; you take interest and make a profit from the poor” ([Ezekiel 22:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2022.12)). Amos derided those “who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts” ([Amos 5:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%205.12)). Micah said, “The ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire” ([Micah 7:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%207.3)). We honor God when we work for justice for the poor and vulnerable.

# God Calling – 8/6/20

# Dwell Apart

Rest more with Me. If I, the Son of God, needed those times of quiet communion with My Father, away, alone, from noise, from activity -- then surely you need them too.

Refilling with the Spirit is a need. That dwelling apart, that shutting yourself away in the very secret place of your being -- away alone with Me.

From these times you come forth in Power to bless and heal.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.  Ephesians 5:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/7/20

# Prayer in the Father’s House



…they found Him in the temple….And He said to them, "…Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?" —[Luke 2:46, 49](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+2%3A46%2C+49)

Our Lord’s childhood was not immaturity waiting to grow into manhood— His childhood is an eternal fact. Am I a holy, innocent child of God as a result of my identification with my Lord and Savior? Do I look at my life as being in my Father’s house? Is the Son of God living in His Father’s house within me?

The only abiding reality is God Himself, and His order comes to me moment by moment. Am I continually in touch with the reality of God, or do I pray only when things have gone wrong— when there is some disturbance in my life? I must learn to identify myself closely with my Lord in ways of holy fellowship and oneness that some of us have not yet even begun to learn. “…I must be about My Father’s business”— and I must learn to live every moment of my life in my Father’s house.

Think about your own circumstances. Are you so closely identified with the Lord’s life that you are simply a child of God, continually talking to Him and realizing that everything comes from His hands? Is the eternal Child in you living in His Father’s house? Is the grace of His ministering life being worked out through you in your home, your business, and in your circle of friends? Have you been wondering why you are going through certain circumstances? In fact, it is not that you have to go through them. It is because of your relationship with the Son of God who comes, through the providential will of His Father, into your life. You must allow Him to have His way with you, staying in perfect oneness with Him.

The life of your Lord is to become your vital, simple life, and the way He worked and lived among people while here on earth must be the way He works and lives in you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The life of Abraham is an illustration of two things: of unreserved surrender to God, and of God’s complete possession of a child of His for His own highest end. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 8/7/20

**The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.**—[JOHN 14:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.26)

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.—If ye . . . being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?—Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—Ye have not, because ye ask not.

When . . . the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.

[John 4:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.10). -[Luke 11:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.11.html" \l "Luke.11.13). -[John 16:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.23). -[Jas. 4:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.2).[John 16:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.13).[Isa. 63:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.10).

“The upright love thee” [Song of Solomon 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.4)

Believers love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry him fast locked in their bosoms. They voluntarily deny themselves for his sake, but they are not to be driven to deny him. It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer’s love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, nor frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world’s power may at length dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craft of Satan been more at fault than when he has exercised it in seeking to rend in sunder this union of two divinely welded hearts. It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, “The upright love thee.” The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by what it appears as by what the upright long for. It is our daily lament that we cannot love enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching further. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, “Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven—yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds—that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ.” Alas! our longest reach is but a span of love, and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with his deserts. Measure our love by our intentions, and it is high indeed; 'tis thus, we trust, our Lord doth judge of it. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a gathering together of all loves to him who is altogether lovely!

# Word Live – 8/7/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/7/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/7/20

# Meet the Target

**Read:** [**Mark 10:1–29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329)

### Divorce

10 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

2Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

3“What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

5“It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. 6“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-24595a)] 7‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-24596b)] 8and the two will become one flesh.’[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-24597c)] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

10When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

### The Little Children and Jesus

13People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

### The Rich and the Kingdom of God

17As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-24608d)]”

20“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

21Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

24The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-24613e)] to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

26The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

28Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel

#### Footnotes:

1. [Mark 10:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-24595) Gen. 1:27
2. [Mark 10:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-24596) Some early manuscripts do not have and be united to his wife.
3. [Mark 10:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-24597) Gen. 2:24
4. [Mark 10:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-24608) Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20
5. [Mark 10:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3a1%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-24613) Some manuscripts is for those who trust in riches

If you’ve ever played darts or tried your hand at archery, you know the goal is deceptively simple: get your dart or arrow in the bullseye. But it is harder than it may initially seem. In lesson planning, the most critical step is establishing the lesson’s objective or target. Defining the target, or the desired outcome of the lesson, is essential for true learning to take place.

