# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/23/21

# The Determination to Serve



The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve… —[Matthew 20:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+20%3A28)

Jesus also said, “Yet I am among you as the One who serves” ([Luke 22:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22:27)). Paul’s idea of service was the same as our Lord’s— “…ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake” ([2 Corinthians 4:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4:5)). We somehow have the idea that a person called to the ministry is called to be different and above other people. But according to Jesus Christ, he is called to be a “doormat” for others— called to be their spiritual leader, but never their superior. Paul said, “I know how to be abased…” ([Philippians 4:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:12)). Paul’s idea of service was to pour his life out to the last drop for others. And whether he received praise or blame made no difference. As long as there was one human being who did not know Jesus, Paul felt a debt of service to that person until he did come to know Him. But the chief motivation behind Paul’s service was not love for others but love for his Lord. If our devotion is to the cause of humanity, we will be quickly defeated and broken-hearted, since we will often be confronted with a great deal of ingratitude from other people. But if we are motivated by our love for God, no amount of ingratitude will be able to hinder us from serving one another.

Paul’s understanding of how Christ had dealt with him is the secret behind his determination to serve others. “I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man…” ([1 Timothy 1:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+1:13)). In other words, no matter how badly others may have treated Paul, they could never have treated him with the same degree of spite and hatred with which he had treated Jesus Christ. Once we realize that Jesus has served us even to the depths of our meagerness, our selfishness, and our sin, nothing we encounter from others will be able to exhaust our determination to serve others for His sake.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/23/21

The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—[HEB. 12:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.24)

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.—It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Abel, . . . brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof . . . The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.—Christ . . . hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.—Having . . . boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

[John 1:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.29). -[Rev. 13:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.13.html" \l "Rev.13.8). -[Heb. 10:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.4),[10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.10).[Gen. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.4.html" \l "Gen.4.4). -[Eph. 5:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html#Eph.5.2).[Heb. 10:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.22). -[Heb. 10:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.19).

“I will never leave thee.” [Hebrews 13:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.5)

No promise is of private interpretation. Whatever God has said to any one saint, he has said to all. When he opens a well for one, it is that all may drink. When he openeth a granary-door to give out food, there may be some one starving man who is the occasion of its being opened, but all hungry saints may come and feed too. Whether he gave the word to Abraham or to Moses, matters not, O believer; he has given it to thee as one of the covenanted seed. There is not a high blessing too lofty for thee, nor a wide mercy too extensive for thee. Lift up now thine eyes to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, for all this is thine. Climb to Pisgah’s top, and view the utmost limit of the divine promise, for the land is all thine own. There is not a brook of living water of which thou mayst not drink. If the land floweth with milk and honey, eat the honey and drink the milk, for both are thine. Be thou bold to believe, for he hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”In this promise, God gives to his people everything. “I will never leave thee.” Then no attribute of God can cease to be engaged for us. Is he mighty? He will show himself strong on the behalf of them that trust him. Is he love? Then with lovingkindness will he have mercy upon us. Whatever attributes may compose the character of Deity, every one of them to its fullest extent shall be engaged on our side. To put everything in one, there is nothing you can want, there is nothing you can ask for, there is nothing you can need in time or in eternity, there is nothing living, nothing dying, there is nothing in this world, nothing in the next world, there is nothing now, nothing at the resurrection-morning, nothing in heaven which is not contained in this text—“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

# Word Live – 2/23/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/23/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/23/21

# Our Debt of Love

**Read:** [**Romans 13:8–14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314)

### **Love Fulfills the Law**

8Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314" \l "fen-NIV-28276a" \o "See footnote a)] and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314#fen-NIV-28276b)] 10Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

### **The Day Is Near**

11And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314" \l "fen-NIV-28281c" \o "See footnote c)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 13:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-28276) Exodus 20:13-15,17; Deut. 5:17-19,21
2. [Romans 13:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-28276) Lev. 19:18
3. [Romans 13:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3a8%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-28281) In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

“Oh, to grace, how great a debtor. / Daily I’m constrained to be!” begins the third stanza of the hymn, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” As recipients of God’s amazing grace, we are in His debt! What do we owe? We must love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. And love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37–40).

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another. Romans 13:8

Today’s passage transitions from our obligation to pay taxes to the debt of love we owe to our neighbor. We are to love God and love our neighbor. Paul views love as the underlying motive behind the law. The commandments that forbid adultery, theft, murder, covetousness, and “whatever other command there may be” are protective. They limit our personal freedom or desires so we will do no harm either to ourselves or to others (v. 10). Obeying the law is an act of love.

Paul puts this section in context. He has not drifted into a random tangent about morality in this passage but is still addressing those who were troubled by his message about a righteousness from God that is “apart from the law” (Rom. 3:21). The righteousness of the gospel does not come through obeying the law, but it agrees with it. Those who, through the Spirit, fulfill their “continuing debt to love one another” are fulfilling the righteousness of the law.

Paul mentions an additional motive in verse 12, where he notes that the night is almost over and “the day is almost here.” This acknowledges the darkness of the present age and is a veiled reference to the return of Christ. Christ’s kingdom is called a “kingdom of light” (Col. 1:12). Its citizens are called “children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

### **Apply the Word**

Are you longing for the light? By treating others with love, you are resisting the darkness of the present age and bearing witness to the coming of Christ’s kingdom. This love is shown both by what you do and what you do not do. How will you show God’s love today?

### **Pray with Us**

When the world speaks of love, it does not know the depth and power of yours. Lord, give us your love for others so that all who interact with us get a taste of you.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/23/21

# Turn on the Light

 **Read:** [**Matthew 5:14–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.14%E2%80%9316)

14“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.16)

As my husband and I prepared for a cross-country move, I wanted to ensure that we kept in touch with our grown sons. I found a unique gift, friendship lamps connected by wireless internet, which can be turned on remotely. When I gave the lamps to my sons, I explained that their lamps will turn on when I touch my lamp—to provide a shining reminder of my love and ongoing prayers. No matter how great the distance between us, a tap on their lamps would trigger a light in our home too. Though we knew nothing could replace our more personal moments of connection, we could be encouraged by knowing we’re loved and prayed for every time we turned on those lights.

All God’s children have the privilege of being light-sharers powered by the Holy Spirit. We’re designed to live as radiant beacons of God’s everlasting hope and unconditional love. When we’re sharing the gospel and serving others in the name of Jesus, we become brilliant spotlights and living testimonies. Every good deed, kind smile, gentle word of encouragement, and heartfelt prayer produces a beaming reminder of God’s faithfulness and His unconditional and life-transforming love ([Matthew 5:14–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.14%E2%80%9316)).

