# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/18/20

# Have You Ever Been Speechless with Sorrow?



When he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. —[Luke 18:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+18%3A23)

The rich young ruler went away from Jesus speechless with sorrow, having nothing to say in response to Jesus’ words. He had no doubt about what Jesus had said or what it meant, and it produced in him a sorrow with no words with which to respond. Have you ever been there? Has God’s Word ever come to you, pointing out an area of your life, requiring you to yield it to Him? Maybe He has pointed out certain personal qualities, desires, and interests, or possibly relationships of your heart and mind. If so, then you have often been speechless with sorrow. The Lord will not go after you, and He will not plead with you. But every time He meets you at the place where He has pointed, He will simply repeat His words, saying, “If you really mean what you say, these are the conditions.”

“Sell all that you have…” ([Luke 18:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:22)). In other words, rid yourself before God of everything that might be considered a possession until you are a mere conscious human being standing before Him, and then give God that. That is where the battle is truly fought— in the realm of your will before God. Are you more devoted to your idea of what Jesus wants than to Jesus Himself? If so, you are likely to hear one of His harsh and unyielding statements that will produce sorrow in you. What Jesus says is difficult— it is only easy when it is heard by those who have His nature in them. Beware of allowing anything to soften the hard words of Jesus Christ.

I can be so rich in my own poverty, or in the awareness of the fact that I am nobody, that I will never be a disciple of Jesus. Or I can be so rich in the awareness that I am somebody that I will never be a disciple. Am I willing to be destitute and poor even in my sense of awareness of my destitution and poverty? If not, that is why I become discouraged. Discouragement is disillusioned self-love, and self-love may be love for my devotion to Jesus— not love for Jesus Himself.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# The Highest Good, 544 R

# CCEL – 8/18/20

What God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?—[DEUT. 3:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.3.html" \l "Deut.3.24)

Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto theLord? O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?—Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.—For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.—The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children.

[Psa. 89:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.6),[8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.8). -[Psa. 86:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.86.html" \l "Ps.86.8). -[II Sam. 7:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.7.html" \l "iiSam.7.21).[I Cor. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.9). -[Deut. 29:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.29.html" \l "Deut.29.29).

“Strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord’s house.” **[Jeremiah 51:51](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.51.html" \l "Jer.51.51)**

In this account the faces of the Lord’s people were covered with shame, for it was a terrible thing that men should intrude into the Holy Place reserved for the priests alone. Everywhere about us we see like cause for sorrow. How many ungodly men are now educating with the view of entering into the ministry! What a crying sin is that solemn lie by which our whole population is nominally comprehended in a National Church! How fearful it is that ordinances should be pressed upon the unconverted, and that among the more enlightened churches of our land there should be such laxity of discipline. If the thousands who will read this portion shall all take this matter before the Lord Jesus this day, he will interfere and avert the evil which else will come upon his Church. To adulterate the Church is to pollute a well, to pour water upon fire, to sow a fertile field with stones. May we all have grace to maintain in our own proper way the purity of the Church, as being an assembly of believers, and not a nation, an unsaved community of unconverted men.

Our zeal must, however, begin at home. Let us examine ourselves as to our right to eat at the Lord’s table. Let us see to it that we have on our wedding garment, lest we ourselves be intruders in the Lord’s sanctuaries. Many are called, but few are chosen; the way is narrow, and the gate is strait. O for grace to come to Jesus aright, with the faith of God’s elect. He who smote Uzzah for touching the ark is very jealous of his two ordinances; as a true believer I may approach them freely, as an alien I must not touch them lest I die. Heart searching is the duty of all who are baptized or come to the Lord’s table. “Search me, O God, and know my way, try me and know my heart.”

# Word Live – 8/18/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/18/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/18/20

# Choosing to Rejoice

**Read:** [**Luke 10:1-23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a1-23)

### Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a1-23#fen-NIV-25365a)] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

5“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ 6If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. 7Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

8“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’ 12I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

13“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a1-23" \l "fen-NIV-25379b" \o "See footnote b)]

16“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

17The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

18He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. 20However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

21At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

22“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

23Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Luke 10:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a1-23#en-NIV-25365) Some manuscripts seventy; also in verse 17
2. [Luke 10:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3a1-23#en-NIV-25379) That is, the realm of the dead

Anyone who teaches will tell you that not every day is easy. You can have the most carefully prepared lesson plan, the most tried-and-true activity on your agenda, and still, your students may be irritable and inattentive. A key part of training future teachers is cautioning them that their attitude will be key. They must learn to maintain a positive spirit even when the going gets tough.

Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20

In Luke 10, Jesus appoints 72 messengers to go and do the work of the kingdom, spreading His message of salvation. He sends them “like lambs among wolves” (v. 3) two by two (v. 1). He let them know their work was important: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (v. 2). Jesus gave them practical instructions on where to stay, what to wear, and what to eat. He told them what to expect, in good situations and in bad (vv. 10–15).

They would not be going in their own power, but with His full authority behind them. When the people rejected them, they were rejecting God Himself (v. 16)! The seventy-two returned to Christ elated from what had happened and amazed by the result of their God-given authority. They said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name” (v. 17). As a wise teacher, and perhaps knowing human tendency toward pride and boastfulness, Jesus reminded them, “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (v. 20). Jesus emphasized that no matter what reception they received while doing His work, what would last for eternity was their personal relationship with God. In that alone, they should rejoice!

**Apply the Word**

We must remember that each and every day we have the opportunity to rejoice over what is most important—our own salvation, and each new sinner saved by God’s grace. Today, remember Christ’s words and genuinely choose to rejoice.

### Pray with Us

“Rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). May these words of Christ to His disciples define our relationships with others and our worldview, no matter what happens.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/18/20

# Rivals or Allies?

 **Read:** [**1 Corinthians 1:10–17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%201.10%E2%80%9317)

### A Church Divided Over Leaders

10I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28374a)] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28376b)]”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

13Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.) 17For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Corinthians 1:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-28374) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in verses 11 and 26; and in 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 6:8; 7:24, 29; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 50, 58; 16:15, 20.
2. [1 Corinthians 1:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A10%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-28376) That is, Peter

Be perfectly united in mind and thought. [1 Corinthians 1:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%201.10)

The city of Texarkana sits squarely on the state border between Texas and Arkansas. The city of 70,000 inhabitants has two mayors, two city councils, and two police and fire departments. The cross-town sporting rivalry between high schools draws an uncommonly high attendance, reflecting the deep allegiance each has to their own state’s school. More significant challenges arise as well, such as disputes over the shared water system, governed by two sets of state laws. Yet the town is known for its unity despite the line that divides it. Residents gather annually for a dinner held on State Line Avenue to share a meal in celebration of their oneness as a community.

The believers in Corinth may not have drawn a line down their main thoroughfare, but they were divided. They’d been quarreling as a result of their allegiances to those who taught them about Jesus: Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (Peter). Paul called them all to oneness “in mind and thought” ([1 Corinthians 1:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%201.10)), reminding them it was Christ who was crucified for them, not their spiritual leaders.

We behave similarly today, don’t we? We sometimes oppose even those who share our singularly important belief—Jesus’ sacrifice for our wrongdoings—making them rivals instead of allies. Just as Christ Himself is not divided, we, as His earthly representation—His body—mustn’t allow differences over nonessentials to divide us. Instead, may we celebrate our oneness in Him.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Over what nonessential spiritual issues are you likely to allow division? How can you foster unity instead?

God, help me to remain focused on You and Your sacrifice for Your people. May I not be distracted by the less important issues but call others to oneness as a community of faith.

#### Insight

The night before Jesus’ crucifixion, He prayed for those who would believe in Him: “I pray . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” ([John 17:20–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2017.20%E2%80%9321)). Paul’s letter to Corinth shows that such unity has always been a struggle ([1 Corinthians 1:10–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%201.10%E2%80%9313)). In another letter, Paul noted that differences on peripheral matters are fine. Writing about dietary concerns and the observance of religious holidays, he said, “Each [person] should be fully convinced in their own mind” ([Romans 14:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2014.5)). But we must agree on who Jesus is—fully God and fully human; born of a virgin; crucified, risen, and returning for His church; the sinless Son of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Such things are foundational to our faith and serve to unify us in God’s Spirit.

