# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/3/19

# “Not by Might nor by Power”



My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power… —[1 Corinthians 2:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+2%3A4)

If in preaching the gospel you substitute your knowledge of the way of salvation for confidence in the power of the gospel, you hinder people from getting to reality. Take care to see while you proclaim your knowledge of the way of salvation, that you yourself are rooted and grounded by faith in God. Never rely on the clearness of your presentation, but as you give your explanation make sure that you are relying on the Holy Spirit. Rely on the certainty of God’s redemptive power, and He will create His own life in people.

Once you are rooted in reality, nothing can shake you. If your faith is in experiences, anything that happens is likely to upset that faith. But nothing can ever change God or the reality of redemption. Base your faith on that, and you are as eternally secure as God Himself. Once you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you will never be moved again. That is the meaning of sanctification. God disapproves of our human efforts to cling to the concept that sanctification is merely an experience, while forgetting that even our sanctification must also be sanctified (see [John 17:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:19)). I must deliberately give my sanctified life to God for His service, so that He can use me as His hands and His feet.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is an easy thing to argue from precedent because it makes everything simple, but it is a risky thing to do. Give God “elbow room”; let Him come into His universe as He pleases. If we confine God in His working to religious people or to certain ways, we place ourselves on an equality with God.  Baffled to Fight Better, 51 L

# CCEL – 12/3/19

**I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.**—[JOB 5:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.5.html" \l "Job.5.8)

Is anything too hard for the Lord?—Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.—Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.—Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord.

It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

[Gen. 18:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.18.html" \l "Gen.18.14). -[Psa. 37:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.5). -[Phi. 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.6). -[I Pet. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7).[Isa. 37:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.37.html" \l "Isa.37.14).[Isa. 65:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.65.html" \l "Isa.65.24). -[Jas. 5:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.5.html" \l "Jas.5.16).[Psa. 116:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.116.html" \l "Ps.116.1).

“There is no spot in thee.” [Song of Solomon 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.7)

Having pronounced his Church positively full of beauty, our Lord confirms his praise by a precious negative, “There is no spot in thee.” As if the thought occurred to the Bridegroom that the carping world would insinuate that he had only mentioned her comely parts, and had purposely omitted those features which were deformed or defiled, he sums up all by declaring her universally and entirely fair, and utterly devoid of stain. A spot may soon be removed, and is the very least thing that can disfigure beauty, but even from this little blemish the believer is delivered in his Lord’s sight. If he had said there is no hideous scar, no horrible deformity, no deadly ulcer, we might even then have marvelled; but when he testifies that she is free from the slightest spot, all these other forms of defilement are included, and the depth of wonder is increased. If he had but promised to remove all spots by-and-by, we should have had eternal reason for joy; but when he speaks of it as already done, who can restrain the most intense emotions of satisfaction and delight? O my soul, here is marrow and fatness for thee; eat thy full, and be satisfied with royal dainties.

Christ Jesus has no quarrel with his spouse. She often wanders from him, and grieves his Holy Spirit, but he does not allow her faults to affect his love. He sometimes chides, but it is always in the tenderest manner, with the kindest intentions: it is “my love” even then. There is no remembrance of our follies, he does not cherish ill thoughts of us, but he pardons and loves as well after the offence as before it. It is well for us it is so, for if Jesus were as mindful of injuries as we are, how could he commune with us? Many a time a believer will put himself out of humour with the Lord for some slight turn in providence, but our precious Husband knows our silly hearts too well to take any offence at our ill manners.

# Word Live – 12/3/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/3/19

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

# Today in the Word – 12/3/19

# Creator of All

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

### **The Supremacy of the Son of God**

15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3a15%e2%80%9323#fen-NIV-29487a)] your evil behavior. 22But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Colossians 1:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3a15%e2%80%9323#en-NIV-29487) Or minds, as shown by

In 1992, a new large mammal was identified for the first time in 50 years—the saola, a longhorned species of wild ox that resembles a deer or antelope. The saola, however, is both rare and shy. So when one was sighted in 2013 in central Vietnam for the first time in fourteen years, conservationists rejoiced. Said one leader: “This is a breathtaking discovery and renews hope for the recovery of the species.”

All things have been created through him and for him. Colossians 1:16

The beauty and variety found in nature remind us of Christ’s role in creation: “In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” (v. 16). As God, the Son created all else that exists, including the material world (the universe) and the spiritual world (angelic beings). How could both the Father and the Son be Creator? As persons of the Trinity, each is equally God. Since Christ is “the image of the invisible God” (v. 15) and God’s “fullness” dwells in Him (v. 19), then He must be God Himself.

In addition, creation’s continued existence depends on Christ. The Bible teaches that “in him all things hold together” (v. 17). We saw this yesterday as well. The Father created everything through the Son, whose “powerful word” sustains everything (Heb. 1:2–3).

In this biblical worldview, creation implies rulership. The phrase “firstborn over all creation” (v. 15) doesn’t indicate Christ is a created being but rather means He holds the first position and is the King over all creation, as when the writer of Hebrews called Him the “heir of all things” (1:2). To the created world, Christ is the reconciler or redeemer of all who respond in faith (v. 20). He accomplished this through His sacrificial atonement on the cross—the hope of the gospel (vv. 21–23)!

### **Apply the Word**

Why not take a walk and rejoice in the beauty of God’s creation? For some readers, the weather is probably cold or snowy. But winter, like the other seasons, has its own beauty and can cause us to worship the Creator. So, if necessary, put on your coat, hat, boots, and gloves and venture out into the landscape God has given you!

### **Pray with Us**

Having read today’s Scripture passage from Colossians 1, praise the Lord for His beautiful creation, sustained by His eternal, powerful word. Praise God that in Him “all things hold together” (Col. 1:17).

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/3/19

# The Lost Envelope

 **Read: Matthew 6:19–21**

### **Treasures in Heaven**

19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:20

We were on the way home from a visit with family in another state when I found it. I was pumping gas when I noticed a dirty, bulky envelope on the ground. I grabbed it, dirt and all, and looked inside. To my surprise, it contained one hundred dollars.

One hundred dollars that someone had lost and who at that very moment was possibly frantically searching to find. I gave our phone number to the attendants at the gas station in case anyone came back looking for it. But no one ever called.

Someone had that money and lost it. Earthly treasure is often like that. It can be lost, stolen, or even squandered. It can be lost in bad investments or even in a monetary market over which we have no control. But the heavenly treasure we have in Jesus—a restored relationship with God and the promise of eternal life—isn’t like that. We can’t lose it at a gas station or anywhere else.

That’s why Christ told us to store up “treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20). We do that when we become “rich in good deeds” (1 Timothy 6:18) or “rich in faith” (James 2:5)—lovingly helping others and sharing Jesus with them. As God leads and empowers us, may we store up eternal treasure even as we anticipate our eternal future with Him.

By: [Dave Branon](https://odb.org/author/davebranon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What can you do this week that has eternal implications? How can you better use your earthly treasures as investments for heaven’s good?

#### **Insight**

Matthew (or Levi, son of Alphaeus; Mark 2:14)—the tax collector turned disciple of Jesus—is believed to be the writer of the gospel of Matthew. Matthew 6 is part of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), given on a hillside near Capernaum. It begins with Jesus speaking on the spiritual life of the believer in Christ (vv. 1–18) and moves to warnings against love of possessions, anxiety, and judgmental attitudes (v. 19–7:5). The warning about love of money and possessions in today’s passage is a common theme in the Bible. A few examples are the accounts of Achan (Joshua 7:1), the rich young man (Matthew 19:16–22), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11).