With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God. Mark 10:27

During Jesus’ time on earth, every single thing He did and said was purposeful. In Mark 10, Jesus was teaching the Pharisees and “crowds of people” (v. 1). Many subjects were brought up, including reasons for divorce, receiving the kingdom of God like an innocent child, and the perils of riches.

One man in the audience, however, struggled to meet the target and learn what Jesus was teaching. The rich young ruler asked: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 17). Jesus took a minute to review what the man already knew, all of the commandments he had carefully learned (vv. 18, 19). From the young man’s perspective, it seemed he had more than passed the test.

But Jesus showed him otherwise. Despite his efforts to keep the commandments, the young man was not meeting the target. Jesus reveals that he was unwilling to take the next step. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor” (v. 21). The text tells us that “he went away sad, because he had great wealth” (v. 22). By his actions, the rich young man showed that he was not as devoted to God as he had thought.

**Apply the Word**

What about you? Are you open to what God is teaching you? When work responsibilities are overwhelming, when a child is ill, when we just feel sad, or even when all seems well ...remember your primary target: trust Christ and serve Him with all your heart.

### Pray with Us

Today’s devotional encourages us to trust Christ in all situations. Ask Him to give you faith to believe that “all things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27).

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/7/20

# Letting Go

 **Read:** [**John 11:21–36**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.21%E2%80%9336)

21“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

23Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

27“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

28After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” 29When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34“Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

35Jesus wept.

36Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. [Psalm 116:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116.15)

“Your father is actively dying,” said the hospice nurse. “Actively dying” refers to the final phase of the dying process and was a new term to me, one that felt strangely like traveling down a lonely one-way street. On my dad’s last day, not knowing if he could still hear us, my sister and I sat by his bed. We kissed the top of his beautiful bald head. We whispered God’s promises to him. We sang “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and quoted the 23rd Psalm. We told him we loved him and thanked him for being our dad. We knew his heart longed to be with Jesus, and we told him he could go. Speaking those words was the first painful step in letting go. A few minutes later, our dad was joyously welcomed into his eternal home.

The final release of a loved one is painful. Even Jesus’ tears flowed when His good friend Lazarus died ([John 11:35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.35)). But because of God’s promises, we have hope beyond physical death. [Psalm 116:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20116.15) says that God’s “faithful servants”—those who belong to Him—are “precious” to Him. Though they die, they’ll be alive again.

Jesus promises, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die” ([John 11:25–26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.25%E2%80%9326)). What comfort it brings to know we’ll be in God’s presence forever.

By:  [Cindy Hess Kasper](https://odb.org/author/cindyhesskasper/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What did Jesus accomplish by His death on the cross? How does His sacrifice affect every person who has ever lived?

Precious Father, thank You for the promise of eternal life in Your presence.

For help in dealing with loss, read Life After Loss at [discoveryseries.org/cb131.](https://discoveryseries.org/cb131.)

#### Insight

When Martha said her brother Lazarus “will rise again in the resurrection at the last day” ([John 11:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.24)), she was echoing the Jewish hope of the afterlife. The resurrection of the dead was an ancient Jewish belief ([Job 19:26–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%2019.26%E2%80%9327)). They believed there would be a future day when the “multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” ([Daniel 12:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%2012.2); see also [Isaiah 26:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2026.19); [John 5:28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%205.28%E2%80%9329)). However, when Jesus said, “Your brother will rise again” ([John 11:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.23)), He wasn’t merely referring to the future resurrection hope but promising a more immediate resurrection of Lazarus (vv. 40–44).

# God Calling – 8/7/20

# All is Well

Our, Lord, bless us and keep us, we beseech Thee.

My Keeping Power is never at fault, but only your realization of it. Not whether I can provide a shelter from the storm, but your failure to be sure of the security of that shelter.

Every fear, every doubt, is a crime against My Love.

Oh! children, trust. Practice daily, many times a day, saying "All is well."

Say it until you believe it, know it.

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou has wrought for them that trust in thee.  Psalm 31:19

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/8/20

# Prayer in the Father’s Honor



…that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. —[Luke 1:35](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+1%3A35)

If the Son of God has been born into my human flesh, then am I allowing His holy innocence, simplicity, and oneness with the Father the opportunity to exhibit itself in me? What was true of the Virgin Mary in the history of the Son of God’s birth on earth is true of every saint. God’s Son is born into me through the direct act of God; then I as His child must exercise the right of a child— the right of always being face to face with my Father through prayer. Do I find myself continually saying in amazement to the commonsense part of my life, “Why did you want me to turn here or to go over there? ‘Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ ” ([Luke 2:49](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2:49)). Whatever our circumstances may be, that holy, innocent, and eternal Child must be in contact with His Father.