# God Calling – 8/18/20

# Stones of the Way

I am here. No distance separates Me. In the Spirit-Kingdom we measure not by earth's miles. A false word, a fear-inspired failure, a harsh criticism, these are the distances between a soul and Me. Your training must be severe, that your work for Me be unhindered.

You seek My Presence and they who seek shall find. It is not a question of human searching, so much as human consciousness, unconditional surrender to My Will in the small, as in the big things of life. This it is that makes My Guidance possible.

You know the difference between taking a glad, loving, joy-springing child with you along a way, when the child anticipates each direction, accepts naturally each decision as to each turning - and the child who resists, and rebellious, has to be forced, even though in its quieter moments it may say, "Yes.  I do want to go with you.  I cannot be left alone, but I hate this way."

It is not the way, but the loving rejoicing in the way and the guidance, that matters with My disciples.  You are ready for the guidance but you do not rejoice as you should, both of you, in the little daily stones of the way.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.  Romans 8:2

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/19/20

# Self-Awareness



Come to Me… —[Matthew 11:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+11%3A28)

God intends for us to live a well-rounded life in Christ Jesus, but there are times when that life is attacked from the outside. Then we tend to fall back into self-examination, a habit that we thought was gone. Self-awareness is the first thing that will upset the completeness of our life in God, and self-awareness continually produces a sense of struggling and turmoil in our lives. Self-awareness is not sin, and it can be produced by nervous emotions or by suddenly being dropped into a totally new set of circumstances. Yet it is never God’s will that we should be anything less than absolutely complete in Him. Anything that disturbs our rest in Him must be rectified at once, and it is not rectified by being ignored but only by coming to Jesus Christ. If we will come to Him, asking Him to produce Christ-awareness in us, He will always do it, until we fully learn to abide in Him.

Never allow anything that divides or destroys the oneness of your life with Christ to remain in your life without facing it. Beware of allowing the influence of your friends or your circumstances to divide your life. This only serves to sap your strength and slow your spiritual growth. Beware of anything that can split your oneness with Him, causing you to see yourself as separate from Him. Nothing is as important as staying right spiritually. And the only solution is a very simple one— “Come to Me….” The intellectual, moral, and spiritual depth of our reality as a person is tested and measured by these words. Yet in every detail of our lives where we are found not to be real, we would rather dispute the findings than come to Jesus.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 8/19/20

As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation—[I PET. 1:15.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.15)

Ye know how we exhorted . . . and charged every one of you, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.—Ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

[I Thes. 2:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.2.html" \l "iThess.2.11). -[I Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.9).[Eph. 5:8-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.8). -[Phi. 1:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.11).[Matt. 5:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.16). -[I Cor. 10:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.31).

“He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord.” **[Micah 5:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.5.html" \l "Mic.5.4)**

Christ’s reign in his Church is that of a shepherd-king. He has supremacy, but it is the superiority of a wise and tender shepherd over his needy and loving flock; he commands and receives obedience, but it is the willing obedience of the well-cared-for sheep, rendered joyfully to their beloved Shepherd, whose voice they know so well. He rules by the force of love and the energy of goodness.

His reign is practical in its character. It is said, “He shall stand and feed.” The great Head of the Church is actively engaged in providing for his people. He does not sit down upon the throne in empty state, or hold a sceptre without wielding it in government. No, he stands and feeds. The expression “feed,” in the original, is like an analogous one in the Greek, which means to shepherdize, to do everything expected of a shepherd: to guide, to watch, to preserve, to restore, to tend, as well as to feed.

His reign is continual in its duration. It is said, “He shall stand and feed;” not “He shall feed now and then, and leave his position;” not, “He shall one day grant a revival, and then next day leave his Church to barrenness.” His eyes never slumber, and his hands never rest; his heart never ceases to beat with love, and his shoulders are never weary of carrying his people’s burdens.

His reign is effectually powerful in its action; “He shall feed in the strength of Jehovah.” Wherever Christ is, there is God; and whatever Christ does is the act of the Most High. Oh! it is a joyful truth to consider that he who stands today representing the interests of his people is very God of very God, to whom every knee shall bow. Happy are we who belong to such a shepherd, whose humanity communes with us, and whose divinity protects us. Let us worship and bow down before him as the people of his pasture.

# Word Live – 8/19/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/19/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/19/20

# Problem Solving

**Read:** [**Mark 11:12–26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326)

### Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple Courts

12The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

15On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326" \l "fen-NIV-24658a" \o "See footnote a)]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-24658b)]”

18The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19When evening came, Jesus and his disciples[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-24660c)] went out of the city.

20In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

22“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. 23“Truly[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-24664d)] I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 24Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” [26] [[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-24667e)]

#### Footnotes:

1. [Mark 11:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-24658) Isaiah 56:7
2. [Mark 11:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-24658) Jer. 7:11
3. [Mark 11:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-24660) Some early manuscripts came, Jesus
4. [Mark 11:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-24664) Some early manuscripts “If you have faith in God,” Jesus answered, 23“truly
5. [Mark 11:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3a12%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-24667) Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matt. 6:15.

As a professor at Moody Bible Institute, I've enjoyed training the next generation of teachers. We tackle all sorts of subjects, one being how to engage children in mathematics. New teachers must understand how to help children approach “word problems.” Children often jump in and try to solve the problem without reading and understanding it. Sound familiar? We can make the same mistake when we jump in to solve problems without a purposeful approach.

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. Mark 11:22

In Mark 11, Jesus was giving His disciples principles for daily living and problem-solving. The day before had been a long one, during which Jesus had experienced hunger and righteous anger as He drove the moneychangers out of the Temple. The next morning, Peter seemed astonished that the fig tree Jesus had cursed the previous day had actually withered. In this section, Jesus teaches them foundational truths for addressing life’s problems: faith in God, prayer, and forgiveness.

Of course, the disciples had no idea what was ahead for them in the days to come. Peter would deny Christ, and they would all witness Christ’s death and resurrection. But in only four verses, Vv. 22–25, Jesus gives Peter a workable approach to facing whatever life would bring: “Have faith in God” (v. 22). As His followers, we are to realize the power of believing in God (v. 23). We should pray diligently with faith (v. 24). And if we have someone to forgive, we should do so immediately. Don’t let your prayers be hindered by the weight of unforgiveness (v. 25).

These lessons, which happened right before Christ’s arrest, would follow Peter and the other disciples through difficult days to come. Jesus’ words promised them that faith in God could move mountains. Jesus knew problems would arise, and faith would be the solution.

**Apply the Word**

Do you get so wrapped up in solving your own problems that you jump ahead to devising your own solutions? Today’s reading reminds us to place all situations in God’s hands and look to Him for answers. Let’s patiently approach difficult times with faith, prayer, and forgiveness. God might just move a mountain!

### Pray with Us

Is God calling you to a deeper life of faith and obedience? We hope Christ’s teaching in today’s Scripture passage will help you along the way. Pray for God’s will to be done in your life.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/19/20

# Only Trust

 **Read:** [**1 Kings 17:8–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2017.8%E2%80%9316)

8Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9“Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” 10So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12“As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. [1 Kings 17:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2017.15)

Three hundred children were dressed and seated for breakfast, and a prayer of thanks was offered for the food. But there was no food! Situations like this were not unusual for orphanage director and missionary George Mueller (1805–1898). Here was yet another opportunity to see how God would provide. Within minutes of Mueller’s prayer, a baker who couldn’t sleep the night before showed up at the door. Sensing that the orphanage could use the bread, he had made three batches. Not long afterward, the town milkman appeared. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. Not wanting the milk to spoil, he offered it to Mueller.