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

# God Calling – 12/3/19

# A Journey With Me

Fret not your souls with puzzles that you cannot solve. The solution may never be shown you until you have left this flesh-life.

Remember what I have so often told you, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Only step by step, and stage by stage, can you proceed, in your journey upward.

The one thing to be sure of is that it is a journey with Me. There does come a Joy known to those who suffer with Me. But that is not the result of the suffering, but the result of the close intimacy with Me, to which suffering drove you.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."  Proverbs 4:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/4/19

# The Law of Opposition



To him who overcomes… —[Revelation 2:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Revelation+2%3A7)

Life without war is impossible in the natural or the supernatural realm. It is a fact that there is a continuing struggle in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual areas of life.

Health is the balance between the physical parts of my body and all the things and forces surrounding me. To maintain good health I must have sufficient internal strength to fight off the things that are external. Everything outside my physical life is designed to cause my death. The very elements that sustain me while I am alive work to decay and disintegrate my body once it is dead. If I have enough inner strength to fight, I help to produce the balance needed for health. The same is true of the mental life. If I want to maintain a strong and active mental life, I have to fight. This struggle produces the mental balance called thought.

Morally it is the same. Anything that does not strengthen me morally is the enemy of virtue within me. Whether I overcome, thereby producing virtue, depends on the level of moral excellence in my life. But we must fight to be moral. Morality does not happen by accident; moral virtue is acquired.

And spiritually it is also the same. Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation…” ([John 16:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:33)). This means that anything which is not spiritual leads to my downfall. Jesus went on to say, “…but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” I must learn to fight against and overcome the things that come against me, and in that way produce the balance of holiness. Then it becomes a delight to meet opposition.

Holiness is the balance between my nature and the law of God as expressed in Jesus Christ.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 12/4/19

**Where shall wisdom be found?**—[JOB 28:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.28.html" \l "Job.28.12)

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.—Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.—The only wise God.—Be not wise in thine own eyes.

Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

[Jas. 1:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.5). -[Prov. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.5). -[I Tim. 1:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.1.html" \l "iTim.1.17). -[Prov. 3:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.7).[Jer. 1:6-8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.1.html" \l "Jer.1.6).[John 16:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.23). -[Matt. 21:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.21.html" \l "Matt.21.22).

“I have much people in this city.” [Acts 18:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.18.html" \l "Acts.18.10)

This should be a great encouragement to try to do good, since God has among the vilest of the vile, the most reprobate, the most debauched and drunken, an elect people who must be saved. When you take the Word to them, you do so because God has ordained you to be the messenger of life to their souls, and they must receive it, for so the decree of predestination runs. They are as much redeemed by blood as the saints before the eternal throne. They are Christ’s property, and yet perhaps they are lovers of the ale-house, and haters of holiness; but if Jesus Christ purchased them he will have them. God is not unfaithful to forget the price which his Son has paid. He will not suffer his substitution to be in any case an ineffectual, dead thing. Tens of thousands of redeemed ones are not regenerated yet, but regenerated they must be; and this is our comfort when we go forth to them with the quickening Word of God.

Nay, more, these ungodly ones are prayed for by Christ before the throne. “Neither pray I for these alone,” saith the great Intercessor, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” Poor, ignorant souls, they know nothing about prayer for themselves, but Jesus prays for them. Their names are on his breastplate, and ere long they must bow their stubborn knee, breathing the penitential sigh before the throne of grace. “The time of figs is not yet.” The predestinated moment has not struck; but, when it comes, they shall obey, for God will have his own; they must, for the Spirit is not to be withstood when he cometh forth with fulness of power—they must become the willing servants of the living God. “My people shall be willing in the day of my power.” “He shall justify many.” “He shall see of the travail of his soul.” “I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.”

# Word Live – 12/4/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/4/19

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# Today in the Word – 12/4/19

# The Eternal Word

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

### **The Word Became Flesh**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a1%e2%80%9314#fen-NIV-26050a)] it.

6There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 1:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a1%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-26050) Or understood

“A Japanese pastor wrote that the most important message of Christmas is that Jesus was born as a babe, weak and vulnerable to the world,” said artist Makoto Fujimura in his book, Refractions. “A baby is utterly dependent on a mother and a father, and others helping the baby to survive. Imagine, one who would claim to be the all-powerful Creator in flesh, becoming vulnerable and dependent on fallen human beings like us!”

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. John 1:14

“The Word became flesh” (v. 14) is one of the greatest truths and greatest acts of love the world has ever known. What does it mean to call Jesus the Word or Logos (v. 1)? To the Greek mind, Logos meant reason, order, and communication, both spoken and unspoken. To the Jewish mind, it meant the word of God, including both Scripture and God’s powerful word as seen in His creation (Gen. 1). The Word implied His sovereignty and represented the culmination of His plan and purpose. God’s word put into effect His plans and purposes. John surely knew and intended both meanings.

The miracle of the Incarnation certainly stunned both the Jewish and the Greek mind. Greeks would have been astounded to think of reason and thought as a Person, while Jews would have been staggered that the Lord of Hosts could become the man Jesus. Theologically, we too may have difficulty wrapping our minds around these truths, but John had seen it for himself (v. 14).

As a man, Jesus remained the eternal Son of God (vv. 1–2). And in yesterday’s devotional we read that He’s the Creator (v. 3). He came to give light and life, the hope of the gospel, to all who will receive it by faith (vv. 4–5). By believing and receiving, we gain the great privilege of becoming children of God (vv. 9–13)!

### **Apply the Word**

Today’s reading is among the most beautiful and powerful passages in all of Scripture. In fact, we could say that about each of our first four Bible readings this month. Why not read them aloud? Perhaps you can read these passages in your small group or at the family dinner table or listen to audio Bible versions of each one.

### **Pray with Us**

As we ponder the wonderful words that begin John’s Gospel, thank the Father in prayer for His Logos, the Word Jesus Christ through whom “all things were made” (John 1:3). Thank Him that His light shines in the darkness, and we can have life in Him.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/4/19

# Free from Condemnation

 **Read: 1 John 3:19–24**

19This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts. 1 John 3:20

As a couple drove their trailer through dry Northern California, they felt a tire blow and heard the scrape of metal against pavement. The sparks ignited the 2018 Carr Fire—a wildfire that burned nearly 230,000 acres, destroyed more than 1,000 homes, and resulted in the deaths of several people.

When survivors heard how the couple were overcome with grief, they formed a Facebook page to show “grace and extend kindness . . . for the shame and despair” enveloping them. One woman wrote: “As someone that lost their home to this fire—I need you to know my family [doesn’t blame you], nor [do] any of the other families that lost homes. . . . Accidents happen. I really hope these kind messages ease your burden. We will all get through this together.”

Condemnation, our fear that we’ve done something unredeemable, can cannibalize the human soul. Thankfully, the Scriptures reveal that “if our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts” (1 John 3:20). Whatever our hidden shame, God is greater than all of it. Jesus calls us to the healing act of repentance (if needed) or simply unmasks the shame consuming us. Then, encountering divine redemption, we “set our hearts at rest in his presence” (v. 19).

Whatever our regrets over things we wish we could undo, God draws us near. Jesus smiles at us and says, “Your heart is free.”

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you experienced shame or condemnation? What does it mean for you to know that Jesus has freed your heart?

God, I have such regret. I wish I could erase this painful situation and do it all over. But thank You for giving me grace to learn and move forward.