Am I simple enough to identify myself with my Lord in this way? Is He having His wonderful way with me? Is God’s will being fulfilled in that His Son has been formed in me (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)), or have I carefully pushed Him to one side? Oh, the noisy outcry of today! Why does everyone seem to be crying out so loudly? People today are crying out for the Son of God to be put to death. There is no room here for God’s Son right now— no room for quiet, holy fellowship and oneness with the Father.

Is the Son of God praying in me, bringing honor to the Father, or am I dictating my demands to Him? Is He ministering in me as He did in the time of His manhood here on earth? Is God’s Son in me going through His passion, suffering so that His own purposes might be fulfilled? The more a person knows of the inner life of God’s most mature saints, the more he sees what God’s purpose really is: to “…fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ…” ([Colossians 1:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1:24)). And when we think of what it takes to “fill up,” there is always something yet to be done.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The life of Abraham is an illustration of two things: of unreserved surrender to God, and of God’s complete possession of a child of His for His own highest end.  
Not Knowing Whither

# CCEL – 8/8/20

**The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**—[PROV. 4:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.4.html" \l "Prov.4.18)

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.—For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.—Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

[Phi. 3:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.12). -[Hos. 6:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.6.html" \l "Hos.6.3).[Matt. 13:43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.43). -[II Cor. 3:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.3.html" \l "iiCor.3.18). -[I Cor. 13:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.10),[12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.12). -[I John. 3:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.2).

“They weave the spider’s web.” [Isaiah 59:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.5)

See the spider’s web, and behold in it a most suggestive picture of the hypocrite’s religion. It is meant to catch his prey: the spider fattens himself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. Foolish persons are easily entrapped by the loud professions of pretenders, and even the more judicious cannot always escape. Philip baptized Simon Magus, whose guileful declaration of faith was so soon exploded by the stern rebuke of Peter. Custom, reputation, praise, advancement, and other flies, are the small game which hypocrites take in their nets. A spider’s web is a marvel of skill: look at it and admire the cunning hunter’s wiles. Is not a deceiver’s religion equally wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his tinsel answer so well the purpose of gold? A spider’s web comes all from the creature’s own bowels. The bee gathers her wax from flowers, the spider sucks no flowers, and yet she spins out her material to any length. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor was forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation, and hew out the pillars of their own house, disdaining to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God. But a spider’s web is very frail. It is curiously wrought, but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the servant’s broom, or the traveller’s staff. The hypocrite needs no battery of Armstrongs to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the besom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, viz., that such cobwebs are not to be endured in the Lord’s house: he will see to it that they and those who spin them shall be destroyed forever. O my soul, be thou resting on something better than a spider’s web. Be the Lord Jesus thine eternal hiding-place.

# Word Live – 8/8/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/8/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/8/20

# A Responsive Classroom

**Read:** [**John 4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4)

### Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

4 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— 2although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4Now he had to go through Samaria. 5So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4" \l "fen-NIV-26166a" \o "See footnote a)])

10Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

11“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

17“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

19“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

25The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

### The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

27Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

28Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

31Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

32But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

33Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

34“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. 38I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

### Many Samaritans Believe

39Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41And because of his words many more became believers.

42They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

### Jesus Heals an Official’s Son

43After the two days he left for Galilee. 44(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) 45When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.

46Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

48“Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

49The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

50“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. 51While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

53Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

54This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

#### Footnotes:

1. [John 4:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4#en-NIV-26166) Or do not use dishes Samaritans have used

New teachers are often trained in what education experts call “responsive classroom” techniques. The goal is to share important information in a welcoming way so your audience will respond well. A responsive teacher is sensitive to their audience’s needs and designs the learning situation to address those needs. Jesus was the epitome of a responsive teacher. John 4 gives an excellent example of such a teacher, as Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman in her comfort zone.

And because of his words many more became believers. John 4:41

As a teacher, Jesus chose “to go through Samaria” (v. 4) so he could interact with His learner in her environment. This was a controversial route as the Samaritans were alienated from the Jewish people; most people would travel around that area. Instead, Jesus chose to go through Samaria because He knew the Samaritan woman would be there, and He knew of her greatest need—salvation.

As a responsive teacher, Jesus chose to engage His audience in a non-threatening manner. He used a shared human need to begin a conversation: “Will you give me a drink?” Notice that all this required was a simple yes/no response. But that question opened the conversation to the greater need—her salvation. Jesus then shared truth, including her sin and her heart’s need: “The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband” (v. 18).