It’s normal to experience bouts of worry, anxiety, and self-pity when we lack resources essential to our well-being—food, shelter, health, finances, friendships. [First Kings 17:8–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2017.8%E2%80%9316) reminds us that God’s help can come through unexpected sources like a needy widow. “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug” (v. 12). Earlier it was ravens that provided for Elijah (vv. 4–6). Concerns for our needs to be met can send us searching in many directions. A clear vision of God as the Provider who has promised to supply our needs can be liberating. Before we seek solutions, may we be careful to seek Him first. Doing so can save us time, energy, and frustration.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What’s been your experience when you’ve focused on securing provision before seeking the Provider in prayer? What current needs will you bring before God?

Father, sharpen my vision of You as the Provider for all my needs. Forgive me for times I have futilely sought to find my way without seeking You first.

#### Insight

An interesting part of this story is the difference between what God tells Elijah and the widow’s initial response. God said he’d “directed” a widow to supply him with food ([1 Kings 17:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2017.9)). But when he asked the widow for bread, she replies that she doesn’t have enough to spare. She even swears by “the Lord your God” (v. 12)—a direct reference to the One who gave her the instructions. It was common to swear by a deity to prove someone was telling the truth—in this case the woman did so to declare that she didn’t have the means to feed Elijah. Despite the reminder (from her own lips) of the instructions she received, she obeys only after Elijah reassured her that God would provide for them until the famine was over.

# God Calling – 8/19/20

# A Human Temple

Lord, we Love Thee, we worship Thee.

Bow low before Me. Worship is not supplication though both express man's varying needs of Me. Bow low in worship, conscious not only of My humanity but of My Divine Majesty.

As you kneel in humble adoration I will tell you that when I took upon Me your humanity it was with the desire of raising that humanity to My Divinity.

Earth gave Me her best -- a human temple to enclose My Divinity, and I brought to her the possession of Divine Power, Divine Love, Divine Strength, to be forever expressed in those of her children who accepted Me, opened their hearts to Me, and sought to live My Life.

So, kneeling in a spirit of humility, turn your eyes Heavenward and realize the majesty, the Power, the Beauty that may be yours. Remember there are no limits to My giving -- there may be to your accepting.

Oh! rejoice at the wonders to which you are called and, seeing them in prayer, rise in My Strength, filled with the longing to attain them.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.  John 4:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/20/20

# Christ-Awareness



…and I will give you rest. —[Matthew 11:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+11%3A28)

Whenever anything begins to disintegrate your life with Jesus Christ, turn to Him at once, asking Him to re-establish your rest. Never allow anything to remain in your life that is causing the unrest. Think of every detail of your life that is causing the disintegration as something to fight against, not as something you should allow to remain. Ask the Lord to put awareness of Himself in you, and your self-awareness will disappear. Then He will be your all in all. Beware of allowing your self-awareness to continue, because slowly but surely it will awaken self-pity, and self-pity is satanic. Don’t allow yourself to say, “Well, they have just misunderstood me, and this is something over which they should be apologizing to me; I’m sure I must have this cleared up with them already.” Learn to leave others alone regarding this. Simply ask the Lord to give you Christ-awareness, and He will steady you until your completeness in Him is absolute.

A complete life is the life of a child. When I am fully conscious of my awareness of Christ, there is something wrong. It is the sick person who really knows what health is. A child of God is not aware of the will of God because he is the will of God. When we have deviated even slightly from the will of God, we begin to ask, “Lord, what is your will?” A child of God never prays to be made aware of the fact that God answers prayer, because he is so restfully certain that God always answers prayer.

If we try to overcome our self-awareness through any of our own commonsense methods, we will only serve to strengthen our self-awareness tremendously. Jesus says, “Come to Me…and I will give you rest,” that is, Christ-awareness will take the place of self-awareness. Wherever Jesus comes He establishes rest— the rest of the completion of activity in our lives that is never aware of itself.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 530

# CCEL – 8/20/20

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.—[NUM. 23:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.23.html" \l "Num.23.19)

The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

The faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.—All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.—Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God . . . which keepeth truth for ever.

[Jas. 1:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.17). -[Heb. 13:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.8).[Psa. 91:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.4).[Heb. 6:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html" \l "Heb.6.17).[Deut. 7:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.7.html" \l "Deut.7.9). -[Psa. 25:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.25.html" \l "Ps.25.10). -[Psa. 146:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.146.html" \l "Ps.146.5).

“The sweet psalmist of Israel.” [2 Samuel 23:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.23.html" \l "iiSam.23.1)

Among all the saints whose lives are recorded in Holy Writ, David possesses an experience of the most striking, varied, and instructive character. In his history we meet with trials and temptations not to be discovered, as a whole, in other saints of ancient times, and hence he is all the more suggestive a type of our Lord. David knew the trials of all ranks and conditions of men. Kings have their troubles, and David wore a crown: the peasant has his cares, and David handled a shepherd’s crook: the wanderer has many hardships, and David abode in the caves of Engedi: the captain has his difficulties, and David found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him. The psalmist was also tried in his friends, his counsellor Ahithophel forsook him, “He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.” His worst foes were they of his own household: his children were his greatest affliction. The temptations of poverty and wealth, of honour and reproach, of health and weakness, all tried their power upon him. He had temptations from without to disturb his peace, and from within to mar his joy. David no sooner escaped from one trial than he fell into another; no sooner emerged from one season of despondency and alarm, than he was again brought into the lowest depths, and all God’s waves and billows rolled over him. It is probably from this cause that David’s psalms are so universally the delight of experienced Christians. Whatever our frame of mind, whether ecstasy or depression, David has exactly described our emotions. He was an able master of the human heart, because he had been tutored in the best of all schools—the school of heart-felt, personal experience. As we are instructed in the same school, as we grow matured in grace and in years, we increasingly appreciate David’s psalms, and find them to be “green pastures.” My soul, let David’s experience cheer and counsel thee this day.

# Word Live – 8/20/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/20/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/20/20

# A Biblical Worldview

**Read:** [**Ephesians 2:1-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1-10)

### Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1-10#fen-NIV-29233a)] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Ephesians 2:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1-10#en-NIV-29233) In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

A kindergarten teacher was trying to understand how she could teach her young students from a biblical worldview. At her Christian school, she spent time telling her students about their intrinsic value as God’s creation. That weekend, one of her boys unexpectedly used his mother’s smartphone to post a video to Facebook. With his toothless grin and wide smile, he boldly proclaimed to the world, “Who am I? I am God’s masterpiece!”

We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

A “masterpiece” is a priceless creation. The word often used to describe valuable works of art, itself implies that this “piece” is formed by an expert, a “master” craftsman. In Ephesians, Paul describes who we are. He begins by saying we are “dead” in our sinfulness (v. 2). Controlled by the “ways of this world,” we did not follow God but lived in disobedience (v. 3). The turning point comes in verse 4 with the word “but.” Everything changes because of God’s “great love for us” (v. 4). The result? We are made alive and saved by His grace (v. 5). This grace ensures our future and changes who we are. It is not a result of our work; God produces this change (v. 8).

We, sinners, have the awesome privilege to be described as His “masterpiece” (NLT). Some Bible versions use “workmanship” (NASB) or “handiwork” (NIV). That word can be translated from the Greek as “His work of art.” Do you believe that about yourself? Perhaps you need to refresh your worldview. As God’s creation, you have implicit value. This is just one part of the biblical worldview that will help us interpret the world around us. Even wide grinned, toothless 5-year-olds can understand this foundational truth and celebrate the incredible gift of being God’s unique work of art.

**Apply the Word**

Do you think of yourself as a masterpiece? As God’s special creation, you are created and saved to do His work. This identity, this worldview, should change how we think, act, and live.

### Pray with Us

Today we invite you to praise the Lord as your Creator, Savior, and Teacher. Thank Him that you are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” created to do good works for the Kingdom.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/20/20

# Working with God

 **Read:** [**1 Corinthians 3:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.1%E2%80%939)

### The Church and Its Leaders

3 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

5What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

We are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building. [1 Corinthians 3:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.9)

During his 1962 visit to Mexico, Bill Ashe helped fix windmill hand pumps at an orphanage. Fifteen years later, inspired by a deep desire to serve God by helping provide clean water to villages in need, Bill founded a nonprofit organization. He said, “God awoke me to ‘make the most of the time’ by finding others with a desire to bring safe drinking water to the rural poor.” Later, having learned about the global need for safe water through the requests of thousands of pastors and evangelists from more than 100 countries, Bill invited others to join the ministry’s efforts.