#### **Insight**

John’s first letter begins in a way similar to the beginning of the gospel of John (1:1–4). In both his letter and gospel, he reflects the wonder of someone who’s seen the eternal Word of God with his own eyes (John 1:1–3; 1 John 1:1–4). In both books he develops the themes of what it takes to live in the presence of One who personified light, life, and love. But there are also some important differences. John’s gospel focuses on the ways Jesus revealed Himself to men and women who never could’ve guessed that the life, light, and love of God could be revealed from an executioner’s cross. John’s first letter, on the other hand, works as an appeal to those who knew the story but were in danger of forgetting what a lack of love for such a God—and one another—means.

By: [**Mart DeHaan**](https://odb.org/author/martdehaan-2/)

# God Calling – 12/4/19

# Man of Sorrows

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isaiah 53:3

That these words strike a note of Beauty in the hearts of those attuned to hear the Beautiful, shows truly that the heart recognizes the need for the Man of Sorrows. That it sees nothing contemptible in One despised by the world. That it recognizes the vast difference between the values of Heaven, and those of the world. Fame and acclamations are accorded to earth's great, contempt and rejection to the Son of God.

One of the things My disciples must ever seek to do is to set aside the valuation of the world, and judge only according to the values of Heaven. These are not for you.  Do not seek the praise and the notice of men. You follow a despised Christ. See the mob is hooting, throwing stones, jeering, and yet in that quiet little throng there is a happiness and Joy the reviling crowds could never know.

Follow that little throng with stones and gibes, and it appears to be of men, mean, ludicrous, contemptible.  Be one of the throng, and you feel the Majesty of God in the presence of Him, Who was despised and rejected of men. Wreaths around His Brow, and shouts of applause, would belittle that Majesty.

In your dark hours, when human help fails, keep very close to the Man of Sorrows. Feel My Hand of Love press yours in silent but complete understanding. I, too, was acquainted with grief. No heart can ache without My heart aching too. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world....For all that is in the world,...is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:15-16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/5/19

# “The Temple of the Holy Spirit”



…only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. —[Genesis 41:40](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+41%3A40)

I am accountable to God for the way I control my body under His authority. Paul said he did not “set aside the grace of God”— make it ineffective ([Galatians 2:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2:21)). The grace of God is absolute and limitless, and the work of salvation through Jesus is complete and finished forever. I am not being saved— I am saved. Salvation is as eternal as God’s throne, but I must put to work or use what God has placed within me. To “work out [my] own salvation” ([Philippians 2:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:12)) means that I am responsible for using what He has given me. It also means that I must exhibit in my own body the life of the Lord Jesus, not mysteriously or secretly, but openly and boldly. “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection . . .” ([1 Corinthians 9:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9:27)). Every Christian can have his body under absolute control for God. God has given us the responsibility to rule over all “the temple of the Holy Spirit,” including our thoughts and desires ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)). We are responsible for these, and we must never give way to improper ones. But most of us are much more severe in our judgment of others than we are in judging ourselves. We make excuses for things in ourselves, while we condemn things in the lives of others simply because we are not naturally inclined to do them.

Paul said, “I beseech you…that you present your bodies a living sacrifice…” ([Romans 12:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12:1)). What I must decide is whether or not I will agree with my Lord and Master that my body will indeed be His temple. Once I agree, all the rules, regulations, and requirements of the law concerning the body are summed up for me in this revealed truth-my body is “the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a public manifestation of believers in Jesus.  Facing Reality, 34 R

# CCEL – 12/5/19

**It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.**—[PSA. 119:71.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.71)

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.—We suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

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

[Heb. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.5.html" \l "Heb.5.8). -[Rom. 8:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.17).[Job 23:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.10).[Deut. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.2),[5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.5).

“Ask, and it shall be given you.” [Matthew 7:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.7.html" \l "Matt.7.7)

We know of a place in England still existing, where a dole of bread is served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever the traveller may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is the dole of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loveth sinners that he has built a St. Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his wants supplied. Nay, he has done better; he has attached to this Hospital of the Cross a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. No sinner ever went into it and found that it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow. As if this were not enough, there is attached to this Hospital of the Cross a wardrobe, and a sinner making application simply as a sinner, may be clothed from head to foot; and if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have a garment for ordinary wear, but armour which shall cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. If he asks for a sword, he shall have that given to him, and a shield too. Nothing that is good for him shall be denied him. He shall have spending-money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord.

If all these things are to be had by merely knocking at mercy’s door, O my soul, knock hard this morning, and ask large things of thy generous Lord. Leave not the throne of grace till all thy wants have been spread before the Lord, and until by faith thou hast a comfortable prospect that they shall be all supplied. No bashfulness need retard when Jesus invites. No unbelief should hinder when Jesus promises. No cold-heartedness should restrain when such blessings are to be obtained.

# Word Live – 12/5/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/5/19

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

# Today in the Word – 12/5/19

# Second Person of the Trinity

**Read:** [**1 John 5:1–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+5%3a1%e2%80%9312)

### **Faith in the Incarnate Son of God**

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7For there are three that testify: 8the[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-30633a)] Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [1 John 5:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+5%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-30633) Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. 8And there are three that testify on earth: the (not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century)

It may be difficult to understand why Jesus wanted or needed to be baptized by John. After all, Jesus had no sins of which to repent. But Jesus made it clear that being baptized was the Father’s will. When Jesus was raised out of the Jordan River: “[the] heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (Matt. 3:13–17). In this amazing moment, all three members of the Trinity were present: The voice from heaven was God, the Father, the dove was the Holy Spirit, and the Son, Jesus, was physically present (see vv. 6–10).

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12

Why does it matter that Jesus is the second person of the Godhead? Jesus needed to be fully God and fully man in order to redeem us from the power of sin and death. Only the God-man could perfectly know and obey His Father’s will and thus be the atoning sacrifice. Only if we believe this, can we be “born of God” (v. 1).

Everything interconnects (vv. 2–5). To be spiritually reborn requires faith in Jesus Christ. Faith leads to obedience, which for Spirit-indwelt Christians is not burdensome but overcomes the world, that is, our sinful choices and patterns (James 4:4). Faith participates in Christ’s victory. To love God is to obey His commands, which requires faith and leads to victory. To love God is also to love His children, who are also doing all this alongside us.

God has given us eternal life through His Son (vv. 11–12). If Jesus is the source of life, and without him there is no life, this is even more evidence that Christ is divine. He is indeed “God over all” (Rom. 9:5)!

### **Apply the Word**

What does this passage teach you about Jesus? Is your list growing? More important than knowing about Christ is knowing Him as your Savior. “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (v. 12; see John 3:18). Have you trusted Christ for salvation? We urge you to put your faith in Him today!

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s devotional encourages us to pray for those who know about Christ, but not as their Savior. Are there loved ones on your prayer list you’ve been praying for? Lift them up in prayer today. May salvation come to them this Christmas!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/5/19

# Intentional Kindness



**2 Samuel 9:3–11**

3The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?”

Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet.”

4“Where is he?” the king asked.

Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

5So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.

6When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.

David said, “Mephibosheth!”

“At your service,” he replied.

7“Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

8Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

9Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s steward, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master’s grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

11Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+9%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8239a)] table like one of the king’s sons.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Samuel 9:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+9%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-8239) Septuagint; Hebrew my

I want to show God’s kindness to them. 2 Samuel 9:3 nlt

Boarding a plane alone with her children, a young mom tried desperately to calm her three-year-old daughter who began kicking and crying. Then her hungry four-month-old son also began to wail.

A traveler seated next to her quickly offered to hold the baby while Jessica got her daughter buckled in. Then the traveler—recalling his own days as a young dad—began coloring with the toddler while Jessica fed her infant. And on the next connecting flight, the same man offered to assist again if needed.

Jessica recalled, “I [was] blown away by God’s hand in this. [We] could have been placed next to anyone, but we were seated next to one of the nicest men I have ever met.”