Through non-threatening dialogue, questions, and then sharing key truth, Jesus leads the woman to ask for what she needs: “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water” (v.15). Ultimately, Christ spends two days with the Samaritan community, “and because of his words many more became believers” (v. 41).

**Apply the Word**

How can you use “responsive teaching” to share the gospel? Consider the needs of your audience. Build relationship through being responsive to their individual situation. Listen well, and then be ready to share life-giving truth as God leads.

### Pray with Us

The story of the Samaritan woman is a wonderful example of Jesus’ wisdom and love for people. Our prayer is that we’ll learn from our great Teacher how to interact with others with love, understanding, and truth.

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/8/20

# His Death Brings Life

 **Read:** [**2 Corinthians 5:14–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.14%E2%80%9321)

14For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28895a" \o "See footnote a)] The old has gone, the new is here! 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21God made him who had no sin to be sin[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28899b)] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

#### Footnotes:

1. [2 Corinthians 5:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28895) Or Christ, that person is a new creation.
2. [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28899) Or be a sin offering

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! [2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.17)

During her ministry to men incarcerated in South Africa’s most violent prison, Joanna Flanders-Thomas witnessed the power of Christ to transform hearts. In Vanishing Grace, Philip Yancey describes her experience: “Joanna started visiting prisoners daily, bringing them a simple gospel message of forgiveness and reconciliation. She earned their trust, got them to talk about their abusive childhoods, and showed them a better way of resolving conflicts. The year before her visits began, the prison recorded 279 acts of violence against inmates and guards; the next year there were two.”

The apostle Paul wrote, “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.17)). While we may not always see that newness expressed as dramatically as Flanders-Thomas did, the gospel’s power to transform is the greatest hope-providing force in the universe. New creations. What an amazing thought! The death of Jesus launches us on a journey of becoming like Him—a journey that will culminate when we see Him face-to-face (see [1 John 3:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.1%E2%80%933)).

As believers in Jesus we celebrate our life as new creations. Yet we must never lose sight of what that cost Christ. His death brings us life. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.21)).

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How has Jesus’ transforming work been evidenced in your life? What areas of your life are still in need of that “new creation” impact?

Loving Father, thank You that, because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, I am a new creation. Forgive me for the times I return to the old things that need to pass away.

#### Insight

Various forms of the key New Testament word reconcile are found five times in [2 Corinthians 5:18–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.18%E2%80%9320). At the root of this term are the ideas of change or exchange. In the context of money, it signifies coins that were exchanged for others of equal value. Concerning people, the word denotes a change in the relationship from hostility to friendship. In [2 Corinthians 5:14–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.14%E2%80%9321), the change in relationship is between God and people on the basis of the death of Christ. Romans also includes multiple uses of the word reconciled. In just one verse the past and the ongoing benefits of reconciliation come into focus. “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (5:10).

# God Calling – 8/8/20

# Empty Yourself

Rely on Me alone. Ask no other help. Pay all out in the Spirit of trust that more will come to meet your supply.

Empty your vessels quickly to ensure a Divine Supply.

So much retained by you, so much the less will be gained from Me. It is a Law of Divine Supply.

To hold back, to retain, implies a fear of the future, a want of trust in Me.

When you ask Me to save you from the sea of poverty and difficulty you must trust wholly to Me.  If you do not, and your prayer and faith are genuine, then I must first answer your prayer for help as a rescuer does that of a drowning man who is struggling to save himself.

He renders him still more helpless and powerless until he is wholly at the will and mercy of the rescuer.  So understand My leading.  Trust wholly. Trust completely.

Empty your vessel.  I will fill it.  You ask both of you to understand Divine Supply. It is a most difficult lesson for My children to learn.  So dependent have they become on material supply they fail to understand.  You must live as I tell you.

Depend on Me.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.  Psalm 4:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/9/20

# Prayer in the Father’s Hearing



Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me." —[John 11:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+11%3A41)

When the Son of God prays, He is mindful and consciously aware of only His Father. God always hears the prayers of His Son, and if the Son of God has been formed in me (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)) the Father will always hear my prayers. But I must see to it that the Son of God is exhibited in my human flesh. “…your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit…” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)), that is, your body is the Bethlehem of God’s Son. Is the Son of God being given His opportunity to work in me? Is the direct simplicity of His life being worked out in me exactly as it was worked out in His life while here on earth? When I come into contact with the everyday occurrences of life as an ordinary human being, is the prayer of God’s eternal Son to His Father being prayed in me? Jesus says, “In that day you will ask in My name…” ([John 16:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:26)). What day does He mean? He is referring to the day when the Holy Spirit has come to me and made me one with my Lord.