God welcomes us to team up to serve with Him and others in various ways. When the people of Corinth argued over which teachers they preferred, the apostle Paul affirmed his role as a servant of Jesus and a teammate of Apollos, fully dependent on God for spiritual growth ([1 Corinthians 3:1–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.1%E2%80%937)). He reminds us that all work has God-given value (v. 8). Acknowledging the privilege of working with others while serving Him, Paul encourages us to build each other up as He transforms us in love (v. 9).

Though our mighty Father doesn’t need our help to accomplish His great works, He equips us and invites us to partner with Him.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How does leaving the results to God give you the courage to risk doing what seems impossible? What hard thing has He invited you to do with His help?

Father, thank You for providing all I need as You continue to accomplish great things in me.

#### Insight

Greek thinkers often saw the soul or spirit as pure and eternal in contrast to the weaknesses and passions of the body, and therefore emphasized controlling the body through the mind. Followers of Aristotle, for example, emphasized moderating bodily desires and feelings, while Stoics tried to eliminate negative emotional reactions to life entirely.

Paul also often contrasted life lived “merely” in the body ([1 Corinthians 3:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.3%E2%80%934)) with a spiritual life (see for example [Romans 8:4–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.4%E2%80%939)). But for Paul, the mind or human spirit was just as susceptible as the body to being governed by unhealthy desires. Paul emphasized instead the contrast between a life empowered by God’s Spirit and a life lived as “mere human beings” ([1 Corinthians 3:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.4)). Paul taught that only living in continual dependence on the Spirit could lift human beings from being slaves to their desires to living out their true purpose.

# God Calling – 8/20/20

# Shame and Remorse

My children! Yes! "Shield from the scorn and cover from the chiding." Often I have to shield My disciples from their own scorn and chiding.

My poor Peter could never have done My work, never have had the courage to live on, or the daring to live for Me, but for the tender love with which I enwrapped him. Not from the anger of My Father, who is all Love, did I need to protect him -- not from the scorn of My enemies, nor from the resentment of My friends. No! But from the hatred of Peter himself.

And so to My followers today, as then, there come the shame and remorse and contempt of themselves, of the weak selves. They meant to be so strong and brave for Me. And then I have to protect them with a shield of love, or never could they have the courage to fight and conquer. But this facing of the real self has to be -- shame and remorse must come.

That is a stage in development, but only a stage. What use the glad wings of a butterfly if it remained Earth bound, weighed down with the thought of its contemptible past? And so now today I say to you both, that you are not to dwell for one moment on your sins, and mistakes, and faults, and bad habits of the past.

You must be as one who runs a race, stumbles and falls, rises and presses on to the goal. What avails it if he stays to examine the spot where he fell, to weep over the delay, over the shortsightedness that prevented his anticipating and avoiding the obstacles?

So with you, and I lay it on you as a command -- no looking back. Give yourself, and all you have ever met a fresh start from today. Remember no more their sins and failures, or your own. The remembrance is a current of disappointment that hinders the swimmer.

When I sent My Disciples out, two by two, no scrip, no two coats, no money, it was an injunction to be carried out literally, but figuratively too. On Life's journey throw away all that is not important. Cast aside all the hindrances, the past imperfections of others - - the failure-sense.

Travel unladen, with a light heart, and a light heart means a weight of influence.

My children, I love you.

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.  Acts 5:41

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/21/20

# The Ministry of the Unnoticed



Blessed are the poor in spirit… —[Matthew 5:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A3)

The New Testament notices things that do not seem worthy of notice by our standards. “Blessed are the poor in spirit….” This literally means, “Blessed are the paupers.” Paupers are remarkably commonplace! The preaching of today tends to point out a person’s strength of will or the beauty of his character— things that are easily noticed. The statement we so often hear, “Make a decision for Jesus Christ,” places the emphasis on something our Lord never trusted. He never asks us to decide for Him, but to yield to Him— something very different. At the foundation of Jesus Christ’s kingdom is the genuine loveliness of those who are commonplace. I am truly blessed in my poverty. If I have no strength of will and a nature without worth or excellence, then Jesus says to me, “Blessed are you, because it is through your poverty that you can enter My kingdom.” I cannot enter His kingdom by virtue of my goodness— I can only enter it as an absolute pauper.

The true character of the loveliness that speaks for God is always unnoticed by the one possessing that quality. Conscious influence is prideful and unchristian. If I wonder if I am being of any use to God, I instantly lose the beauty and the freshness of the touch of the Lord. “He who believes in Me…out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” ([John 7:38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7:38)). And if I examine the outflow, I lose the touch of the Lord.

Who are the people who have influenced us most? Certainly not the ones who thought they did, but those who did not have even the slightest idea that they were influencing us. In the Christian life, godly influence is never conscious of itself. If we are conscious of our influence, it ceases to have the genuine loveliness which is characteristic of the touch of Jesus. We always know when Jesus is at work because He produces in the commonplace something that is inspiring.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We are not fundamentally free; external circumstances are not in our hands, they are in God’s hands, the one thing in which we are free is in our personal relationship to God. We are not responsible for the circumstances we are in, but we are responsible for the way we allow those circumstances to affect us; we can either allow them to get on top of us, or we can allow them to transform us into what God wants us to be.  Conformed to His Image, 354 L

# CCEL – 8/21/20

Thou art my portion, O Lord.—[PSA. 119:57.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.57)

All things are yours; . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.—Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave himself for us.—God gave him to be the head over all things to the church.—Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.—I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.—O my soul, thou hast said unto theLord, Thou art my Lord. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

[I Cor. 3:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.3.html" \l "iCor.3.21),[23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.3.html" \l "iCor.3.23). -[Tit. 2:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.13). -[Eph. 1:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.22). -[Eph. 5:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.25),[27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.27).[Psa. 34:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.2). -[Isa. 61:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.61.html" \l "Isa.61.10).[Psa. 73:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.25). -[Psa. 16:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.2),[5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.5).

“He that watereth shall be watered also himself.” **[Proverbs 11:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.11.html" \l "Prov.11.25)**

We are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others. In watering others, we are ourselves watered. How? Our efforts to be useful, bring out our powers for usefulness. We have latent talents and dormant faculties, which are brought to light by exercise. Our strength for labour is hidden even from ourselves, until we venture forth to fight the Lord’s battles, or to climb the mountains of difficulty. We do not know what tender sympathies we possess until we try to dry the widow’s tears, and soothe the orphan’s grief. We often find in attempting to teach others, that we gain instruction for ourselves. Oh, what gracious lessons some of us have learned at sick beds! We went to teach the Scriptures, we came away blushing that we knew so little of them. In our converse with poor saints, we are taught the way of God more perfectly for ourselves and get a deeper insight into divine truth. So that watering others makes us humble. We discover how much grace there is where we had not looked for it; and how much the poor saint may outstrip us in knowledge. Our own comfort is also increased by our working for others. We endeavour to cheer them, and the consolation gladdens our own heart. Like the two men in the snow; one chafed the other’s limbs to keep him from dying, and in so doing kept his own blood in circulation, and saved his own life. The poor widow of Sarepta gave from her scanty store a supply for the prophet’s wants, and from that day she never again knew what want was. Give then, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and running over.

# Word Live – 8/21/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/21/20

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# Today in the Word – 8/21/20

# Listening as Obedience

**Read:** [**Malachi 2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2)

### Additional Warning to the Priests

2 “And now, you priests, this warning is for you. 2If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me.

3“Because of you I will rebuke your descendants[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#fen-NIV-23107a)]; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. 4And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue,” says the Lord Almighty. 5“My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. 6True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

7“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the Lord Almighty. 9“So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

### Breaking Covenant Through Divorce

10Do we not all have one Father[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#fen-NIV-23114b)]? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

11Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. 12As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord remove him from the tents of Jacob[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#fen-NIV-23116c)]—even though he brings an offering to the Lord Almighty.