Wherever God leads us, and however we serve Him, we can be used by Him to help others shine His light. As God, by His Spirit, provides the true illumination, we can reflect the light and love of His presence.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you be a light for Christ, intentionally expressing His love to those in your sphere of influence this week? How can you shine a light on God’s love as you serve people who don’t know Him?

Loving Father, please fuel me with Your perfect truth and love so I can shine a spotlight on You by loving You and others wherever I go.

#### **Insight**

The New Testament uses various metaphors to describe the believer in Jesus. For example, it speaks of us as sheep ([John 10:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.27)); fruitful branches (15:5); ambassadors ([2 Corinthians 5:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.20)); soldiers, athletes, farmers ([2 Timothy 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%202.3), [5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Timothy%202.5%E2%80%936)); and living stones ([1 Peter 2:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.5)). In [Matthew 5:13–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.13%E2%80%9316), Jesus uses two everyday items—salt and a lamp—to illustrate the impact disciples of Christ ought to have on the people around them. Salt is a preservative, a flavor enhancer, and a thirst stimulant. As believers in Jesus, we’re to bring the salt of preservation and joy to a bland, tasteless, and otherwise decaying world. A lamp gives light that enables people to see and gives direction. It must necessarily be placed in a conspicuous position for the light to be effective. We’re to be the light of salvation to a world darkened by sin.

# God Calling – 2/23/21

# Secret Of Healing

Love the busy life. It is a joy-filled life. I love you both and bid you be of good cheer. Take your fill of joy in the Spring.

Live outside whenever possible. Sun and air are My great healing forces, and that inward Joy that changes poisoned blood to a pure healthy life-giving flow.

Never forget that real healing of body, mind, and Spirit comes from within, from the close loving contact of your spirit with My Spirit.

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/24/21

# The Delight of Sacrifice



I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls… —[2 Corinthians 12:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+12%3A15)

Once “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,” we deliberately begin to identify ourselves with Jesus Christ’s interests and purposes in others’ lives ([Romans 5:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:5)). And Jesus has an interest in every individual person. We have no right in Christian service to be guided by our own interests and desires. In fact, this is one of the greatest tests of our relationship with Jesus Christ. The delight of sacrifice is that I lay down my life for my Friend, Jesus (see [John 15:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:13)). I don’t throw my life away, but I willingly and deliberately lay it down for Him and His interests in other people. And I do this for no cause or purpose of my own. Paul spent his life for only one purpose— that he might win people to Jesus Christ. Paul always attracted people to his Lord, but never to himself. He said, “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” ([1 Corinthians 9:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9:22)).

When someone thinks that to develop a holy life he must always be alone with God, he is no longer of any use to others. This is like putting himself on a pedestal and isolating himself from the rest of society. Paul was a holy person, but wherever he went Jesus Christ was always allowed to help Himself to his life. Many of us are interested only in our own goals, and Jesus cannot help Himself to our lives. But if we are totally surrendered to Him, we have no goals of our own to serve. Paul said that he knew how to be a “doormat” without resenting it, because the motivation of his life was devotion to Jesus. We tend to be devoted, not to Jesus Christ, but to the things which allow us more spiritual freedom than total surrender to Him would allow. Freedom was not Paul’s motive at all. In fact, he stated, “I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren…” ([Romans 9:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+9:3)). Had Paul lost his ability to reason? Not at all! For someone who is in love, this is not an overstatement. And Paul was in love with Jesus Christ.

**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 – 2/24/21

Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of.—[EZEK. 36:37.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.36.html" \l "Ezek.36.37)

Ye have not, because ye ask not.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.—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.—Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.—Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.—Ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

[Jas. 4:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.2).[Matt. 7:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.7.html" \l "Matt.7.7). -[I John 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.14). -[Jas. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.5). -[Psa. 81:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.81.html" \l "Ps.81.10). -[Luke 18:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.18.html" \l "Luke.18.1).[Psa. 34:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.15),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.17). -[John 16:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.26),[24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.24).

“I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.” [Ezekiel 34:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.34.html" \l "Ezek.34.26)

Here is sovereign mercy—“I will give them the shower in its season.” Is it not sovereign, divine mercy?—for who can say, “I will give them showers,” except God? There is only one voice which can speak to the clouds, and bid them beget the rain. Who sendeth down the rain upon the earth? Who scattereth the showers upon the green herb? Do not I, the Lord? So grace is the gift of God, and is not to be created by man. It is also needed grace. What would the ground do without showers? You may break the clods, you may sow your seeds, but what can you do without the rain? As absolutely needful is the divine blessing. In vain you labour, until God the plenteous shower bestows, and sends salvation down. Then, it is plenteous grace. “I will send them showers.” It does not say, “I will send them drops,” but “showers.” So it is with grace. If God gives a blessing, he usually gives it in such a measure that there is not room enough to receive it. Plenteous grace! Ah! we want plenteous grace to keep us humble, to make us prayerful, to make us holy; plenteous grace to make us zealous, to preserve us through this life, and at last to land us in heaven. We cannot do without saturating showers of grace. Again, it is seasonable grace. “I will cause the shower to come down in his season.” What is thy season this morning? Is it the season of drought? Then that is the season for showers. Is it a season of great heaviness and black clouds? Then that is the season for showers. “As thy days so shall thy strength be.” And here is a varied blessing. “I will give thee showers of blessing.” The word is in the plural. All kinds of blessings God will send. All God’s blessings go together, like links in a golden chain. If he gives converting grace, he will also give comforting grace. He will send “showers of blessing.” Look up today, O parched plant, and open thy leaves and flowers for a heavenly watering.

# Word Live – 2/24/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/24/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/24/21

# Acceptable Differences

**Read:** [**Romans 14:1–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a1%e2%80%9312)

### **The Weak and the Strong**

14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

5One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

10You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-28291a)]? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. 11It is written:

“‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,  
‘every knee will bow before me;  
    every tongue will acknowledge God.’”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-28292b)]

12So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 14:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-28291) The Greek word for brother or sister (adelphos) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God’s family; also in verses 13, 15 and 21.
2. [Romans 14:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-28292) Isaiah 45:23

My father was a fan of Dixieland jazz. If I complained about it, he usually responded with the Latin phrase: De gustibus non est disputandem, which means, “In matters of taste, there can be no disputes.” While one person has a great love of jazz, another might only listen to classical music. It all depends on their personal taste.