Is the Lord Jesus Christ being abundantly satisfied by your life, or are you exhibiting a walk of spiritual pride before Him? Never let your common sense become so prominent and forceful that it pushes the Son of God to one side. Common sense is a gift that God gave to our human nature— but common sense is not the gift of His Son. Supernatural sense is the gift of His Son, and we should never put our common sense on the throne. The Son always recognizes and identifies with the Father, but common sense has never yet done so and never will. Our ordinary abilities will never worship God unless they are transformed by the indwelling Son of God. We must make sure that our human flesh is kept in perfect submission to Him, allowing Him to work through it moment by moment. Are we living at such a level of human dependence upon Jesus Christ that His life is being exhibited moment by moment in us?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To those who have had no agony Jesus says, “I have nothing for you; stand on your own feet, square your own shoulders. I have come for the man who knows he has a bigger handful than he can cope with, who knows there are forces he cannot touch; I will do everything for him if he will let Me. Only let a man grant he needs it, and I will do it for him.” The Shadow of an Agony, 1166 R

# CCEL – 8/9/20

**Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.**—[SONG 4:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.7)

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.—We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.—I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.

Ye are washed, . . . ye are sanctified, . . . ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.—The King's daughter is all glorious within.—Perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish.—Ye are complete in him.

[Isa. 1:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.1.html" \l "Isa.1.5). -[Isa. 64:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.6). -[Rom. 7:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.18).[I Cor. 6:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.11). -[Psa. 45:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.45.html" \l "Ps.45.13). -[Ezek. 16:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.14).[Psa. 90:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.17).[Rev. 7:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.14). -[Eph. 5:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.27). -[Col. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10).

“The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” [Revelation 21:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.21.html" \l "Rev.21.23)

Yonder in the better world, the inhabitants are independent of all creature comforts. They have no need of raiment; their white robes never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled. They need no medicine to heal diseases, “for the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” They need no sleep to recruit their frames—they rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise him in his temple. They need no social relationship to minister comfort, and whatever happiness they may derive from association with their fellows is not essential to their bliss, for their Lord’s society is enough for their largest desires. They need no teachers there; they doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God, but they do not require this by way of instruction; they shall all be taught of the Lord. Ours are the alms at the king’s gate, but they feast at the table itself. Here we lean upon the friendly arm, but there they lean upon their Beloved and upon him alone. Here we must have the help of our companions, but there they find all they want in Christ Jesus. Here we look to the meat which perisheth, and to the raiment which decays before the moth, but there they find everything in God. We use the bucket to fetch us water from the well, but there they drink from the fountain head, and put their lips down to the living water. Here the angels bring us blessings, but we shall want no messengers from heaven then. They shall need no Gabriels there to bring their love-notes from God, for there they shall see him face to face. Oh! what a blessed time shall that be when we shall have mounted above every second cause and shall rest upon the bare arm of God! What a glorious hour when God, and not his creatures; the Lord, and not his works, shall be our daily joy! Our souls shall then have attained the perfection of bliss.

# Word Live – 8/9/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/9/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/9/20

# Practicing Awareness

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4)

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

6If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4" \l "fen-NIV-29754a" \o "See footnote a)] you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

11Command and teach these things. 12Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 13Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

15Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Timothy 4:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+4#en-NIV-29754) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family.

My spiritual mentor is now 87 years old and has faithfully served Jesus Christ as a teacher, pastor’s wife, church planter, and missionary for most of her earthly years. She has been an incredible blessing in my life and to many others! The Apostle Paul had a similar relationship with Timothy. Even though Paul and Timothy were devoted followers of Christ in the early church, Paul knew how quickly people can become tainted by the world’s teachings. Therefore, Paul warned Timothy, “Watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Tim. 4:16). Be aware of how your life reflects Christ to those around you.