In 2 Samuel 9, we read of another example of what I call intentional kindness. After King Saul and his son Jonathan had been killed, some expected David to kill off any competition to his claim for the throne. Instead, he asked, “Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?” (v. 3). Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son, was then brought to David who restored his inheritance and warmly invited him to share his table from then on—just as if he were his own son (v. 11).

As beneficiaries of the immense kindness of God, may we look for opportunities to show intentional kindness toward others (Galatians 6:10).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who can you show God’s kindness to? What specific act of kindness can you demonstrate to someone who is hurting or discouraged?

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the kindness You’ve shown me. Help me to lavish it on others.

#### **Insight**

The events that transpire in 2 Samuel 9 have their roots in the covenant relationship that David had with Jonathan, the son of Israel’s first king, Saul. Jonathan, knowing that David was destined to be king, secured David’s commitment to show “kindness” to his offspring (1 Samuel 20:14–17). Mephibosheth, crippled by an accident when he was five years old (2 Samuel 4:4), was an heir to covenant kindness.

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

# God Calling – 12/5/19

# Law of Supply

The first law of giving is of the spirit world. Give to all you meet, or whose lives touch yours, of your prayers, your time, yourselves, your love, your thought. You must practice this giving first.

Then give of this world's goods and money, as you have them given to you. To give money and material things, without having first made the habit daily, hourly, ever increasingly, of giving on the highest plane, is wrong.

Give, give, give all your best to all who need it.

Be great givers--great givers. Give as I said My Father in Heaven gives. He who makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Remember, as I have told you before, give according to need, never according to desert. In giving, with the thought of supplying a real need you must closely resemble that Father in Heaven, the Great Giver.

As you receive, you must supply the needs of those I bring to you. Not questioning, not limiting. Their nearness to you, their relationship, must never count. Only their need is to guide you. Pray to become great givers.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Matthew 5:43

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/6/19

# “My Rainbow in the Cloud”

# http://cdn.utmost.org/files/2016/12/06-770x468.jpg

I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. —[Genesis 9:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+9%3A13)

It is the will of God that human beings should get into a right-standing relationship with Him, and His covenants are designed for this purpose. Why doesn’t God save me? He has accomplished and provided for my salvation, but I have not yet entered into a relationship with Him. Why doesn’t God do everything we ask? He has done it. The point is— will I step into that covenant relationship? All the great blessings of God are finished and complete, but they are not mine until I enter into a relationship with Him on the basis of His covenant.

Waiting for God to act is fleshly unbelief. It means that I have no faith in Him. I wait for Him to do something in me so I may trust in that. But God won’t do it, because that is not the basis of the God-and-man relationship. Man must go beyond the physical body and feelings in his covenant with God, just as God goes beyond Himself in reaching out with His covenant to man. It is a question of faith in God— a very rare thing. We only have faith in our feelings. I don’t believe God until He puts something tangible in my hand, so that I know I have it. Then I say, “Now I believe.” There is no faith exhibited in that. God says, “Look to Me, and be saved…” ([Isaiah 45:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+45:22)).

When I have really transacted business with God on the basis of His covenant, letting everything else go, there is no sense of personal achievement— no human ingredient in it at all. Instead, there is a complete overwhelming sense of being brought into union with God, and my life is transformed and radiates peace and joy.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

For the past three hundred years men have been pointing out how similar Jesus Christ’s teachings are to other good teachings. We have to remember that Christianity, if it is not a supernatural miracle, is a sham.  The Highest Good, 548 L

# CCEL – 12/6/19

**It is God which worketh in you.**—[PHI. 2:13.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html#Phil.2.13)

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.—A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.—No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.—And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

[II Cor. 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.3.html" \l "iiCor.3.5). -[John 3:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.27). -[John 6:44](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.44). -[Jer. 32:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.39).[Jas. 1:16-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.16).[Eph. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.10).[Isa. 26:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.12).

“As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” [1 Corinthians 15:48](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.48)

The head and members are of one nature, and not like that monstrous image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. The head was of fine gold, but the belly and thighs were of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet, part of iron and part of clay. Christ’s mystical body is no absurd combination of opposites; the members were mortal, and therefore Jesus died; the glorified head is immortal, and therefore the body is immortal too, for thus the record stands, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” As is our loving Head, such is the body, and every member in particular. A chosen Head and chosen members; an accepted Head, and accepted members; a living Head, and living members. If the head be pure gold, all the parts of the body are of pure gold also. Thus is there a double union of nature as a basis for the closest communion. Pause here, devout reader, and see if thou canst without ecstatic amazement, contemplate the infinite condescension of the Son of God in thus exalting thy wretchedness into blessed union with his glory. Thou art so mean that in remembrance of thy mortality, thou mayest say to corruption, “Thou art my father,” and to the worm, “Thou art my sister”; and yet in Christ thou art so honoured that thou canst say to the Almighty, “Abba, Father,” and to the Incarnate God, “Thou art my brother and my husband.” Surely if relationships to ancient and noble families make men think highly of themselves, we have whereof to glory over the heads of them all. Let the poorest and most despised believer lay hold upon this privilege; let not a senseless indolence make him negligent to trace his pedigree, and let him suffer no foolish attachment to present vanities to occupy his thoughts to the exclusion of this glorious, this heavenly honour of union with Christ.

# Word Live – 12/6/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/6/19

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

# Today in the Word – 12/6/19

# The New Adam

**Read:** [**Romans 5:12–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3a12%e2%80%9321)

### **Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ**

12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

13To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone’s account where there is no law. 14Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

15But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

18Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

J.R.R. Tolkien, author of The Lord of the Rings, coined the term “eucatastrophe,” which means “good catastrophe.” When it looks like a hero is doomed . . . but then the plot turns! The death of Jesus certainly qualifies as a eucatastrophe! As one writer explains, “Jesus’ crucifixion was the most evil event in history, but it secured the redemption of those who believe in Jesus’ substitutionary atonement for their salvation.”

Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19

Christ’s sacrifice made it possible for us (and all of humanity) to start over. That is why Paul depicted Him as the new Adam. Today, we begin the second section of our month’s study focusing on Christ’s role in salvation.

Paul explains that, through the first Adam, sin and death entered the world and affected all humanity (v. 12). No one was innocent then, and no one is innocent now. This “original sin” means we are all born with sin natures and stand condemned before God. The good news is that Jesus, as the new Adam, lived a perfect life of obedience to His Father. Through His sacrificial death and resurrection, life is possible for those who believe. We stand justified before God on the basis of Christ’s righteousness (vv. 18–19).

Notice the contrast between the old and new Adams. What Christ achieved is greater than what Adam spoiled (vv. 15–17). Jesus didn’t merely undo the Fall, salvation is a step up! His gift is greater than any trespass. Good is greater than evil. Grace is greater than sin. Life is greater than death. Furthermore, while sin and its consequences were deserved, the gift of salvation is undeserved by us, to God’s greater glory. The result? Whereas once “sin reigned in death,” now grace reigns and brings “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 21).

### **Apply the Word**

To give today’s passage even more context, re-read the record of the original Adam and the Fall in Genesis 3–4. How were Adam and Eve led to disobey? What were the consequences? What evidence was there that God continued to love them? Rejoice that “as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22)!

### **Pray with Us**

Candlelight Carols is an important part of Christmas celebration at Moody and involves student music groups and student drama group. Pray for our students who perform on stage and those in the audience, as they attend tomorrow’s concerts.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/6/19

# Gifts from Above

 **Read: Matthew 1:18–25**

### **Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son**

18This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23163a)]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23164b)] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-23166c" \o "See footnote c)] because he will save his people from their sins.”

22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-23168d" \o "See footnote d)] (which means “God with us”).