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. Romans 14:1

The differences mentioned in today’s reading weren’t merely questions of good or bad taste. They were matters of conscience. Paul addresses specific debates having to do with food. While one person’s faith allowed them to eat everything, another would eat only vegetables (v. 2). Others disputed about the observance of sacred days (v. 5).  We don’t know the exact nature of these differences except to say that they were issues of faith and food. In Corinth, there were differences about whether Christians should eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:4). Some in the Galatian churches disagreed about the observance of sacred days. As long as these differences did not compromise the gospel, Paul counseled toleration (Rom. 14:3).

However, Paul does point out that this did not mean that every difference of opinion was merely a matter of personal taste. Some in Corinth had crossed the line by exercising their liberty in a way that caused others to violate their conscience (1 Cor. 8:9–11). Those in Galatia had probably adopted the Jewish calendar and were requiring Gentiles to observe it. Paul viewed this as a form of bondage to the law (Gal. 4:9–10). Again, it returns to acting in love, valuing others above our own personal choice.

### **Apply the Word**

How does loving our neighbor influence our tastes and preferences? If we love others, we must consider how our actions affect them. We should not look contemptuously on those who differ from us when it is a matter of personal conscience. The law of love may even require us to limit our personal freedom as an act of love (1 Cor. 8:13).

### **Pray with Us**

When the world speaks of love, it does not know the depth and power of yours. Lord, give us your love for others so that all who interact with us get a taste of you.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/24/21

# Never Alone



**Read: Ecclesiastes 4:8–12**

8There was a man all alone;   
    he had neither son nor brother.  
There was no end to his toil,  
    yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.  
“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,  
    “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”  
This too is meaningless—  
    a miserable business!

9Two are better than one,  
    because they have a good return for their labor:  
10If either of them falls down,  
    one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
    and has no one to help them up.  
11Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
    But how can one keep warm alone?  
12Though one may be overpowered,  
    two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Two are better than one . . . If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. [Ecclesiastes 4:9–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%204.9%E2%80%9310)

“It can be an affliction more harrowing than homelessness, hunger or disease,” wrote Maggie Fergusson in The Economist’s 1843 magazine. Her subject? Loneliness. Fergusson chronicled the increasing rates of loneliness, irrespective of one’s social or economic status, using heart-wrenching examples of what it feels like to be lonely.

The hurt of feeling alone isn’t new to our day. Indeed, the pain of isolation echoes off the pages of the ancient book of Ecclesiastes. Often attributed to King Solomon, the book captures the sorrow of those who seem to lack any meaningful relationships (4:7–8). The speaker lamented that it’s possible to acquire significant wealth and yet experience no value from it because there’s no one to share it with.

But the speaker also recognized the beauty of companionship, writing that friends help you accomplish more than you could achieve on your own (v. 9); companions help in times of need (v. 10); partners bring comfort (v. 11); and friends can provide protection in difficult situations (v. 12).

Loneliness is a significant struggle—God created us to offer and receive the benefits of friendship and community. If you’re feeling alone, pray that God would help you form meaningful connections with others. In the meantime, find encouragement in the reality that the believer is never truly alone because Jesus’ Spirit is always with us ([Matthew 28:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.20)).

By:  [Lisa M. Samra](https://odb.org/author/lisasamra/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How might you reach out to someone who’s lonely? How have you experienced the blessing of God’s Spirit with you when you’ve felt alone?

Heavenly Father, when I feel lonely, give me courage to reach out to others with an offer of friendship.

#### **Insight**

The book of Ecclesiastes is unique for its grappling with “existential angst,” or the meaninglessness of life. Our days are complicated and our experiences aren’t always easily understood. Ecclesiastes reflects the confusion we all experience as we wrestle with the challenges of life; therefore, it has an almost timeless appeal. It speaks to highly personal issues, such as loneliness (4:8), that are just as relevant today as when it was first composed. But even a subject as apparently simple as loneliness is not as straightforward as it appears. A few verses earlier in verse 4 the writer complained that one’s labor is a result of the jealousy of one for another, and yet in verse 8 the problem is not having anyone around. We don’t want to be alone, and yet certain relationships can bring pain and discomfort—perhaps leaving us wanting to be left alone! Ecclesiastes gives voice to the painful tensions we experience in life.

Visit [ChristianUniversity.org/OT506-11](https://ChristianUniversity.org/OT506-11) to learn more about the book of Ecclesiastes.

# God Calling – 2/24/21

# Share Everything

**Silently the work of the Spirit is done.**

Already Love is drawing others to you. Take all who come as sent by Me, and give them a royal welcome. It will surprise you, all that I have planned for you.

Welcome all who come with the love of both your hearts. You may not see the work. Today they may not need you. Tomorrow they may need you. I may send you strange visitors. Make each desire to return. Nobody must come and feel unwanted.

Share your Love, your Joy, your Happiness, your time, your food, gladly with all. Such wonders will unfold. You see it all but in bud now -- the glory of the open flower is beyond all your telling. Love, Joy, Peace, in richest abundance -- only believe. Give out Love and all you can with a glad free heart and hand. Use all you can for others, and back will come such countless stores and blessings.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,  
 and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/25/21

# The Destitution of Service



…though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. —[2 Corinthians 12:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+12%3A15)

Natural human love expects something in return. But Paul is saying, “It doesn’t really matter to me whether you love me or not. I am willing to be completely destitute anyway; willing to be poverty-stricken, not just for your sakes, but also that I may be able to get you to God.” “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor…” ([2 Corinthians 8:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+8:9)). And Paul’s idea of service was the same as our Lord’s. He did not care how high the cost was to himself— he would gladly pay it. It was a joyful thing to Paul.

The institutional church’s idea of a servant of God is not at all like Jesus Christ’s idea. His idea is that we serve Him by being the servants of others. Jesus Christ actually “out-socialized” the socialists. He said that in His kingdom the greatest one would be the servant of all (see [Matthew 23:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23:11)). The real test of a saint is not one’s willingness to preach the gospel, but one’s willingness to do something like washing the disciples’ feet— that is, being willing to do those things that seem unimportant in human estimation but count as everything to God. It was Paul’s delight to spend his life for God’s interests in other people, and he did not care what it cost. But before we will serve, we stop to ponder our personal and financial concerns— “What if God wants me to go over there? And what about my salary? What is the climate like there? Who will take care of me? A person must consider all these things.” All that is an indication that we have reservations about serving God. But the apostle Paul had no conditions or reservations. Paul focused his life on Jesus Christ’s idea of a New Testament saint; that is, not one who merely proclaims the gospel, but one who becomes broken bread and poured-out wine in the hands of Jesus Christ for the sake of others.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/25/21

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.—[JAS. 4:7.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.7)

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.—Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.—And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.—Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

[Isa. 59:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.19). -[Matt. 4:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.4.html" \l "Matt.4.10).[Eph. 6:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.10). -[Eph. 5:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.11). -[II Cor. 2:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.2.html" \l "iiCor.2.11). -[I Pet. 5:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.8). -[I John 5:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.4).[Rom. 8:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.33).