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

Paul was teaching Timothy to be aware of the people and circumstances surrounding him. But verse 16, where this caution appears, is actually the last verse of the chapter. Throughout chapter 4, Paul describes a process for maintaining godliness that allows believers to guard their lives against the enemy. This process includes speaking truth to one another, avoiding false teachings, sharing the hope of Christ, and pursuing godliness no matter one’s age (vv. 6–10). Paul exhorts Timothy to train himself to be godly, not to neglect his gift, to be diligent, and to persevere because “we have put our hope in the living God” (v. 10). Timothy could not accomplish this without a deep sense of self-awareness; he needed to be mindful of his own sin, emotions, and behaviors. Likewise, we must recognize our need in order to grow. We must be aware that we are Christ’s living messengers to the world. Paul presents it as a calling that we can fulfill with God’s leading and guidance. This should encourage us to examine ourselves and ask others to help us keep a close watch on how we live.

**Apply the Word**

Today, reflect on these questions: “Who am I, and what am I like? Whom do I allow to speak truth into my life?” If you are in need of a spiritual mentor, ask your pastor to help you find one. Being mentored in the faith can be the first step in becoming a lifelong follower of Christ.

### Pray with Us

Ask God in prayer that together with Timothy in today’s reading, you will persevere in godliness, “watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Tim. 4:16), and share the hope of Christ.

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/9/20

# Time-Traveling Letters

 **Read:** [**1 John 1:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%201.1%E2%80%938)

### The Incarnation of the Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4We write this to make our[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1%3A1%E2%80%938+%28&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30545a)] joy complete.

### Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness

5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1%3A1%E2%80%938+%28&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30548b)] sin.

8If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 John 1:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1%3A1%E2%80%938+%28&version=NIV#en-NIV-30545) Some manuscripts your
2. [1 John 1:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1%3A1%E2%80%938+%28&version=NIV#en-NIV-30548) Or every

The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. [1 John 1:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%201.2)

More than a million young people take part in the International Letter-Writing Competition each year. In 2018, the theme of the competition was this: “Imagine you are a letter traveling through time. What message do you want to convey to your readers?”

In the Bible, we have a collection of letters that—thanks to the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit—have made their way through time to us. As the Christian church grew, Jesus’ disciples wrote to local churches across Europe and Asia Minor to help the people understand their new life in Christ; many of those letters were collected in the Bible we read today.

What did these letter-writers want to convey to readers? John explains, in his first letter, that he’s writing about “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched.” He’s writing about his encounter with the living Christ ([1 John 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%201.1)). He writes so that his readers may “have fellowship with” one another, and with “the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (v. 3). When we have fellowship together, he writes, our joy will be complete (v. 4). The letters in the Bible draw us into a fellowship that’s beyond time—fellowship with the eternal God.

By:  [Amy Peterson](https://odb.org/author/petersonamy/)

#### Reflect & Pray

If God wrote a letter to you today, what would it say? If you wrote a letter to a friend telling about how you’ve encountered the living God, what would it say?

Thank You, Father, for the fellowship I have with You.

#### Insight

Who was John, the writer of this letter? He not only authored the three letters of John, but he also wrote the gospel of John and the book of Revelation. Like the brothers Simon Peter and Andrew, John and his brother James were fishermen ([Matthew 4:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%204.21)) who became part of the twelve chosen followers of Jesus ([Mark 3:16–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.16%E2%80%9319)). Within that group, John was one of the three who had a close relationship with Jesus ([Mark 5:37](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%205.37); [9:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%209.2); [14:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2014.33)). He refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” ([John 13:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.23)), and love becomes a central theme throughout his gospel and letters. It appears that he alone of the disciples stood by the cross (19:26), and he and Peter entered the tomb first (20:8).

# God Calling – 8/9/20

# Effort And Rest

Come to Me, talk to Me, dwell with Me and then you will know My Way is a sure way, My Paths are safe paths.

Come very near to Me.

Dig deep down into the soil of the Kingdom. Effort and rest -- a union of the two.

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.  Psalm 75:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/10/20

# The Holy Suffering of the Saint



Let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good… —[1 Peter 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Peter+4%3A19)

Choosing to suffer means that there must be something wrong with you, but choosing God’s will— even if it means you will suffer— is something very different. No normal, healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he simply chooses God’s will, just as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not. And no saint should ever dare to interfere with the lesson of suffering being taught in another saint’s life.