24When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 1:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-23163) Or The origin of Jesus the Messiah was like this
2. [Matthew 1:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-23164) Or was a righteous man and
3. [Matthew 1:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-23166) Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means the Lord saves.
4. [Matthew 1:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-23168) Isaiah 7:14

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel. Matthew 1:23

According to an old story, a man named Nicholas (born in ad 270) heard about a father who was so poor that he couldn’t feed his three daughters, much less provide for their future marriages. Wanting to assist the father, but hoping to keep his help a secret, Nicholas threw a bag of gold through an open window, which landed in a sock or shoe drying on the hearth. That man was known as St. Nicholas, who later became the inspiration for Santa Claus.

When I heard that story of a gift coming down from above, I thought of God the Father, who out of love and compassion sent to earth the greatest gift, His Son, through a miraculous birth. According to Matthew’s gospel, Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that a virgin would conceive and give birth to a son whom they would call Immanuel, meaning “God with us” (1:23).

As lovely as Nicholas’s gift was, how much more amazing is the gift of Jesus. He left heaven to become a man, died and rose again, and is God living with us. He brings us comfort when we’re hurting and sad; He encourages us when we feel downhearted; He reveals the truth to us when we might be deceived.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you give the gift of Jesus today? How does His presence lead you to share your resources of time, wisdom, and love with others?

Jesus, thank You for the way You left Your Father to be born in humble circumstances. May I never take for granted Your presence in my life.

To learn more about the birth of Jesus, visit [bit.ly/2R7FD4f.](https://bit.ly/2R7FD4f.)

#### **Insight**

Today’s text introduces us to Joseph, a carpenter in Nazareth and step-father of Jesus. Joseph is only mentioned briefly in Scripture but he’s never the speaker; however, his life speaks volumes of his devotion to God. He’s concerned for the law and desires to act in obedience (Matthew 1:19), yet he pairs that concern with genuine compassion for Mary. His focus on obedience is likewise balanced by trust that the message he’s received from the angel is from God—giving him strength to obey (vv. 22–25).

For more on Joseph, see Mary and Joseph: Reflecting on the Wonder of Christmas at [discoveryseries.org/hp074.](https://discoveryseries.org/hp074.)

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

# God Calling – 12/6/19

# Expect Temptation

Lord, give us Power to conquer temptation as Thou didst in the wilderness.

The very first step towards conquering temptation is to see it as temptation. To dissociate yourself from it.

Not to think of it as something resulting from your tiredness, or illness, or poverty, or nerve-strain, when you feel you might well excuse yourself for yielding, but first to realize very fully that when you have heard My voice ("the Heavens opened," as it were) and are going to fulfill your mission to work for me and to draw souls to me, you must expect a mighty onslaught from the evil one, who will endeavor with all his might to frustrate you, and to prevent your good work. Expect that.

Then when these little temptations, or big ones come, you will recognize them as planned by evil to thwart Me. Then for very love of Me you will conquer.

"And lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Matthew 6:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/7/19

# Repentance



Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation… —[2 Corinthians 7:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+7%3A10)

Conviction of sin is best described in the words:

My sins, my sins, my Savior,  
How sad on Thee they fall.

Conviction of sin is one of the most uncommon things that ever happens to a person. It is the beginning of an understanding of God. Jesus Christ said that when the Holy Spirit came He would convict people of sin (see [John 16:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:8)). And when the Holy Spirit stirs a person’s conscience and brings him into the presence of God, it is not that person’s relationship with others that bothers him but his relationship with God— “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight…” ([Psalm 51:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+51:4)). The wonders of conviction of sin, forgiveness, and holiness are so interwoven that it is only the forgiven person who is truly holy. He proves he is forgiven by being the opposite of what he was previously, by the grace of God. Repentance always brings a person to the point of saying, “I have sinned.” The surest sign that God is at work in his life is when he says that and means it. Anything less is simply sorrow for having made foolish mistakes— a reflex action caused by self-disgust.

The entrance into the kingdom of God is through the sharp, sudden pains of repentance colliding with man’s respectable “goodness.” Then the Holy Spirit, who produces these struggles, begins the formation of the Son of God in the person’s life (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)). This new life will reveal itself in conscious repentance followed by unconscious holiness, never the other way around. The foundation of Christianity is repentance. Strictly speaking, a person cannot repent when he chooses— repentance is a gift of God. The old Puritans used to pray for “the gift of tears.” If you ever cease to understand the value of repentance, you allow yourself to remain in sin. Examine yourself to see if you have forgotten how to be truly repentant.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 12/7/19

**He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**—[II COR. 5:21.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21)

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.—There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The Lord our Righteousness.

[Isa. 53:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.6). -[I Pet. 2:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.24). -[Rom. 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.19).[Tit. 3:4-7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.4). -[Rom. 8:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.1).[Jer. 23:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.6).

“Base things of the world hath God chosen.” [1 Corinthians 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.28)

Walk the streets by moonlight, if you dare, and you will see sinners then. Watch when the night is dark, and the wind is howling, and the picklock is grating in the door, and you will see sinners then. Go to yon jail, and walk through the wards, and mark the men with heavy over-hanging brows, men whom you would not like to meet at night, and there are sinners there. Go to the Reformatories, and note those who have betrayed a rampant juvenile depravity, and you will see sinners there. Go across the seas to the place where a man will gnaw a bone upon which is reeking human flesh, and there is a sinner there. Go where you will, you need not ransack earth to find sinners, for they are common enough; you may find them in every lane and street of every city, and town, and village, and hamlet. It is for such that Jesus died. If you will select me the grossest specimen of humanity, if he be but born of woman, I will have hope of him yet, because Jesus Christ is come to seek and to save sinners. Electing love has selected some of the worst to be made the best. Pebbles of the brook grace turns into jewels for the crown-royal. Worthless dross he transforms into pure gold. Redeeming love has set apart many of the worst of mankind to be the reward of the Saviour’s passion. Effectual grace calls forth many of the vilest of the vile to sit at the table of mercy, and therefore let none despair.

Reader, by that love looking out of Jesus’ tearful eyes, by that love streaming from those bleeding wounds, by that faithful love, that strong love, that pure, disinterested, and abiding love; by the heart and by the bowels of the Saviour’s compassion, we conjure you turn not away as though it were nothing to you; but believe on him and you shall be saved. Trust your soul with him and he will bring you to his Father’s right hand in glory everlasting.

# Word Live – 12/7/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/7/19

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

# Today in the Word – 12/7/19

# The Lamb of God

**Read:** [**John 1:29–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a29%e2%80%9334)

### **John Testifies About Jesus**

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ 31I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

32Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a29%e2%80%9334#fen-NIV-26079a)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 1:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a29%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-26079) See Isaiah 42:1; many manuscripts is the Son of God.

For our wedding day, Julia and I chose the music carefully. We wanted the ceremony to be worshipful, focused ultimately on God and not us. For this reason, one of the songs we picked was “Lamb of God” by Twila Paris. It doesn’t mention marriage, but it does celebrate the amazing love of God: “Your gift of love they crucified. They laughed and scorned him as he died. The humble King they named a fraud, and sacrificed the Lamb of God.”

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

Lamb of God seems an unlikely title for Jesus. What does it mean? John the Baptist identified Jesus to his followers by announcing, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (vv. 29–31). This alluded specifically to the Passover story (Exodus 12; 1 Cor. 5:7). Prior to the tenth plague on Egypt, the Israelites were instructed to put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts so the angel of death would “pass over” them and spare their firstborn sons. The principle at work was that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” or life (Heb. 9:22).