“The wrath to come.” [Matthew 3:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.3.html" \l "Matt.3.7)

It is pleasant to pass over a country after a storm has spent itself; to smell the freshness of the herbs after the rain has passed away, and to note the drops while they glisten like purest diamonds in the sunlight. That is the position of a Christian. He is going through a land where the storm has spent itself upon his Saviour’s head, and if there be a few drops of sorrow falling, they distil from clouds of mercy, and Jesus cheers him by the assurance that they are not for his destruction. But how terrible is it to witness the approach of a tempest: to note the forewarnings of the storm; to mark the birds of heaven as they droop their wings; to see the cattle as they lay their heads low in terror; to discern the face of the sky as it groweth black, and look to the sun which shineth not, and the heavens which are angry and frowning! How terrible to await the dread advance of a hurricane—such as occurs, sometimes, in the tropics—to wait in terrible apprehension till the wind shall rush forth in fury, tearing up trees from their roots, forcing rocks from their pedestals, and hurling down all the dwelling-places of man! And yet, sinner, this is your present position. No hot drops have as yet fallen, but a shower of fire is coming. No terrible winds howl around you, but God’s tempest is gathering its dread artillery. As yet the water-floods are dammed up by mercy, but the flood-gates shall soon be opened: the thunderbolts of God are yet in his storehouse, but lo! the tempest hastens, and how awful shall that moment be when God, robed in vengeance, shall march forth in fury! Where, where, where, O sinner, wilt thou hide thy head, or whither wilt thou flee? O that the hand of mercy may now lead you to Christ! He is freely set before you in the gospel: his riven side is the rock of shelter. Thou knowest thy need of him; believe in him, cast thyself upon him, and then the fury shall be overpast forever.

# Word Live – 2/25/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/25/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/25/21

# Working for Peace

**Read:** [**Romans 14:13–23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a13%e2%80%9323)

13Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

19Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

22So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a13%e2%80%9323" \l "fen-NIV-28304a" \o "See footnote a)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 14:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14%3a13%e2%80%9323#en-NIV-28304) Some manuscripts place 16:25-27 here; others after 15:33.

Cartoons often depict our conscience as a tiny angel standing on one shoulder, telling you to do good, and a miniature devil standing on the other, urging you to do the opposite. This cartoon image is right in one respect. The voice of our conscience can often feel like a whisper or a tug.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Romans 14:19

What is more, in verses 13–23, Paul shows that the conscience of some people may react sensitively to things that others find acceptable. He refers to these choices, and the effect they have on others, as a “stumbling block or obstacle” (v. 13). What should we do if our conscience has reservations? Or what if someone else believes our practice is wrong? The loving and biblical response, in either case, is sensitivity. For the person whose conscience is sensitive, the best course of action is to refrain from that action (v. 14). On the other hand, the one whose conscience is free needs to take care “not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister” (v. 13). When you make a choice to limit your freedom in order to help another, your actions are “pleasing to God” (v. 18).

It is important to note that Paul is not talking about matters where Scripture has given a clear command or principle. He also doesn’t mean that the tastes of others should automatically dictate our own. When you have a choice to make that is not clearly dictated or regulated by Scripture and is not affecting those around you, you are free to keep matters “between yourself and God” (v. 22).

### **Apply the Word**

Our actions won’t always be guided by a comprehensive list of dos and don’ts. But whatever we do, Paul urges us to consider the peace and building up of our brothers and sisters in Christ. What are some choices you make which might differ from those of other believers? What is your responsibility toward those who disagree with you?

### **Pray with Us**

Search our hearts, Father. Show us any areas where we are not obeying you and redirect us when our consciences falter. Prepare us to surrender our freedoms for the sake of others.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/25/21

# To Be Human

 **Read:** [**Matthew 23:37–24:2**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2023.37%E2%80%9324.2)

37“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23%3A37%E2%80%9324%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23958a)]”

### **The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times**

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 23:39](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23%3A37%E2%80%9324%3A2&version=NIV#en-NIV-23958) Psalm 118:26

Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. [Matthew 23:37](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2023.37)

“Mr. Singerman, why are you crying?” asked twelve-year-old Albert as he watched the master craftsman construct a wooden box.

“I cry,” he said, “because my father cried, and because my grandfather cried.” The woodworker’s answer to his young apprentice provides a tender moment in an episode of Little House on the Prairie. “Tears,” explained Mr. Singerman, “come with the making of a coffin.”

“Some men don’t cry because they fear it is a sign of weakness,” he said. “I was taught that a man is a man because he can cry.”

Emotion must have welled up in the eyes of Jesus as He compared His concern for Jerusalem to the care of a mother hen for her chicks ([Matthew 23:37](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2023.37)). His disciples were often confused by what they saw in His eyes or heard in His stories. His idea of what it meant to be strong was different. It happened again as they walked with Him from the temple. Calling His attention to the massive stone walls and magnificent decor of their place of worship (24:1), the disciples noted the strength of human accomplishment. Jesus saw a temple that would be leveled in ad 70.

Christ shows us that healthy people know when to cry and why. He cried because His Father cares and His Spirit groans for children who couldn’t yet see what breaks His heart.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what situations in your life might you be avoiding grief? How can your faith in a Savior who cries ([John 11:35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.35)) help you express your grief in a healthy way?

Father, please replace any cold illusions of strength I cling to with a growing understanding of the cares and concerns that break Your heart for children like me.

#### **Insight**

Scholars believe Jesus made the statements about the temple in [Matthew 24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2024) two days prior to His crucifixion. The temple was a source of great national pride for the Jewish people. Constructed by Herod the Great, it was twice as large as Solomon’s temple and served as the centerpiece of national faith. Not surprisingly, Jesus’ prophecy about the temple’s destruction was literally fulfilled. Josephus the historian, who was with the Romans at the temple’s destruction, has left us an eyewitness account of that event. The destruction was thorough, with only a portion of the Western Wall left standing.

At Jesus’ crucifixion, the miraculous tearing in two of the temple curtain signified the end of the system of animal sacrifice for sin ([Matthew 27:51](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.51); [Mark 15:38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2015.38); [Luke 23:45](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.45)), yet these ineffective sacrifices did continue for a time. The destruction of the temple in ad 70 put an end to the practice.