The saint who satisfies the heart of Jesus will make other saints strong and mature for God. But the people used to strengthen us are never those who sympathize with us; in fact, we are hindered by those who give us their sympathy, because sympathy only serves to weaken us. No one better understands a saint than the saint who is as close and as intimate with Jesus as possible. If we accept the sympathy of another saint, our spontaneous feeling is, “God is dealing too harshly with me and making my life too difficult.” That is why Jesus said that self-pity was of the devil (see [Matthew 16:21-23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16:21-23)). We must be merciful to God’s reputation. It is easy for us to tarnish God’s character because He never argues back; He never tries to defend or vindicate Himself. Beware of thinking that Jesus needed sympathy during His life on earth. He refused the sympathy of people because in His great wisdom He knew that no one on earth understood His purpose (see [Matthew 16:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16:23)). He accepted only the sympathy of His Father and the angels (see [Luke 15:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+15:10)).

Look at God’s incredible waste of His saints, according to the world’s judgment. God seems to plant His saints in the most useless places. And then we say, “God intends for me to be here because I am so useful to Him.” Yet Jesus never measured His life by how or where He was of the greatest use. God places His saints where they will bring the most glory to Him, and we are totally incapable of judging where that may be.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Jesus Christ can afford to be misunderstood; we cannot. Our weakness lies in always wanting to vindicate ourselves.  The Place of Help, 1051 L

# CCEL – 8/10/20

**I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but thou shouldest keep them from the evil.**—[JOHN 17:15.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.15)

Blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.—Ye are the salt of the earth, . . . the light of the world.—Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven.

I also withheld thee from sinning against me.

The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.—So did not I, because of the fear of God.—Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.—Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

[Phi. 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.15). -[Matt. 5:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.13). -[Matt. 5:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.16).[Gen. 20:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.20.html" \l "Gen.20.6).[II Thes. 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.3.html" \l "iiThess.3.3). -[Neh. 5:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.5.html" \l "Neh.5.15). -[Gal. 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.1.html" \l "Gal.1.4). -[Jude 24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.24).

“Christ, who is our life.” [Colossians 3:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.4)

Paul’s marvellously rich expression indicates, that Christ is the source of our life. “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” That same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb raised us to newness of life. He is now the substance of our spiritual life. It is by his life that we live; he is in us, the hope of glory, the spring of our actions, the central thought which moves every other thought. Christ is the sustenance of our life. What can the Christian feed upon but Jesus’ flesh and blood? “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” O wayworn pilgrims in this wilderness of sin, you never get a morsel to satisfy the hunger of your spirits, except ye find it in him! Christ is the solace of our life. All our true joys come from him; and in times of trouble, his presence is our consolation. There is nothing worth living for but him; and his lovingkindness is better than life! Christ is the object of our life. As speeds the ship towards the port, so hastes the believer towards the haven of his Saviour’s bosom. As flies the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain, and is crowned in his captain’s victory, so the believer contends for Christ, and gets his triumph out of the triumphs of his Master. “For him to live is Christ.” Christ is the exemplar of our life. Where there is the same life within, there will, there must be, to a great extent, the same developments without; and if we live in near fellowship with the Lord Jesus we shall grow like him. We shall set him before us as our Divine copy, and we shall seek to tread in his footsteps, until he shall become the crown of our life in glory. Oh! how safe, how honoured, how happy is the Christian, since Christ is our life!

# Word Live – 8/10/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/10/20

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 8/10/20

# Practicing Empathy

**Read:** [**Mark 8:1–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3a1%e2%80%9313)

### Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

8 During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2“I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”

4His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?”

5“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied.

6He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. 7They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. 8The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 9About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, 10he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

11The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. 12He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” 13Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

Anne Graham Lotz’s grandfather was a medical missionary to China for 25 years, where he established the Love and Mercy Hospital in Tsingkianpu. She writes, “My grandfather was wise. He knew that ‘man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,’ and so all of his ambulatory patients were required to attend chapel every day in the hospital . . . Those who were unable to leave their beds were visited personally by someone who would share Christ with them.” Because of her grandfather’s care for their physical and spiritual needs, hundreds, and even thousands of Chinese men and women received Jesus as Savior.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. Psalm 103:13

During His earthly ministry, it is easy to see that Jesus understood both the spiritual and physical needs of His followers. In Mark 8:2, Jesus showed empathy to a hungry crowd that had gathered to hear Him teach on a hillside: “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.” We can imagine the crowd of people clinging to Christ’s every word. But after three days and no more food, there were certainly rumbling stomachs, headaches, and plenty of irritability.

Jesus knew that if He sent them home, many of them might faint along the way (v. 3). His empathy led Him to meet their physical needs. He told them to sit on the ground (v. 6), perhaps so they could be fed in an orderly fashion. Jesus fed the people spiritually, but first He met their physical hunger. He understood that both needs were important. As Christians, we must have genuine empathy and understand people’s spiritual and physical needs. If we want to lead others to Christ, we cannot turn a blind eye to someone’s physical needs.