Jesus is the Lamb of God because He shed His own blood for our forgiveness and salvation. A well-known Messianic prophecy said He would be “led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7), that is, Jesus sacrificed Himself willingly. The apostle Peter understood the sacrificial lamb image as well, writing that we have been redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:19).

Although only John the Baptist uses the title “Lamb of God” in the New Testament, Christ appears as a Lamb at least 29 times in the book of Revelation (see Rev. 5:6). This picture powerfully and memorably unites the meanings of atonement and victory!

### **Apply the Word**

What does this passage teach you about Jesus? Why is it important to you that He is the Lamb of God? Write down your answers and maybe talk about this with your friends or family. Then, spend some time in prayer thanking God for the gift of His Son, Jesus. “The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” (John 1:29).

### **Pray with Us**

Will you pray for Moody’s president, Dr. Mark Jobe, as he speaks at both performances of Moody’s annual Christmas program, Candlelight Carols? Please ask the Lord to touch the hearts of our audience with the power of the gospel message.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/7/19

# Don’t Forget the Giver

**Deuteronomy 6:4–12**

4Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A4%E2%80%9312&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-5091a" \o "See footnote a)] 5Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

10When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, 11houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, 12be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Deuteronomy 6:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A4%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-5091) Or The Lord our God is one Lord; or The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; or The Lord is our God, the Lord alone

Be careful that you do not forget the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:12

It was just before Christmas, and her kids were having a difficult time with gratitude. She knew how easy it was to slip into that kind of thinking, but she also knew she wanted something better for the hearts of her children. So she went through the house and placed red bows on light switches, the pantry and refrigerator doors, the washing machine and dryer, and the water faucets. With each bow there was a handwritten note: “Some of the gifts God gives us are easy to overlook, so I’ve put a bow on them. He is so good to our family. Let’s not forget where the gifts come from.”

In Deuteronomy 6, we see that the future of the nation of Israel involved the conquest of existing places. So they would move into large flourishing cities they did not build (v. 10), occupy houses filled with good things they didn’t provide, and benefit from wells and vineyards and olive groves they didn’t dig or plant (v. 11). All these blessings could be easily traced back to a single source—“the Lord your God” (v. 10). And while God lovingly provided these things and more, Moses wanted to make sure the people were careful not to forget (v. 12).

During certain seasons of life it’s easy to forget. But let’s not lose sight of God’s goodness, the source of all our blessings.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Name five blessings in your life. Why are you grateful for them? How will you thank God for them today?

Loving Father, You are the source of every blessing in our lives. In our pride we often imagine otherwise, but we know better. We do. Thank You for all Your gifts.

#### **Insight**

Orthodox Jews take the command of Deuteronomy 6:8 literally. A devout Jewish man will tie leather cases known as tefillin (Greek, phylactery) on his left arm or hand and on his forehead. The tefillin contain the portion of Scripture known as the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–9). In Mark 12:29–31, Jesus quoted from the Shema and Leviticus 19:18 when He said “there is no commandment greater” than “to love the Lord your God . . . [and] your neighbor as yourself.”

The tefillin usually include Scriptures from Exodus 13:1–16 and Deuteronomy 11:13–21. The Exodus portion refers to the first Passover when God said, “This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that this law of the Lord is to be on your lips” (Exodus 13:9). A time will come when those who reject God must have a mark either on their hands or on their foreheads (Revelation 13:16; 14:9). Satan loves to counterfeit God’s ways.

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

# God Calling – 12/7/19

# Food of Life

I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Those were My words to My Disciples in the early days of My Ministry. Later I was to lead them on to a fuller understanding of that Majestic Union of a soul with God in which strength, life, and food pass from One to the other.

Meat is to sustain the body. To do the Will of God is the very strength and support of Life. Feed on that Food.

Soul-starvation comes from the failing to do, and to delight in doing, My Will. How busy the world is in talking of bodies that are undernourished! What of the souls that are undernourished?

Make it indeed your meat to do My Will. Strength and Power will indeed come to you from that.

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work." John 4:34

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/8/19

# The Impartial Power of God



By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. —[Hebrews 10:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+10%3A14)

We trample the blood of the Son of God underfoot if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only reason for the forgiveness of our sins by God, and the infinite depth of His promise to forget them, is the death of Jesus Christ. Our repentance is merely the result of our personal realization of the atonement by the Cross of Christ, which He has provided for us. “…Christ Jesus…became for us wisdom from God— and righteousness and sanctification and redemption…” ([1 Corinthians 1:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1:30)). Once we realize that Christ has become all this for us, the limitless joy of God begins in us. And wherever the joy of God is not present, the death sentence is still in effect.

No matter who or what we are, God restores us to right standing with Himself only by means of the death of Jesus Christ. God does this, not because Jesus pleads with Him to do so but because He died. It cannot be earned, just accepted. All the pleading for salvation which deliberately ignores the Cross of Christ is useless. It is knocking at a door other than the one which Jesus has already opened. We protest by saying, “But I don’t want to come that way. It is too humiliating to be received as a sinner.” God’s response, through Peter, is, “… there is no other name…by which we must be saved” ([Acts 4:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4:12)). What at first appears to be heartlessness on God’s part is actually the true expression of His heart. There is unlimited entrance His way. “In Him we have redemption through His blood…” ([Ephesians 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1:7)). To identify with the death of Jesus Christ means that we must die to everything that was never a part of Him.

God is just in saving bad people only as He makes them good. Our Lord does not pretend we are all right when we are all wrong. The atonement by the Cross of Christ is the propitiation God uses to make unholy people holy.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 12/8/19

**By love serve one another.**—[GAL. 5:13.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.13)

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.—Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.—Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.—Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.—Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

We . . . that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

[Gal. 6:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.1).[Jas. 5:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.5.html" \l "Jas.5.19). -[I Pet. 1:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.22). -[Rom. 13:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.8). -[Rom. 12:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.10). -[I Pet. 5:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.5).[Rom. 15:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.1).

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” [Revelation 3:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.4)

We may understand this to refer to justification. “They shall walk in white;” that is, they shall enjoy a constant sense of their own justification by faith; they shall understand that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that they have all been washed and made whiter than the newly-fallen snow.

Again, it refers to joy and gladness: for white robes were holiday dresses among the Jews. They who have not defiled their garments shall have their faces always bright; they shall understand what Solomon meant when he said “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart. Let thy garments be always white, for God hath accepted thy works.” He who is accepted of God shall wear white garments of joy and gladness, while he walks in sweet communion with the Lord Jesus. Whence so many doubts, so much misery, and mourning? It is because so many believers defile their garments with sin and error, and hence they lose the joy of their salvation, and the comfortable fellowship of the Lord Jesus, they do not here below walk in white.

The promise also refers to walking in white before the throne of God. Those who have not defiled their garments here shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most High. They shall possess joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knoweth not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire hath not reached. The “undefiled in the way” shall have all this—not of merit, nor of works, but of grace. They shall walk with Christ in white, for he has made them “worthy.” In his sweet company they shall drink of the living fountains of waters.

# Word Live – 12/8/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/8/19

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# Today in the Word – 12/8/19

# The Suffering Servant

**Read:** [**Isaiah 53**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53)

53 Who has believed our message  
    and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
2He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
    and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
    nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
3He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
    a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces  
    he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4Surely he took up our pain  
    and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
    stricken by him, and afflicted.  
5But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
    he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
    and by his wounds we are healed.  
6We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
    each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
    the iniquity of us all.