# God Calling – 2/25/21

# How To Conquer

Joy is the sovereign balm for all the ills of the world, the spirit-cure for every ailment. There is nothing that Joy and Love cannot do.

Set your standard very high. Aim at conquering a world, the world around you. Just say, "Jesus conquers" -- "Jesus saves" -- in the face of every doubt, every sin, every evil, every fear.

No evil can stand against that, for there is "none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby men can be saved." To every thought of want or lack, "Jesus saves from poverty," to every fear, "Jesus saves from fear."

Do this to every ill and it will vanish, as night when the sun arises.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Romans 8:37

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/26/21

# Our Misgivings About Jesus

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw [water] with, and the well is deep." —[John 4:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+4%3A11)

Have you ever said to yourself, “I am impressed with the wonderful truths of God’s Word, but He can’t really expect me to live up to that and work all those details into my life!” When it comes to confronting Jesus Christ on the basis of His qualities and abilities, our attitudes reflect religious superiority. We think His ideals are lofty and they impress us, but we believe He is not in touch with reality— that what He says cannot actually be done. Each of us thinks this about Jesus in one area of our life or another. These doubts or misgivings about Jesus begin as we consider questions that divert our focus away from God. While we talk of our dealings with Him, others ask us, “Where are you going to get enough money to live? How will you live and who will take care of you?” Or our misgivings begin within ourselves when we tell Jesus that our circumstances are just a little too difficult for Him. We say, “It’s easy to say, ‘Trust in the Lord,’ but a person has to live; and besides, Jesus has nothing with which to draw water— no means to be able to give us these things.” And beware of exhibiting religious deceit by saying, “Oh, I have no misgivings about Jesus, only misgivings about myself.” If we are honest, we will admit that we never have misgivings or doubts about ourselves, because we know exactly what we are capable or incapable of doing. But we do have misgivings about Jesus. And our pride is hurt even at the thought that He can do what we can’t.

My misgivings arise from the fact that I search within to find how He will do what He says. My doubts spring from the depths of my own inferiority. If I detect these misgivings in myself, I should bring them into the light and confess them openly— “Lord, I have had misgivings about You. I have not believed in Your abilities, but only my own. And I have not believed in Your almighty power apart from my finite understanding of it.”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

There is no condition of life in which we cannot abide in Jesus. We have to learn to abide in Him wherever we are placed. Our Brilliant Heritage

# CCEL – 2/26/21

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.—[LAM. 3:40.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.40)

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.—Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.—I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.—Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.—Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

[Psa. 26:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.26.html" \l "Ps.26.2). -[Psa. 51:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.6). -[Psa. 119:59,60](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.59). -[I Cor. 11:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.11.html" \l "iCor.11.28).[I John 1:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.9). -[I John 2:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.1). -[Heb. 10:19-22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.19).

“Salvation is of the Lord.” [Jonah 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jonah.2.html" \l "Jonah.2.9)

Salvation is the work of God. It is he alone who quickens the soul “dead in trespasses and sins,” and it is he also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life. He is both “Alpha and Omega.” “Salvation is of the Lord.” If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful; if I have graces, they are God’s gifts to me; if I hold on in a consistent life, it is because he upholds me with his hand. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed a spiritual enemy, the Lord’s strength nerved my arm. Do I live before men a consecrated life? It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me. Am I sanctified? I did not cleanse myself: God’s Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by God's chastisements sanctified to my good. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me. All my jewels were fashioned by heavenly art. I find in God all that I want; but I find in myself nothing but sin and misery. “He only is my rock and my salvation.” Do I feed on the Word? That Word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna but Jesus Christ himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink? Am I continually receiving fresh increase of strength? Where do I gather my might? My help cometh from heaven’s hills: without Jesus I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I, except I abide in him. What Jonah learned in the great deep, let me learn this morning in my closet: “Salvation is of the Lord.”

# Word Live – 2/26/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/26/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/26/21

# The Spirit of Unity

**Read:** [**Romans 15:1–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313)

15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. 3For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28307a)] 4For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

5May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28312b)] on behalf of God’s truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;  
    I will sing the praises of your name.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28313c)]

10Again, it says,

“Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.”[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28314d)]

11And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;  
    let all the peoples extol him.”[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28315e)]

12And again, Isaiah says,

“The Root of Jesse will spring up,  
    one who will arise to rule over the nations;  
    in him the Gentiles will hope.”[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28316f)]

13May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 15:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28307) Psalm 69:9
2. [Romans 15:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28312) Greek circumcision
3. [Romans 15:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28313) 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49
4. [Romans 15:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28314) Deut. 32:43
5. [Romans 15:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28315) Psalm 117:1
6. [Romans 15:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28316) Isaiah 11:10 (see Septuagint)

The church today is divided over many things. Race and politics, in particular, have become a flashpoint in recent days. But there are also many other, less volatile matters over which we disagree. We may have different preferences in the style of the church building, length of service, or musical instruments. Knowing how prone we are to division, it is no accident that the Bible says we need to make an effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

Today’s passage teaches the hard lesson that the burden for maintaining this peace is not equally shared: “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves” (v. 1). In this context, the weak are those whose conscience does not allow them the same freedom as the strong.

Paul’s command may seem hard to accept because it feels like an infringement on our individual rights. And...it is (v. 2)! But when God expects this of us, He is treating us no differently than He did His own Son who humbled Himself for us.

Paul did not say these things lightly. He understood the challenge and prayed that God would enable the believers in Rome to have “the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had” (v. 5). This attitude was: “Christ did not please himself” (v. 3). Paul focused on the root of their division by showing that Jesus came as a servant to both Jews and Gentiles (vv. 7–12).

### **Apply the Word**

Sometimes we make allowances for our differences but still view others with contempt. We tolerate others without truly accepting them. Such treatment is not true acceptance. Remember that Christ has not treated us this way. How should you treat those people with whom you differ? Accept one another as Christ has accepted you.

### **Pray with Us**

Forgive us for our contempt of others and teach us to respect all members of the body of Christ, even those whom we don’t understand. Draw us ever closer to you, Lord.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/26/21

# Facing Fear

 **Read:** [**Psalm 56:3–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2056.3%E2%80%9311)

3When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.  
4    In God, whose word I praise—  
in God I trust and am not afraid.  
    What can mere mortals do to me?

5All day long they twist my words;  
    all their schemes are for my ruin.  
6They conspire, they lurk,  
    they watch my steps,  
    hoping to take my life.  
7Because of their wickedness do not[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+56%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14763a)] let them escape;  
    in your anger, God, bring the nations down.