13Another thing you do: You flood the Lord’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. 14You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

15Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2" \l "fen-NIV-23119d" \o "See footnote d)] So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

16“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,”[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2" \l "fen-NIV-23120e" \o "See footnote e)] says the Lord Almighty.

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

### Breaking Covenant Through Injustice

17You have wearied the Lord with your words.

“How have we wearied him?” you ask.

By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

#### Footnotes:

1. [Malachi 2:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#en-NIV-23107) Or will blight your grain
2. [Malachi 2:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#en-NIV-23114) Or father
3. [Malachi 2:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#en-NIV-23116) Or 12May the Lord remove from the tents of Jacob anyone who gives testimony in behalf of the man who does this
4. [Malachi 2:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#en-NIV-23119) The meaning of the Hebrew for the first part of this verse is uncertain.
5. [Malachi 2:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2#en-NIV-23120) Or “I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “because the man who divorces his wife covers his garment with violence,”

At times I can be “listening” to someone and suddenly realize that I haven’t heard a word that has been said in the last five minutes. My not listening has nothing to do with the topic at hand or my hearing ability. It has everything to do with one thing: selfishness. I allowed my busy mind to wander away from what I should have been focusing on at that moment. I gave priority to my thoughts over the other person’s thoughts. Whether it’s during a personal conversation, a business meeting, or even listening to a sermon, can you relate?

“If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will send a curse on you.” Malachi 2:2

The prophet Malachi served God by delivering a message of judgment to the people of Judah. They had turned away from worshiping the Lord and toward worshiping foreign gods. Even the priests, the religious leaders, were not listening to God. In Malachi 2:1 we see God’s graciousness in His willingness to give the priests a “warning.” Verse 2 begins with a stern warning, “If you will not listen...” If they disobeyed and continued to close their ears, God’s wrath and judgment would fall upon everyone.

This problem was not really a new one for God’s people. For example, the priests of Judah had practiced not listening well to God’s instructions by bringing Him polluted offerings (1:7–8). In Malachi 2, God clearly and purposely instructs the priests (His servant-leaders) to listen well to His instructions and give the proper honor to His name. Why? He tells them in verse 7 that their lips should “preserve knowledge” because they are God’s messengers. Oh, if they would only listen and obey!

**Apply the Word**

When I don’t listen well it reflects my selfish focus. Although I might be quiet and appear to be listening, I know that my mind is wandering. As we seek to share Jesus with others, we should learn to be careful listeners. Whom will you listen to today?

### Pray with Us

Today’s Scripture shows the importance of listening to the voice of the Lord and honoring His name with our lives. Let’s pray we’ll discern God’s voice above all the others competing for our attention.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/21/20

# Bright Spots in Bleak Places

 **Read:** [**Psalm 86:1–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086.1%E2%80%9313)

#### A prayer of David.

1Hear me, Lord, and answer me,  
    for I am poor and needy.  
2Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;  
    save your servant who trusts in you.  
You are my God; 3have mercy on me, Lord,  
    for I call to you all day long.  
4Bring joy to your servant, Lord,  
    for I put my trust in you.

5You, Lord, are forgiving and good,  
    abounding in love to all who call to you.  
6Hear my prayer, Lord;  
    listen to my cry for mercy.  
7When I am in distress, I call to you,  
    because you answer me.

8Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;  
    no deeds can compare with yours.  
9All the nations you have made  
    will come and worship before you, Lord;  
    they will bring glory to your name.  
10For you are great and do marvelous deeds;  
    you alone are God.

11Teach me your way, Lord,  
    that I may rely on your faithfulness;  
give me an undivided heart,  
    that I may fear your name.  
12I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;  
    I will glorify your name forever.  
13For great is your love toward me;  
    you have delivered me from the depths,  
    from the realm of the dead.

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

When my husband and I were exploring a small, rugged corner of the state of Wyoming, I spied a sunflower in a rocky, dry place where sagebrush, nettles, prickly cactus, and other scraggly plants grew. It wasn’t as tall as the domestic sunflower, but it was just as bright—and I felt cheered.

This unexpected bright spot in rough terrain reminded me of how life, even for the believer in Jesus, can seem barren and cheerless. Troubles can seem insurmountable, and like the cries of the psalmist David, our prayers sometimes seem to go unheeded: “Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy” ([Psalm 86:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086.1)). Like him, we too long for joy (v. 4).

But David goes on to declare that we serve a faithful (v. 11), “compassionate and gracious God” (v. 15), who abounds in love for all who call on Him (v. 5). He does answer (v. 7).

Sometimes in bleak places, God sends a sunflower—an encouraging word or note from a friend; a comforting verse or Bible passage; a beautiful sunrise—that helps us to move forward with a lighter step, with hope. Even as we await the day we experience God’s deliverance out of our difficulty, may we join the psalmist in proclaiming, “You are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God”! (v. 10).

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Out of what difficult place has God delivered you? During that time, did you experience any “sunflowers” that helped you persevere?

Loving God, thank You for being compassionate and gracious. Help me to remember how You’ve been faithful and answered my prayers in the past—and will again in the future.

#### Insight

King David is credited with composing seventy-three to seventy-four of the psalms, and [Psalm 86](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086) is one of them. Unlike some of David’s songs (see, for example, the superscription of [Psalm 51](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2051)), [Psalm 86](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086) contains no comments about the circumstances that prompted its writing, and it appears to contain numerous phrases that appear in other Davidic psalms. However, the key feature of [Psalm 86](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2086), as observed in The New Bible Commentary, may be that the name Lord appears seven times (vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15) using the Hebrew term Adonai, which speaks of God’s sovereignty. As David offers worship and adoration to God, he also presents his needs and concerns to Him—knowing that he’s appealing to the God who not only deserves all his worship and praise, but that He’s the One who can be trusted with all possible outcomes.

# God Calling – 8/21/20

# Broken Voices

Behold, I make all things new. It is only the earthbound spirit that cannot soar. Every blessing I send you, every joy, every freedom achieved from poverty and worry will loosen a strand that ties you to earth.

It is only those strands that bind you. Therefore your freedom will mean your rising into the realm of Joy and Appreciation.

Clipped wings can grow again. Broken voices regain a strength and beauty unknown before. Your power to help other lives will soon bring its delight, even when, at first, the help to yourselves may seem too late to bring you Joy.

Worn-out and tired as you may seem, and pain-weary, I say unto you, "Behold, I make all things new." That promise shall be fulfilled. Tenderly across the years, yet tenderly close and near to your tired noise-weary ears, I speak to you, My loved ones, today.

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest."

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.  2 Corinthians 5:17

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/22/20

# “I Indeed…But He”



I indeed baptize you with water…but He…will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. —[Matthew 3:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+3%3A11)

Have I ever come to the point in my life where I can say, “I indeed…but He…”? Until that moment comes, I will never know what the baptism of the Holy Spirit means. I indeed am at the end, and I cannot do anything more— but He begins right there— He does the things that no one else can ever do. Am I prepared for His coming? Jesus cannot come and do His work in me as long as there is anything blocking the way, whether it is something good or bad. When He comes to me, am I prepared for Him to drag every wrong thing I have ever done into the light? That is exactly where He comes. Wherever I know I am unclean is where He will put His feet and stand, and wherever I think I am clean is where He will remove His feet and walk away.

Repentance does not cause a sense of sin— it causes a sense of inexpressible unworthiness. When I repent, I realize that I am absolutely helpless, and I know that through and through I am not worthy even to carry His sandals. Have I repented like that, or do I have a lingering thought of possibly trying to defend my actions? The reason God cannot come into my life is that I am not at the point of complete repentance.

“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” John is not speaking here of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience, but as a work performed by Jesus Christ. “He will baptize you….” The only experience that those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit are ever conscious of is the experience of sensing their absolute unworthiness.

“I indeed” was this in the past, “but He” came and something miraculous happened. Get to the end of yourself where you can do nothing, but where He does everything.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Seeing is never believing: we interpret what we see in the light of what we believe. Faith is confidence in God before you see God emerging; therefore the nature of faith is that it must be tried.  He Shall Glorify Me, 494 R

# CCEL – 8/22/20

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.—[ROM. 14:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.7)

Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Let no man seek his own: but every man another's wealth.—Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[Rom. 14:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.8). -[I Cor. 10:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.24). -[I Cor. 6:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.20).[Phi. 1:20-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.20).[Gal. 2:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.19).