7He was oppressed and afflicted,  
    yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
    and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
    so he did not open his mouth.  
8By oppression[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18720a)] and judgment he was taken away.  
    Yet who of his generation protested?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
    for the transgression of my people he was punished.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18720b)]  
9He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
    and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
    nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
    and though the Lord makes[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18722c)] his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
    and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.  
11After he has suffered,  
    he will see the light of life[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18723d)] and be satisfied[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18723e)];  
by his knowledge[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18723f)] my righteous servant will justify many,  
    and he will bear their iniquities.  
12Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53" \l "fen-NIV-18724g" \o "See footnote g)]  
    and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#fen-NIV-18724h)]  
because he poured out his life unto death,  
    and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many,  
    and made intercession for the transgressors.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Isaiah 53:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18720) Or From arrest
2. [Isaiah 53:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18720) Or generation considered / that he was cut off from the land of the living, / that he was punished for the transgression of my people?
3. [Isaiah 53:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18722) Hebrew though you make
4. [Isaiah 53:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18723) Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text does not have the light of life.
5. [Isaiah 53:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18723) Or (with Masoretic Text) 11He will see the fruit of his suffering / and will be satisfied
6. [Isaiah 53:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18723) Or by knowledge of him
7. [Isaiah 53:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18724) Or many
8. [Isaiah 53:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53#en-NIV-18724) Or numerous

In his sermon, “The Man of Sorrows,” nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon expressed faith-filled amazement that Jesus was fully God and fully man: “He who was ‘despised and rejected of men’ was beloved and adored by angels. And He, from whom men hid their faces in contempt, was worshipped by cherubim and seraphim. Man of the substance of Your mother, You art also essential Deity! We worship you this day in spirit and in truth!”

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. Isaiah 53:5

The Messianic prophecy in today’s reading depicts Jesus as a Suffering Servant. This title was certainly not expected by the Jews of Jesus’ day. They expected a king who would release them from Rome’s rule and sit on the throne of David . . . certainly not a servant! They desired victory, not suffering. Yet that is exactly how Isaiah’s fourth servant song presented Jesus, as “a man of suffering, and familiar with pain” (v. 3).

Christ’s suffering was for our atonement. We deserved what He endured in our place. “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (v. 5). Though He “was assigned a grave with the wicked” (v. 9), He had committed no sin. He suffered and died for our sake—though death would not be His end (v. 11)—and He did so willingly, choosing freely to suffer the punishment we deserved (vv. 4, 12). He did not protest or fight back (v. 7), as we see in the Gospel accounts of His unjust trials. His was silent by choice, not due to powerlessness.

This costly redemption was ordained by God the Father (Acts 2:23). “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). “It was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer . . . the Lord makes his life an offering for sin” (v. 10).

### **Apply the Word**

As followers of Christ, it is our privilege to “share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Rom. 8:17). Many believers around the world are suffering today. Let’s pray for the persecuted church in countries such as China, North Korea, and Pakistan. Prayer guides are available at websites such as Voice of the Martyrs.

### **Pray with Us**

Another important event starts on Moody’s Chicago campus tomorrow—final exams. Please uphold in prayer our undergraduate students and ask the Lord to help them to finish well and retain the valuable knowledge they learned from their professors.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/8/19

# Attitude of Gratitude

 **Read: Colossians 3:12–25**

12Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### **Instructions for Christian Households**

18Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3A12%E2%80%9325&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-29539a" \o "See footnote a)] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Colossians 3:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3A12%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-29539) Or Parents

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Colossians 3:15

In my state in the US, the winters can be brutal, with sub-zero temperatures and never-ending snow. One bitterly cold day, as I shoveled snow for what seemed like the thousandth time, our postman paused in his rounds to ask how I was doing. I told him that I disliked winter and was weary of all the heavy snow. I then commented that his job must be pretty rough during these extreme weather conditions. He responded, “Yeah, but at least I have a job. A lot of people don’t. I’m thankful to be working.”

I have to admit that I felt quite convicted by his attitude of gratitude. How easily we can lose sight of everything we have to be thankful for when the circumstances of life become unpleasant.

Paul told the followers of Christ at Colossae, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful” (Colossians 3:15). He wrote to the Thessalonians, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Even in our times of genuine struggle and pain, we can know God’s peace and permit it to rule our hearts. And in that peace, we’ll find reminders of all that we’ve been given in Christ. In that, we can truly be thankful.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What do you need to stop complaining about? What do you have to thank God for today?

God, how often I complain about things that are mere inconveniences. Help me never to lose sight of Your goodness. Give me a heart full of gratitude.

#### **Insight**

The virtues and vices listed in Colossians 3:5–17 illustrate the dramatic contrast between life on our own and life lived by Christ’s Spirit. Believers in Jesus don’t experience spiritual transformation by “trying harder” but by surrendering our old identities in exchange for “the new self” (v. 10) that has died and risen with Christ (vv. 1–3).

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

# God Calling – 12/8/19

# My Kingdom

And greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father.

While I was on earth, to the great number of those with whom I came in contact, Mine was a lost cause. Even My disciples only believed, half-doubting, half-wondering. When they all forsook Me and fled it was not so much fear of My enemies as the certainty that My Mission, however beautiful they thought it, had failed.

In spite of all I had taught them, in spite of the revelation of the Last Supper, they had secretly felt sure that when the final moment came, and the hatred of the Pharisees was declared against Me I should sound some call to action, and that I should lead My many followers, and found My earthly kingdom. Even the disciples who had eyes to see My Spiritual Kingdom had thought material forces had proved too strong for Me.

But with My Resurrection came hope. Faith revived. They would remind each other of all I had said. They would have the assurance of My Divinity, Messiahship, the lack of which had hindered My work on earth, and they would have all My Power in the unseen - the Holy Spirit - to help them.

Remember, I came to found a Kingdom - the Kingdom.  Those who lived in the Kingdom were to do the work -- greater works than I was able to do. Not a greater Power shown, not a greater Life lived, but, as men recognized My Godhead, opportunities for works in My Name would increase. My work on earth was to gather around Me the nucleus of My Kingdom, and to teach the Truths of My Kingdom to them.  In those Truths they were to live and work.

"But now it is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death,  by man came also the Resurrection of the dead." 1 Corinthians 15:20-21

# My Utmost for His Highest – 12/9/19

# The Opposition of the Natural



Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. —[Galatians 5:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+5%3A24)

The natural life itself is not sinful. But we must abandon sin, having nothing to do with it in any way whatsoever. Sin belongs to hell and to the devil. I, as a child of God, belong to heaven and to God. It is not a question of giving up sin, but of giving up my right to myself, my natural independence, and my self-will. This is where the battle has to be fought. The things that are right, noble, and good from the natural standpoint are the very things that keep us from being God’s best. Once we come to understand that natural moral excellence opposes or counteracts surrender to God, we bring our soul into the center of its greatest battle. Very few of us would debate over what is filthy, evil, and wrong, but we do debate over what is good. It is the good that opposes the best. The higher up the scale of moral excellence a person goes, the more intense the opposition to Jesus Christ. “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh….” The cost to your natural life is not just one or two things, but everything. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself…” ([Matthew 16:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16:24)). That is, he must deny his right to himself, and he must realize who Jesus Christ is before he will bring himself to do it. Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.

The natural life is not spiritual, and it can be made spiritual only through sacrifice. If we do not purposely sacrifice the natural, the supernatural can never become natural to us. There is no high or easy road. Each of us has the means to accomplish it entirely in his own hands. It is not a question of praying, but of sacrificing, and thereby performing His will.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Is He going to help Himself to your life, or are you taken up with your conception of what you are going to do? God is responsible for our lives, and the one great keynote is reckless reliance upon Him. Approved Unto God, 10 R

# CCEL – 12/9/19

**To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.**—[PROV. 21:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.21.html" \l "Prov.21.3)

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.—Mary . . . sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

[Mic. 6:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.6.html" \l "Mic.6.8). -[I Sam. 15:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.15.html" \l "iSam.15.22). -[Mark 12:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.12.html" \l "Mark.12.33).[Hos. 12:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.12.html" \l "Hos.12.6). -[Luke 10:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.10.html" \l "Luke.10.39),[42](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.10.html" \l "Luke.10.42).[Phi. 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.13).

“Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you.” [Isaiah 30:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.18)

God often delays in answering prayer. We have several instances of this in sacred Scripture. Jacob did not get the blessing from the angel until near the dawn of day—he had to wrestle all night for it. The poor woman of Syrophoenicia was answered not a word for a long while. Paul besought the Lord thrice that “the thorn in the flesh” might be taken from him, and he received no assurance that it should be taken away, but instead thereof a promise that God’s grace should be sufficient for him. If thou hast been knocking at the gate of mercy, and hast received no answer, shall I tell thee why the mighty Maker hath not opened the door and let thee in? Our Father has reasons peculiar to himself for thus keeping us waiting. Sometimes it is to show his power and his sovereignty, that men may know that Jehovah has a right to give or to withhold. More frequently the delay is for our profit. Thou art perhaps kept waiting in order that thy desires may be more fervent. God knows that delay will quicken and increase desire, and that if he keeps thee waiting thou wilt see thy necessity more clearly, and wilt seek more earnestly; and that thou wilt prize the mercy all the more for its long tarrying. There may also be something wrong in thee which has need to be removed, before the joy of the Lord is given. Perhaps thy views of the Gospel plan are confused, or thou mayest be placing some little reliance on thyself, instead of trusting simply and entirely to the Lord Jesus. Or, God makes thee tarry awhile that he may the more fully display the riches of his grace to thee at last. Thy prayers are all filed in heaven, and if not immediately answered they are certainly not forgotten, but in a little while shall be fulfilled to thy delight and satisfaction. Let not despair make thee silent, but continue instant in earnest supplication.

# Word Live – 12/9/19

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

# Scripture Union – 12/9/19

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

# Today in the Word – 12/9/19

# Our Risen Lord

[**Read: Luke 24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24)

### **Jesus Has Risen**

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” 8Then they remembered his words.

9When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

### **On the Road to Emmaus**

13Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24#fen-NIV-26005a)] from Jerusalem. 14They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16but they were kept from recognizing him.

17He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. 18One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

19“What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

25He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

30When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

33They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” 35Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

36While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

37They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

40When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

45Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things. 49I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

### **The Ascension of Jesus**

50When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 24:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24#en-NIV-26005) Or about 11 kilometers

“Outside of the cross of Jesus Christ, there is no hope in this world,” says Ravi Zacharias, Christian apologist and author. “That cross and resurrection at the core of the Gospel is the only hope for humanity. Wherever you go, ask God for wisdom on how to get that Gospel in, even in the toughest situations of life.”

Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Luke 24:5–6

The resurrection changed everything! Today we celebrate the fact that Jesus Christ is our Risen Lord. This is not a metaphor or a symbolic picture, but the literal historical truth. The Resurrection was both a spiritual and a physical event. When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He worked hard to convince them that He was not a ghost (v. 37). Though His glorified body was qualitatively different, He could still show them the scars in His hands and feet (vv. 36-40). He even ate broiled fish (vv. 42–43).

Despite Jesus having told them before the fact (vv. 6–7), His followers had no expectation that He would rise from the dead. The women who discovered the empty tomb had come to anoint His corpse with spices and pay their final respects (v. 1). When they brought the angels’ news to the disciples, it “seemed to them like nonsense” (v. 11). In Luke’s account, only Peter bothered to go and check, and even when he found the tomb empty, “he went away, wondering to himself what had happened” (v. 12). The two disciples on the Emmaus road didn’t know what to make of the women’s story either (vv. 19–24).

That’s why Christ’s post-Resurrection appearances were taught His followers—that what had happened had been exactly what Scripture prophesied (vv. 25–27, 44–48). He opened their minds so they could realize the incredible significance of the Truth standing before them: redemption and forgiveness of sin!

### **Apply the Word**

Jesus said “repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations” (v. 47), a mandate the church continues to obey today. Which missionaries do you or your church support? Do you know what’s been happening in their ministries lately? Why not read one of their newsletters and spend time in prayer for them?

### **Pray with Us**

Final exams, a busy time for Moody’s faculty, start today. We invite you to include in prayer the professors of the Educational Ministries program: Robert MacRae, Michael Milco, Mary Martin, and Peter Worrall. We ask for God’s blessing on them.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 12/9/19

# Our Guiding Light

** Read: 2 Samuel 22:26–30**

26“To the faithful you show yourself faithful,  
    to the blameless you show yourself blameless,  
27to the pure you show yourself pure,  
    but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.  
28You save the humble,  
    but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.  
29You, Lord, are my lamp;  
    the Lord turns my darkness into light.  
30With your help I can advance against a troop[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A26%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8633a)];  
    with my God I can scale a wall.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Samuel 22:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A26%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-8633) Or can run through a barricade

You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light. 2 Samuel 22:29

At a museum, I lingered near a display of ancient lamps. A sign revealed they were from Israel. Decorated with carved designs, these oval-shaped clay vessels had two openings—one for fuel, and one for a wick. Although the Israelites commonly used them in wall alcoves, each was small enough to fit in the palm of a person’s hand.

Perhaps a little light like this inspired King David to write a praise song in which he said, “You Lord are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light” (2 Samuel 22:29). David sang these words after God gave him victory in battle. Rivals from both inside and outside his own nation had been stalking him, intending to kill him. Because of his relationship with God, David didn’t cower in the shadows. He moved forward into enemy confrontations with the confidence that comes from God’s presence. With God helping him, he could see things clearly so he could make good decisions for himself, his troops, and his nation.

The darkness David mentioned in his song likely involved fear of weakness, defeat, and death. Many of us live with similar worries, which produce anxiety and stress. When the darkness presses in on us, we can find peace because we know God is with us too. The divine flame of the Holy Spirit lives in us to light our path until we meet Jesus face to face.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why can you trust God to help you with your fears? What can you do to seek God’s guidance in your life?

God, please assure me of Your presence when I’m afraid. Help me to remember that You’ve defeated spiritual darkness through Your death and resurrection.

#### **Insight**

Today’s passage is part of a longer song David wrote “when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul” (2 Samuel 22:1). This song was the exuberant celebration of a man who’d been “delivered” from years of running and hiding—both from enemies in other countries and from his own people. While we don’t know exactly how long David lived on the run, we know that he lived with the Philistines for sixteen months (1 Samuel 27:7). This is amazing considering his initial claim to fame was killing their champion (ch. 17).

To learn more about the time of David, visit [christianuniversity.org/OT128-06](https://christianuniversity.org/OT128-06).

# God Calling – 12/9/19

# Your Search Rewarded

Lord, all men seek for the Thee.

All men seek for Me, but all men do not know what they want. They are seeking because they are dissatisfied without realizing that I am the object of their quest.

Count it your greatest joy to be the means, by your lives, sufferings, words, and love, to prove to the questing ones you know that their search would end when they saw Me.

Profit by My Example. I left My work -- seemingly the greatest work -- that of saving souls, to seek communion with My Father. Did I know perhaps that with many it was idle curiosity? Did I know that there must be no rush into the Kingdom, that the still small voice, not the shoutings of a mob, would alone persuade men I was the Son of God?

Why be surrounded by multitudes if the multitudes were not really desiring to learn from, and to follow, Me? Follow the Christ into the quiet places of prayer.

"Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he." John 18:7, 8