8Record my misery;  
    list my tears on your scroll[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+56%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14764b)]—  
    are they not in your record?  
9Then my enemies will turn back  
    when I call for help.  
    By this I will know that God is for me.

10In God, whose word I praise,  
    in the Lord, whose word I praise—  
11in God I trust and am not afraid.  
    What can man do to me?

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 56:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+56%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-14763) Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text does not have do not.
2. [Psalm 56:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+56%3A3%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-14764) Or misery; / put my tears in your wineskin

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. [Psalm 56:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2056.3)

Warren moved to a small town to pastor a church. After his ministry had some initial success, one of the locals turned on him. Concocting a story accusing Warren of horrendous acts, the man took the story to the local newspaper and even printed his accusations on pamphlets to distribute to local residents by mail. Warren and his wife started praying hard. If the lie was believed, their lives would be upended.

King David once experienced something similar. He faced an attack of slander by an enemy. “All day long they twist my words,” he said, “all their schemes are for my ruin” ([Psalm 56:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2056.5)). This sustained assault left him fearful and tearful (v. 8). But in the midst of the battle, he prayed this powerful prayer: “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. . . . What can mere mortals do to me?” (vv. 3–4).

David’s prayer can be a model for us today. When I am afraid—in times of fear or accusation, we turn to God. I put my trust in you—we place our battle in God’s powerful hands. What can mere mortals do to me?—facing the situation with Him, we remember how limited the powers against us really are.

The newspaper ignored the story about Warren. For some reason, the pamphlets were never distributed. What battle do you fear today? Talk to God. He’s willing to fight it with you.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What real fears do you face? How can David’s prayer help you deal with them?

Loving God, I’m afraid—and so today I put my trust in You. What can mere mortals do to me when You’re fighting for me? Thank You for the coming victory.

For help in choosing hope instead of fear, read [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0733.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0733.)

#### **Insight**

The prominent theme of [Psalm 56:3–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2056.3%E2%80%9311) is David’s trust in God when he’s afraid. In Scripture, we see God repeatedly calling His people to trust in Him and not be fearful. He urged Abram, Hagar, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Isaiah, and Daniel: “Do not be afraid” ([Genesis 15:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2015.1); [21:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%2021.17); [26:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%2026.24); [46:2-3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Genesis%2046.2-3); [Numbers 21:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2021.34); [Joshua 1:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%201.9); [Judges 6:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%206.23); [Isaiah 43:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2043.5); [Daniel 10:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%2010.12), [19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Daniel%2010.19)). And God has likewise instructed others to do the same. King David urged his son Solomon, “Do not be afraid or discouraged” ([1 Chronicles 28:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2028.20)), and King Hezekiah encouraged his followers with similar declarations ([2 Chronicles 32:6–8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2032.6%E2%80%938)). When Jesus walked the earth, He often calmed His disciples’ fears with those same words ([Matthew 10:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.28), [31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%2010.31); [14:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%2014.27); [Mark 5:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%205.36)).

# God Calling – 2/26/21

# Swift Help

There is nothing lacking in your lives because really all is yours, only you lack the faith to know it. You are like a King's daughters who sit in rags, and yet around them are stores of all they could desire.

Pray for more faith, as a thirsty man in a desert prays for rain, for water. Swift comes My help, swift and strong. Do you know what it is to feel sure that I can never fail you? As sure as you are that you still breathe? How poor his man's faith! So poor. Do you trust Me as much as you would a friend if that friend came and said he would send you help? Pray daily and most diligently that your faith may increase.

"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Luke 17:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/27/21

# The Impoverished Ministry of Jesus



Where then do You get that living water? —[John 4:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+4%3A11)

“The well is deep” — and even a great deal deeper than the Samaritan woman knew! ([John 4:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4:11)). Think of the depths of human nature and human life; think of the depth of the “wells” in you. Have you been limiting, or impoverishing, the ministry of Jesus to the point that He is unable to work in your life? Suppose that you have a deep “well” of hurt and trouble inside your heart, and Jesus comes and says to you, “Let not your heart be troubled…” ([John 14:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:1)). Would your response be to shrug your shoulders and say, “But, Lord, the well is too deep, and even You can’t draw up quietness and comfort out of it.” Actually, that is correct. Jesus doesn’t bring anything up from the wells of human nature— He brings them down from above. We limit the Holy One of Israel by remembering only what we have allowed Him to do for us in the past, and also by saying, “Of course, I cannot expect God to do this particular thing.” The thing that approaches the very limits of His power is the very thing we as disciples of Jesus ought to believe He will do. We impoverish and weaken His ministry in us the moment we forget He is almighty. The impoverishment is in us, not in Him. We will come to Jesus for Him to be our comforter or our sympathizer, but we refrain from approaching Him as our Almighty God.

The reason some of us are such poor examples of Christianity is that we have failed to recognize that Christ is almighty. We have Christian attributes and experiences, but there is no abandonment or surrender to Jesus Christ. When we get into difficult circumstances, we impoverish His ministry by saying, “Of course, He can’t do anything about this.” We struggle to reach the bottom of our own well, trying to get water for ourselves. Beware of sitting back, and saying, “It can’t be done.” You will know it can be done if you will look to Jesus. The well of your incompleteness runs deep, but make the effort to look away from yourself and to look toward Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are all based on a conception of importance, either our own importance, or the importance of someone else; Jesus tells us to go and teach based on the revelation of His importance. “All power is given unto Me.… Go ye therefore ….”  So Send I You, 1325 R

# CCEL – 2/27/21

Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—[ROM. 6:11.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.11)

He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.—I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Because I live, ye shall live also.—I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God . . . For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

[John 5:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.24). -[Gal. 2:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.19).[John 14:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.19). -[John 10:28-30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.28).[Col. 3:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.1),[3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.3).

“Thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.” [Psalm 91:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.9)

The Israelites in the wilderness were continually exposed to change. Whenever the pillar stayed its motion, the tents were pitched; but tomorrow, ere the morning sun had risen, the trumpet sounded, the ark was in motion, and the fiery, cloudy pillar was leading the way through the narrow defiles of the mountain, up the hill side, or along the arid waste of the wilderness. They had scarcely time to rest a little before they heard the sound of “Away! this is not your rest; you must still be onward journeying towards Canaan!” They were never long in one place. Even wells and palm trees could not detain them. Yet they had an abiding home in their God, his cloudy pillar was their roof-tree, and its flame by night their household fire. They must go onward from place to place, continually changing, never having time to settle, and to say, “Now we are secure; in this place we shall dwell.” “Yet,” says Moses, “though we are always changing, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place throughout all generations.” The Christian knows no change with regard to God. He may be rich today and poor to-morrow; he may be sickly today and well to-morrow; he may be in happiness today, to-morrow he may be distressed—but there is no change with regard to his relationship to God. If he loved me yesterday, he loves me today. My unmoving mansion of rest is my blessed Lord. Let prospects be blighted; let hopes be blasted; let joy be withered; let mildews destroy everything; I have lost nothing of what I have in God. He is “my strong habitation whereunto I can continually resort.” I am a pilgrim in the world, but at home in my God. In the earth I wander, but in God I dwell in a quiet habitation.