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.” **[Song of Solomon 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.8)**

Such is the language of the believer panting after present fellowship with Jesus, he is sick for his Lord. Gracious souls are never perfectly at ease except they are in a state of nearness to Christ; for when they are away from him they lose their peace. The nearer to him, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven; the nearer to him, the fuller the heart is, not only of peace, but of life, and vigour, and joy, for these all depend on constant intercourse with Jesus. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothing to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveller in a weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us; and, therefore, if we are not consciously one with him, little marvel if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.” This earnest longing after Jesus has a blessing attending it: “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness”; and therefore, supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One. Blessed is that hunger, since it comes from God: if I may not have the full-blown blessedness of being filled, I would seek the same blessedness in its sweet bud-pining in emptiness and eagerness till I am filled with Christ. If I may not feed on Jesus, it shall be next door to heaven to hunger and thirst after him. There is a hallowedness about that hunger, since it sparkles among the beatitudes of our Lord. But the blessing involves a promise. Such hungry ones “shall be filled” with what they are desiring. If Christ thus causes us to long after himself, he will certainly satisfy those longings; and when he does come to us, as come he will, oh, how sweet it will be!

# Word Live – 8/22/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/22/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/22/20

# Listening Well

**Read:** [**Philippians 2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2)

### Imitating Christ’s Humility

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#fen-NIV-29398a)] God,  
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
7rather, he made himself nothing  
    by taking the very nature[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,  
    being made in human likeness.  
8And being found in appearance as a man,  
    he humbled himself  
    by becoming obedient to death—  
        even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
    and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
    to the glory of God the Father.

### Do Everything Without Grumbling

12Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#fen-NIV-29407c)] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

### Timothy and Epaphroditus

19I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Philippians 2:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#en-NIV-29398) Or in the form of
2. [Philippians 2:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#en-NIV-29399) Or the form
3. [Philippians 2:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2#en-NIV-29407) Deut. 32:5

When our two children, Jaclyn and John, were preschoolers, I often had to gently turn their little faces toward me and say, “Listen to Mommy. Let me see your eyes and your listening ears.” Of course, their minds could be elsewhere, but the starting point of teaching them to listen well was to get their attention and have them focus on me, their mother, and my words of instruction.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3

Listening well requires turning our attention off ourselves and onto others. We all have trouble at times focusing our attention where God wants it to focus. In a world with ever-increasing distractions, listening well is key for all who desire to lead others in serving Christ. Listening involves removing the focus from ourselves, and valuing others as Jesus did (v. 3). Philippians 2:3–5 describes Jesus as a model of humility. First, we see that He listened to the will of His Father (vv. 5–7). Notice how this humble position changes both His relationship to God and to others. Listening and following Jesus’ example means we count others as more significant than ourselves (v. 3) and enables us to look out for the interests of others (v. 4). Listening well may mean silencing our phones and turning our full attention to those Christ is asking us to serve.

Verse 5 places this listening in context: “In your relationships with one another . . .” Relationship is an important word. Living in true relationship requires humble sacrifice. God sacrificed His Son Jesus for us. Can we sacrifice our own thoughts and opinions at times simply by listening well? But verse 14 takes listening a step further. We are to listen well and resist grumbling or arguing. Following Jesus, we are to exalt God and not ourselves (v. 9).

**Apply the Word**

We all need our heavenly Father’s gentle prodding through Scripture to turn our focus on Him rather than our smart calendars, to-do lists, or even our desire to be heard. Consider how well you listen to others and how your listening well represents Christ’s love through you.

### Pray with Us

How do we represent Christ to those around us? Do we walk in love, grace, and humility, preferring others to our agenda? Make these matters your prayer today.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/22/20

# Faithful Until the Harvest

 **Read:** [**Galatians 6:7–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206.7%E2%80%9310)

7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Let us not become weary in doing good. [Galatians 6:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206.9)

A woman I know planned an event at a local park and invited all the neighborhood children to participate. She was excited about the opportunity to share her faith with her neighbors.

She recruited her three grandchildren and two high school students to help her, gave the assignments, planned a number of games and other activities, prepared food, prepared a Bible story about Jesus to present to the children, and waited for them to gather.

Not a single child showed up the first day. Or the second day. Or the third day. Yet, each day my friend went through that day’s activities with her grandchildren and helpers.

On the fourth day, she noticed a family picnicking nearby and invited the children to join in the games. One little girl came, entered into the fun, ate with them, and listened to the story about Jesus. Perhaps years from now she’ll remember. Who knows what the outcome will be? God, through the book of Galatians, encourages us, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people” (6:9–10).

Don’t worry about numbers or other visible measures of success. Our job is to be faithful to what He wants us to do and then leave the harvest to Him. God determines the outcomes.

By:  [David H. Roper](https://odb.org/author/davidhroper/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What best-laid plans of yours have gone wrong? How can you learn to trust God with the outcome despite disappointment?

God, I’m grateful that You’re the one in charge of the results. You’re the one at work. Help me to do what You ask no matter what.

#### Insight

The Greek word sarx is used eighteen times in Galatians and is variously translated depending on the context. In Galatians, the word first appears in 1:16, where it’s translated “human being” (niv) or “anyone” (esv). These words are a combination of the words “flesh and blood” found in the King James Version and refer to the physical constituents of our humanity. On the other hand, the final occurrence of sarx in [Galatians 6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206) is translated “flesh” (vv. 8, 12, 13). This term refers to mankind’s internal human nature apart from the influence of God and His Word. In this regard, [Galatians 5:16–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.16%E2%80%9321) provides the reader with a fitting commentary on [Galatians 6:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206.8).

# God Calling – 8/22/20

# Gleams of Sunlight

Because you have both longed to save My World I let you have that training that shall fit you to save.

Take your pains and sufferings, difficulties and hardships -- each day, both of you, and offer them up for one troubled soul, or for some prayer specially needed to be answered.

So the beauty of each day will live on after the trouble and distress, difficulty and pain of the day have passed.

Learn from My Life of the suffering that saves others. So, you will sing in your pain. Across the grayest days there are the gleams of Sunlight.

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.  1 Peter 4:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/23/20

# Prayer— Battle in “The Secret Place”



When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. —[Matthew 6:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A6)

Jesus did not say, “Dream about your Father who is in the secret place,” but He said, “…pray to your Father who is in the secret place….” Prayer is an effort of the will. After we have entered our secret place and shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot seem to get our minds into good working order, and the first thing we have to fight is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is overcoming this problem of our idle and wandering thinking.

We have to learn to discipline our minds and concentrate on willful, deliberate prayer.

We must have a specially selected place for prayer, but once we get there this plague of wandering thoughts begins, as we begin to think to ourselves, “This needs to be done, and I have to do that today.” Jesus says to “shut your door.” Having a secret stillness before God means deliberately shutting the door on our emotions and remembering Him. God is in secret, and He sees us from “the secret place”— He does not see us as other people do, or as we see ourselves.

When we truly live in “the secret place,” it becomes impossible for us to doubt God. We become more sure of Him than of anyone or anything else. Enter into “the secret place,” and you will find that God was right in the middle of your everyday circumstances all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and “pray to your Father who is in the secret place,” every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Seeing is never believing: we interpret what we see in the light of what we believe. Faith is confidence in God before you see God emerging; therefore the nature of faith is that it must be tried.  He Shall Glorify Me, 494 R

# CCEL – 8/23/20

I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.—[JER. 31:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.31.html" \l "Jer.31.3)

We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.—God . . . hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.—Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

[II Thes. 2:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html" \l "iiThess.2.13). -[II Tim. 1:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.9). -[Psa. 139:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.16).[John 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html#John.3.16).[I John 4:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.10).