**Apply the Word**

As you read Mark 8, notice Christ’s attitude toward those He is serving. Compare His attitude to the disciples’ attitude . . . and then to your own. Who is God asking you to serve, and how will you respond?

### Pray with Us

In response to today’s teaching from Mark 8, let’s pray that our actions will be driven by empathy and understanding of people’s spiritual needs. Lord, help us to be a godly example.

## BY Mary Martin, Former Professor of Christian School Education

# Our Daily Bread – 8/10/20

# On the Bubble

 **Read:** [**1 Peter 2:4–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.4%E2%80%9310)

### The Living Stone and a Chosen People

4As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30405a)] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
    a chosen and precious cornerstone,  
and the one who trusts in him  
    will never be put to shame.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30406b)]

7Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected  
    has become the cornerstone,”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30407c)]

8and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble  
    and a rock that makes them fall.”[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30408d)]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Peter 2:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-30405) Or into a temple of the Spirit
2. [1 Peter 2:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-30406) Isaiah 28:16
3. [1 Peter 2:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-30407) Psalm 118:22
4. [1 Peter 2:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+2%3A4%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-30408) Isaiah 8:14

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you . . . into his wonderful light. [1 Peter 2:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.9)

A news article in May 1970 contained one of the first uses of the idiom “on the bubble.” Referring to a state of uncertainty, the expression was used in relation to rookie race car driver Steve Krisiloff. He’d been “on the bubble,” having posted a slow qualifying lap for the Indianapolis 500. Later, it was confirmed that his time—though the slowest of those who qualified—allowed him to compete in the race.

We can feel at times that we’re “on the bubble,” uncertain we have what it takes to compete in or finish the race of life. When we’re feeling that way, it’s important to remember that in Jesus we’re never “on the bubble.” As children of God, our place in His kingdom is secure ([John 14:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.3)). Our confidence flows from Him who chose Jesus to be the “cornerstone” on which our lives are built, and He chose us to be “living stones” filled with the Spirit of God, capable of being the people God created us to be ([1 Peter 2:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.5%E2%80%936)).

In Christ, our future is secure as we hope in and follow Him (v. 6). For “[we] are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that [we] may declare the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light” (v. 9).

In Jesus’ eyes we’re not “on the bubble.” We’re precious and loved (v. 4).

By:  [Ruth O’Reilly-Smith](https://odb.org/author/oreillysmith/)

#### Reflect & Pray

In what areas of life have you found yourself “on the bubble” and struggling with uncertainty? What can you do to regain your confidence in Jesus?

Father God, when disappointments threaten to undermine my identity as Your child, remind me to put my hope and confidence in You alone.

#### Insight

Peter wrote this letter to an audience experiencing difficulty because of persecution and in need of encouragement. His solution? To remind them of their identity as believers in Jesus.

Pulling from two passages in the Old Testament, Peter uses several phrases to describe the new identity of those who once “were not a people” ([1 Peter 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.10)). From [Exodus 19:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2019.6), a passage that precedes the receiving of the Ten Commandments, Peter tells his readers that they’re “a royal priesthood” and a “holy nation” ([1 Peter 2:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.9)). From [Isaiah 43:20–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2043.20%E2%80%9321), he tells them they’re a “chosen people” to “declare [God’s] praises” ([1 Peter 2:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.9)). Peter reminds his readers, and us, that like Israel who preceded them, they’re the special possession of God through His redemptive act.

# God Calling – 8/10/20

# Stray Sheep

Oh Jesus, guide our footsteps lest we stray.

For straying, My children, there is no cure except to keep so close to Me that nothing, no interest, no temptation, no other -- can come between us.

Sure of that you can but stay at My Side, knowing that, as I am the very Way itself, nothing can prevent your being in the Way, nothing can cause you to stray.

I have promised Peace but not leisure, heartrest and comfort, but not pleasure. I have said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation"; so do not feel, when adverse things happen, that you have failed or are not being guided, but I have said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

So learn of Me the overcoming Power of one who, though spat upon, scourged, misunderstood, forsaken, crucified, could yet see His Work had not been affected by these things, and cry triumphantly from His Cross, "It is finished."

Not the pain, the mocking, the agony, but His Task.

Let this thought comfort you. Amid failure, discord, contumely, suffering, even now may friends and angels be prepared to sound the chorus, "It is finished."

And he went a little father, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.  Matthew 26:39