# Word Live – 2/27/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/27/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/27/21

# Joining the Struggle

**Read:** [**Romans 15:14–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3a14%e2%80%9333)

### **Paul the Minister to the Gentiles**

14I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— 19by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. 20It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. 21Rather, as it is written:

“Those who were not told about him will see,  
    and those who have not heard will understand.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A14%E2%80%9333&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28325a)]

22This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

### **Paul’s Plan to Visit Rome**

23But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, 24I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there. 26For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. 27They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. 28So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. 29I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

30I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. 31Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, 32so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed. 33The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 15:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A14%E2%80%9333&version=NIV#en-NIV-28325) Isaiah 52:15 (see Septuagint)

Missionaries often refer to those who support their work as “ministry partners.” They aren’t trying to flatter donors so they will send more money. They know that their ministry depends on the prayers and finances of others. The book of Romans is both an explanation of Christian doctrine and a prayer letter soliciting support for Paul’s ministry.

Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Romans 15:30

In the second half of chapter 15, Paul reminds the church why he has written “quite boldly on some points” (v. 15). It was not because he had a low view of the church’s understanding or its level of spiritual maturity. Paul elaborated on things they already knew, speaking frankly with these brothers and sisters in Christ because he cared for them. He also wanted the church to recognize his credentials so they would understand his calling as a minister of Jesus Christ. The apostle viewed his ministry as the “priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (v. 16).

In verses 17–22 Paul shared his vision for his future ministry but also explained his failure to visit Rome thus far. The church was established in Rome, and Paul’s strategy was to concentrate on those areas “where Christ was not known” (v. 20). He planned to go to Spain and stop off at Rome along the way. But before this, he intended to travel to Jerusalem to carry a financial contribution from the Gentile churches for the poor believers there (vv. 26–27). Paul did eventually come to Rome, but in chains (Acts 28:14–31). In 2 Timothy 4:6, the apostle seemed to anticipate his approaching martyrdom when he wrote of his “departure” and of being “poured out like a drink offering.”

### **Apply the Word**

How do you support the ministry of others? Spend a few minutes praying for your church’s leaders and the missionaries you support. Ask God to grant them the courage of Paul.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, thank you for granting each of us opportunities to participate in ministry. Strengthen and encourage those who go on the mission field and bless those who provide prayer and financial support.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/27/21

# No Longer Yourself

 **Read:** [**Galatians 2:14–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%202.14%E2%80%9321)

14When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

15“We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 16know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29098a)] Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

17“But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn’t that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

19“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29103b)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Galatians 2:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-29098) Or but through the faithfulness of … justified on the basis of the faithfulness of
2. [Galatians 2:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-29103) Some interpreters end the quotation after verse 14.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [Galatians 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%202.20)

In the summer of 1859, Monsieur Charles Blondin became the first person to cross Niagara Falls on a tightrope—something he would go on to do hundreds of times. Once he did it with his manager Harry Colcord on his back. Blondin gave Colcord these instructions: “Look up, Harry . . . you are no longer Colcord, you are Blondin. . . . If I sway, sway with me. Do not attempt to do any balancing yourself. If you do, we will both go to our death.”

Paul, in essence, said to the Galatian believers: You can’t walk the line of living a life that is pleasing to God apart from faith in Christ. But here’s the good news—you don’t have to! No amount of attempting to earn our way to God will ever cut it. So are we passive in our salvation? No! Our invitation is to cling to Christ. Clinging to Jesus means putting to death an old, independent way of living; it’s as if we ourselves have died. Yet, we go on living. But “the life [we] now live in the body, [we] live by faith in the Son of God, who loved [us] and gave himself for [us]” ([Galatians 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%202.20)).

Where are we trying to walk the tightrope today? God hasn’t called us to walk out on the rope to Him; He’s called us to cling to Him and walk this life with Him.

By:  [Glenn Packiam](https://odb.org/author/glennpackiam/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you stop trying to please God on your own? Where do you need to cling to Jesus today, trusting His righteousness?

Dear Jesus, thank You for doing for me what I could never do for myself. I turn away from trying to please You on my own. I’m so glad I don’t need to earn Your love.

#### **Insight**

The book of Galatians is significant for understanding the content of the gospel and showing us how to live in accordance with it. The word gospel is mentioned more times (twelve) in Galatians than in any other New Testament book except Romans (thirteen times). Paul’s defense of the gospel of God’s grace in and through Jesus—apart from conformity to the law, including circumcision—is the highlight of the letter. The great apostle’s godly zeal was such that his defense included challenging Cephas (Peter), one of the pillars of the early church (2:11). Paul’s boast was in Christ’s work alone (6:14).

# God Calling – 2/27/21

# Spirit Sounds

Take time for prayer. Take more time to be alone with Me. So only will you prosper.

Realize that the hearing of Spirit Sounds is more than the hearing of all earth's noises. I am with you. Let that content you, nay, more, let that fill you with rapture.

Seek sometimes not even to hear Me. Seek a silence of spirit-understanding with Me. Be not afraid. All is well. Dwell much on what I did, as well as what I said.

Remember, I "touched her hand, and the fever left her." Not many words, just a moment's contact and all fever left her. She was well, whole, calm, able to arise and "minister unto them."

My touch is still a potent healer. Just feel that touch. Since My Presence, and the fever of work and care and fear just melts into nothingness -- and health, joy, peace, take its place.

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Matthew 9:21

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/28/21

# “Do You Now Believe?”



"By this we believe…." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?" —[John 16:30-31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+16%3A30-31)

“Now we believe….” But Jesus asks, “Do you…? Indeed the hour is coming…that you…will leave Me alone” ([John 16:31-32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:31-32)). Many Christian workers have left Jesus Christ alone and yet tried to serve Him out of a sense of duty, or because they sense a need as a result of their own discernment. The reason for this is actually the absence of the resurrection life of Jesus. Our soul has gotten out of intimate contact with God by leaning on our own religious understanding (see [Proverbs 3:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+3:5-6)). This is not deliberate sin and there is no punishment attached to it. But once a person realizes how he has hindered his understanding of Jesus Christ, and caused uncertainties, sorrows, and difficulties for himself, it is with shame and remorse that he has to return.