“The voice of weeping shall be no more heard.” **[Isaiah 65:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.65.html" \l "Isa.65.19)**

The glorified weep no more, for all outward causes of grief are gone. There are no broken friendships, nor blighted prospects in heaven. Poverty, famine, peril, persecution, and slander, are unknown there. No pain distresses, no thought of death or bereavement saddens. They weep no more, for they are perfectly sanctified. No “evil heart of unbelief” prompts them to depart from the living God; they are without fault before his throne, and are fully conformed to his image. Well may they cease to mourn who have ceased to sin. They weep no more, because all fear of change is past. They know that they are eternally secure. Sin is shut out, and they are shut in. They dwell within a city which shall never be stormed; they bask in a sun which shall never set; they drink of a river which shall never dry; they pluck fruit from a tree which shall never wither. Countless cycles may revolve, but eternity shall not be exhausted, and while eternity endures, their immortality and blessedness shall co-exist with it. They are forever with the Lord. They weep no more, because every desire is fulfilled. They cannot wish for anything which they have not in possession. Eye and ear, heart and hand, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will, all the faculties, are completely satisfied; and imperfect as our present ideas are of the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet we know enough, by the revelation of the Spirit, that the saints above are supremely blessed. The joy of Christ, which is an infinite fulness of delight, is in them. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite beatitude. That same joyful rest remains for us. It may not be far distant. Ere long the weeping willow shall be exchanged for the palm-branch of victory, and sorrow’s dewdrops will be transformed into the pearls of everlasting bliss. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

# Word Live – 8/23/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/23/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/23/20

# Promoting Healing

**Read:** [**1 Corinthians 13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13)

13 If I speak in the tongues[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#fen-NIV-28667a)] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13" \l "fen-NIV-28669b" \o "See footnote b)] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Corinthians 13:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#en-NIV-28667) Or languages
2. [1 Corinthians 13:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#en-NIV-28669) Some manuscripts body to the flames

Caring for elderly parents can provide incredible blessings but also poses significant challenges. As my 81-year-old father lay in a cancer center for two weeks, we shared wonderful and sometimes tearful conversations. During one visit, he gave my brother and I an important request. He asked that we promise to care for our mother, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. We knew that fulfilling our dad’s request would require time, money, and energy, but we were determined to love and serve our father and mother in this way.

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

As Christ-followers, we are called to love one another as Jesus loved us. We have seen how He did so in a way that not only addressed people’s spiritual needs but also their physical and emotional ones. Showing love in this way may require great sacrifice on our part. First Corinthians 13 describes a way of living and loving that goes contrary to our natural inclination to think primarily of ourselves. Paul goes into detail with a list of what Christlike love requires: “Love is patient, love is kind” (v. 4), “it is not self-seeking” (v 5). This love, agape in the Greek, is displayed in God’s unconditional, sacrificing actions toward us. He gave His one and only Son for our salvation (John 3:16), the ultimate example of healing.

This love, defined for us in 1 Corinthians 13, is sacrificial and, at times, costly. Living out 1 Corinthians 13 may come with a cost—perhaps a significant sacrifice of our time, money, or personal desires—but the healing that can result can literally be the difference between life and death. “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love” (v. 13).

**Apply the Word**

As you read 1 Corinthians 13, list the actions and attitudes God uses to describe love. Which of these tend to be more difficult for you in loving someone? Why? Consider studying each action and attitude through a word study. Ask God to reveal to you how He wants you to respond.

### Pray with Us

As we ponder the attributes of love in 1 Corinthians 13, we thank Jesus that these are also His attributes. He poured out this love on us. We ask for the courage to share Christ’s love with others.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/23/20

# No Fishing Allowed

 **Read:** [**Psalm 130**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20130)

#### A song of ascents.

1Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;  
2    Lord, hear my voice.  
Let your ears be attentive  
    to my cry for mercy.

3If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,  
    Lord, who could stand?  
4But with you there is forgiveness,  
    so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

5I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
    and in his word I put my hope.  
6I wait for the Lord  
    more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
    more than watchmen wait for the morning.

7Israel, put your hope in the Lord,  
    for with the Lord is unfailing love  
    and with him is full redemption.  
8He himself will redeem Israel  
    from all their sins.

[God will] hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. [Micah 7:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%207.19)

Holocaust survivor Corrie ten Boom knew the importance of forgiveness. In her book Tramp for the Lord, she says her favorite mental picture was of forgiven sins thrown into the sea. “When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. . . . I believe God then places a sign out there that says No Fishing Allowed.”

She points to an important truth that believers in Jesus can sometimes fail to grasp—when God forgives our wrongdoing, we’re forgiven fully! We don’t have to keep dredging up our shameful deeds, wallowing in any mucky feelings. Rather we can accept His grace and forgiveness, following Him in freedom.

We see this idea of “no fishing allowed” in [Psalm 130](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20130). The psalmist proclaims that although God is just, He forgives the sin of those who repent: “But with you there is forgiveness” (v. 4). As the psalmist waits for God, putting his trust in Him (v. 5), he states in faith that He “himself will redeem Israel from all their sins” (v. 8). Those who believe will find “full redemption” (v. 7).

When we’re caught in feelings of shame and unworthiness, we can’t serve God with our whole hearts. Instead, we’re restricted by our past. If you feel stymied by the wrong you’ve done, ask God to help you fully believe in His gift of forgiveness and new life. He’s cast your sins into the ocean!

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Are you holding on to the false belief that God can’t possibly forgive you for some sin in your life? God wants you to allow His forgiveness to set you free!

Forgiving God, You sent Your Son Jesus to save me from my sins and shame. Help me to live in the freedom of being fully forgiven.

#### Insight

[Psalm 130](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20130) mentions both redemption and forgiveness: with God “there is forgiveness” and “full redemption” (vv. 4, 7). Do these words have the same meaning? According to the Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, the Hebrew root verb for redemption used in this psalm has a legal context and is used “when an animal substitutes (or redeems) a person or another animal.” In the theological context, it indicates “a freeing from the slavery of sin, the ransom or price paid for freedom.” Jesus provided this ransom through His death on the cross, giving His life “as a ransom for many” ([Matthew 20:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2020.28)). We can be forgiven (or pardoned) for our sin because of Jesus’ redemptive work on the cross. When we come to God in repentance (sorrow for our sin), God forgives and releases us (sinners, wrongdoers) from judgment and the penalty for our sins, which is eternal separation from Him.

# God Calling – 8/23/20

# The Summit

See not the small trials and vexations of each hour of the day. See the one purpose and plan to which all are leading. If in climbing a mountain you keep your eyes on each stony or difficult place, as you ascend, seeing only that, how weary and profitless your climb!

But if you think of each step as leading to the summit of achievement, from which glories and beauties will open out before you, then your climb will be so different.

The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.  Habakkuk 3:19

# My Utmost for His Highest – 8/24/20

# The Spiritual Search



What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? —[Matthew 7:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+7%3A9)

The illustration of prayer that our Lord used here is one of a good child who is asking for something good. We talk about prayer as if God hears us regardless of what our relationship is to Him (see [Matthew 5:45](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:45)). Never say that it is not God’s will to give you what you ask. Don’t faint and give up, but find out the reason you have not received; increase the intensity of your search and examine the evidence. Is your relationship right with your spouse, your children, and your fellow students? Are you a “good child” in those relationships? Do you have to say to the Lord, “I have been irritable and cross, but I still want spiritual blessings”? You cannot receive and will have to do without them until you have the attitude of a “good child.”

We mistake defiance for devotion, arguing with God instead of surrendering. We refuse to look at the evidence that clearly indicates where we are wrong. Have I been asking God to give me money for something I want, while refusing to pay someone what I owe him? Have I been asking God for liberty while I am withholding it from someone who belongs to me? Have I refused to forgive someone, and have I been unkind to that person? Have I been living as God’s child among my relatives and friends? (see [Matthew 7:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:12)).

I am a child of God only by being born again, and as His child I am good only as I “walk in the light” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). For most of us, prayer simply becomes some trivial religious expression, a matter of mystical and emotional fellowship with God. We are all good at producing spiritual fog that blinds our sight. But if we will search out and examine the evidence, we will see very clearly what is wrong— a friendship, an unpaid debt, or an improper attitude. There is no use praying unless we are living as children of God. Then Jesus says, regarding His children, “Everyone who asks receives…” ([Matthew 7:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:8)).

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 8/24/20

I know their sorrows.—[EXO. 3:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.3.html" \l "Exod.3.7)

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.—Touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.—Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.

When Jesus . . . saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. Jesus wept.—For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.—He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.—When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.

He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.—In all their affliction he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them.

[Isa. 53:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.3). -[Heb. 4:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.15).[Matt. 8:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.8.html" \l "Matt.8.17). -[John 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.6).[John 11:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.33),[35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.35). -[Heb. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.18).[Psa. 102:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.102.html" \l "Ps.102.19). -[Job 23:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.10). -[Psa. 142:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.142.html" \l "Ps.142.3).[Zech. 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.2.html" \l "Zech.2.8). -[Isa. 63:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.9).

“The breaker is come up before them.” **[Micah 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.2.html" \l "Mic.2.13)**

Inasmuch as Jesus has gone before us, things remain not as they would have been had he never passed that way. He has conquered every foe that obstructed the way. Cheer up now thou faint-hearted warrior. Not only has Christ travelled the road, but he has slain thine enemies. Dost thou dread sin? He has nailed it to his cross. Dost thou fear death? He has been the death of Death. Art thou afraid of hell? He has barred it against the advent of any of his children; they shall never see the gulf of perdition. Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome. There are lions, but their teeth are broken; there are serpents, but their fangs are extracted; there are rivers, but they are bridged or fordable; there are flames, but we wear that matchless garment which renders us invulnerable to fire. The sword that has been forged against us is already blunted; the instruments of war which the enemy is preparing have already lost their point. God has taken away in the person of Christ all the power that anything can have to hurt us. Well then, the army may safely march on, and you may go joyously along your journey, for all your enemies are conquered beforehand. What shall you do but march on to take the prey? They are beaten, they are vanquished; all you have to do is to divide the spoil. You shall, it is true, often engage in combat; but your fight shall be with a vanquished foe. His head is broken; he may attempt to injure you, but his strength shall not be sufficient for his malicious design. Your victory shall be easy, and your treasure shall be beyond all count.

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“Proclaim aloud the Saviour’s fame,

Who bears the Breaker's wond'rous name;

Sweet name; and it becomes him well,

Who breaks down earth, sin, death, and hell.”

# Word Live – 8/24/20

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

# Scripture Union – 8/24/20

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

# Today in the Word – 8/24/20

# Building Community

**Read:** [**Matthew 22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22)

### The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

4“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

5“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

8“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ 10So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

13“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

### Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

15Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#fen-NIV-23890a)] to Caesar or not?”

18But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, 20and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

21“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

22When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

### Marriage at the Resurrection

23That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 24“Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. 25Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. 27Finally, the woman died. 28Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

29Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. 30At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 31But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 32‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22" \l "fen-NIV-23905b" \o "See footnote b)]? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

33When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

### The Greatest Commandment

34Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#fen-NIV-23910c)] 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#fen-NIV-23912d)] 40All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

### Whose Son Is the Messiah?

41While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42“What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

43He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,

44“‘The Lord said to my Lord:  
    “Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies  
    under your feet.”’[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#fen-NIV-23917e)]

45If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” 46No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Matthew 22:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#en-NIV-23890) A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens
2. [Matthew 22:32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#en-NIV-23905) Exodus 3:6
3. [Matthew 22:37](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#en-NIV-23910) Deut. 6:5
4. [Matthew 22:39](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#en-NIV-23912) Lev. 19:18
5. [Matthew 22:44](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22#en-NIV-23917) Psalm 110:1

Foster parents open their homes and lives to children whose lives have been upended by personal tragedy, and sometimes that opportunity comes about unexpectedly. My husband Michael and I were blessed to foster and later adopt two siblings, Jaclyn and John, who are both now adults. One thing we will always remember from those first days of foster parenting is how our church family stepped in to help with much-needed supplies and wisdom.

Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39

In Matthew 22, Jesus is approached by the Sadducees, religious teachers, who wanted to test, insult, and deflate Jesus’ influence. They approached Him with what they considered to be a series of difficult questions, hoping to reveal Him as a false teacher. First, they attempted to trap Him with a question about taxes (vv. 15–22). Second, they asked about marriage in the afterlife (vv. 23–33). But their final question is the focus of our reading today. One in the group, “an expert in the law” (v. 34), asked: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (v. 36). Although their intent was to dissuade the community of believers by trying to reveal Jesus as not knowing the details of the Law, Jesus’ response would challenge their thinking. They were first to “Love the Lord your God” (v. 37) and second, to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 39). Jesus goes further to say that all other teachings “hang” on these two commands (v. 40).

If we follow Jesus’ commands, we will not only love Him but also love others. Love becomes the foundation for the church’s work in the local community and beyond. In response to the question, Which is the greatest commandment? Jesus focused on love.

**Apply the Word**

Imagine a young couple who become instant foster parents and no one is there to help. Many people face unexpected situations without a supportive and loving community. How can you demonstrate Christ’s love to someone in need today?

### Pray with Us

Again, God’s love is the focus of our study today. Our prayer is that we’ll keep the two greatest commandments in the forefront of our words and actions.

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

# Our Daily Bread – 8/24/20

# How Did I Get Here?

 **Read:** [**Job 2:1–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%202.1%E2%80%9310)

2 On another day the angels[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+2%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12893a)] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. 2And the Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”

3Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

4“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. 5But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

6The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

7So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. 8Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

9His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”

10He replied, “You are talking like a foolish[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+2%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12902b)] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Job 2:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+2%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-12893) Hebrew the sons of God
2. [Job 2:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+2%3A1%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-12902) The Hebrew word rendered foolish denotes moral deficiency.

Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble? [Job 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%202.10)

Tiffani awoke in the pitch-black darkness of an Air Canada jet. Still wearing her seat belt, she’d slept while the other passengers exited and the plane was parked. Why didn’t anyone wake her? How did she get here? She shook the cobwebs from her brain and tried to remember.

Have you found yourself in a place you never expected? You’re too young to have this disease, and there’s no cure. Your last review was excellent; why is your position being eliminated? You were enjoying the best years of your marriage. Now you’re starting over, as a single parent with a part-time job.

How did I get here? Job may have wondered as “he sat among the ashes” ([Job 2:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%202.8)). He’d lost his children, his wealth, and his health, in no time flat. He couldn’t have guessed how he got here; he just knew he had to remember.

Job remembered his Creator and how good He’d been. He told his wife, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (v. 10). Job remembered he could count on this good God to be faithful. So he lamented. He screamed at the heavens. And he mourned in hope, “I know that my redeemer lives,” and that “in my flesh I will see God” (19:25–26). Job clung to hope as he remembered how the story began and how it ends.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What situation fills you with agony and dread? How might you regain your bearings and live with hope and joy?

Father, You’re not surprised by what surprises me. You were good before, and You remain good now.

To learn more about the book of Job and its message, visit [bit.ly/337DURd.](https://bit.ly/337DURd.)

#### Insight

[Job 1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%201%E2%80%932) are filled with mystery, often prompting questions for which we have no answers. What’s the nature of the heavenly council meeting described in these chapters? Why was Satan allowed to participate? Why did God allow Job to suffer in such extreme ways? These are difficult questions, but what’s certain is that even in his suffering, Job wasn’t abandoned by God—and his harsh experiences were used by Him.

To explore this further, read Out of the Ashes: God’s Presence in Job’s Pain at [discoveryseries.org/q0735.](https://discoveryseries.org/q0735.)

# God Calling – 8/24/20

# Sublime Heights

Our Lord, we know that Thou art great and able to deliver us.

I am your deliverer. Trust in Me absolutely. Know that I will do the very best for you. Be ready and willing for My Will to be done.

Know that with Me all things are possible. Cling joyfully to that truth.

Say many times, "All things are possible with My Master, My Lord, My Friend."

This truth, accepted and firmly believed in, is the ladder up which a soul can climb from the lowest of pits to the sublimest of heights.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.  Daniel 3:17