We need to rely on the resurrection life of Jesus on a much deeper level than we do now. We should get in the habit of continually seeking His counsel on everything, instead of making our own commonsense decisions and then asking Him to bless them. He cannot bless them; it is not in His realm to do so, and those decisions are severed from reality. If we do something simply out of a sense of duty, we are trying to live up to a standard that competes with Jesus Christ. We become a prideful, arrogant person, thinking we know what to do in every situation. We have put our sense of duty on the throne of our life, instead of enthroning the resurrection life of Jesus. We are not told to “walk in the light” of our conscience or in the light of a sense of duty, but to “walk in the light as He is in the light…” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). When we do something out of a sense of duty, it is easy to explain the reasons for our actions to others. But when we do something out of obedience to the Lord, there can be no other explanation— just obedience. That is why a saint can be so easily ridiculed and misunderstood.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great word of Jesus to His disciples is Abandon. When God has brought us into the relationship of disciples, we have to venture on His word; trust entirely to Him and watch that when He brings us to the venture, we take it.  
Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

# CCEL – 2/28/21

**God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**—[JOHN 3:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.16)

God . . . hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

[II Cor. 5:18-21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.18). -[I John 4:8-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.8).

“My expectation is from him.” [Psalm 62:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.62.html" \l "Ps.62.5)

It is the believer’s privilege to use this language. If he is looking for aught from the world, it is a poor “expectation” indeed. But if he looks to God for the supply of his wants, whether in temporal or spiritual blessings, his “expectation” will not be a vain one. Constantly he may draw from the bank of faith, and get his need supplied out of the riches of God’s lovingkindness. This I know, I had rather have God for my banker than all the Rothschilds. My Lord never fails to honour his promises; and when we bring them to his throne, he never sends them back unanswered. Therefore I will wait only at his door, for he ever opens it with the hand of munificent grace. At this hour I will try him anew. But we have “expectations” beyond this life. We shall die soon; and then our “expectation is from him.” Do we not expect that when we lie upon the bed of sickness he will send angels to carry us to his bosom? We believe that when the pulse is faint, and the heart heaves heavily, some angelic messenger shall stand and look with loving eyes upon us, and whisper, “Sister spirit, come away!” As we approach the heavenly gate, we expect to hear the welcome invitation, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” We are expecting harps of gold and crowns of glory; we are hoping soon to be amongst the multitude of shining ones before the throne; we are looking forward and longing for the time when we shall be like our glorious Lord—for “We shall see him as he is.” Then if these be thine “expectations,” O my soul, live for God; live with the desire and resolve to glorify him from whom cometh all thy supplies, and of whose grace in thy election, redemption, and calling, it is that thou hast any “expectation” of coming glory.

# Word Live – 2/28/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/28/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/28/21

# Many Hands

**Read:** [**Romans 16:1–26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326)

### **Personal Greetings**

16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-28338a)][[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326" \l "fen-NIV-28338b" \o "See footnote b)] of the church in Cenchreae. 2I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

3Greet Priscilla[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-28340c)] and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

5Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

6Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

7Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-28344d)] the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

8Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

9Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

10Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

11Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

12Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

13Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

14Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them.

15Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord’s people who are with them.

16Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

17I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

20The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

22I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city’s director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. [24] [[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-28361e)]

25Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#fen-NIV-28363f)] faith—

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 16:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28338) Or servant
2. [Romans 16:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28338) The word deacon refers here to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12.
3. [Romans 16:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28340) Greek Prisca, a variant of Priscilla
4. [Romans 16:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28344) Or are esteemed by
5. [Romans 16:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28361) Some manuscripts include here May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.
6. [Romans 16:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+16%3a1%e2%80%9326#en-NIV-28363) Or that is

When I was a pastor, our church hosted Vacation Bible School every summer. Planning began months before the event with the same announcement every year: “Many hands make light work.” Paul would have liked this announcement because he was not a lone ranger in his ministry. One reason for his effectiveness was that he relied on the help of many hands.

Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way. Romans 16:17

Paul ends this significant letter with the introduction of Phoebe (vv. 1–2), a host of personal greetings, and a closing benediction. One striking feature of this chapter is the number of people that Paul knew in a church he had not yet visited. One reason was the church’s location. Rome was the most important city in Paul’s day. It is not surprising that it would attract many believers. But the number of people in Paul’s list also shows how important relationships were to the success of his ministry.

The apostle does more than simply list the names of those he greets. In the majority of instances, he adds a personal note. He describes the worthy attributes of Phoebe who has been a significant help and support (v. 2). Priscilla and Aquila had risked their lives for Paul (v. 3). Epenetus was Paul’s first convert in Asia (v. 5). Mary worked “very hard” for the believers in Rome (v. 6). Andronicus and Junia are praised as “outstanding” (v. 7). Ampliatus was Paul’s “dear friend” (v. 8). Urbanus was his co-worker and Stachys, his dear friend (v. 9). He praises Apelles for his fidelity to Christ (v. 10). He greets so many more, it reads like a reunion! He finishes with a beautiful doxology—words of praise to God whose strong hand works through the many hands that make Paul’s ministry possible (vv. 25–27).

### **Apply the Word**

As we conclude Paul’s letter to the Romans, consider who you would thank for contributing to your Christian life. Make a brief list of individuals who have played a significant role in your journey. Use that list to pray for them and perhaps, one by one, you can send them a note of thanks.

### **Pray with Us**

As we conclude Paul’s letter to the Romans, consider who you would thank for contributing to your Christian life. Make a brief list of individuals who have played a significant role in your journey. Use that list to pray for them and perhaps, one by one, you can send them a note of thanks.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/28/21

# New Every Morning

 **Read:** [**Lamentations 3:19–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.19%E2%80%9326)

19I remember my affliction and my wandering,  
    the bitterness and the gall.  
20I well remember them,  
    and my soul is downcast within me.  
21Yet this I call to mind  
    and therefore I have hope:

22Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,  
    for his compassions never fail.  
23They are new every morning;  
    great is your faithfulness.  
24I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion;  
    therefore I will wait for him.”

25The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,  
    to the one who seeks him;  
26it is good to wait quietly  
    for the salvation of the Lord.

[God’s] compassions never fail. They are new every morning. [Lamentations 3:22–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.22%E2%80%9323)

My brother Paul grew up battling severe epilepsy, and when he entered his teenage years it became even worse. Nighttime was excruciating for him and my parents, as he’d experience continuous seizures for often more than six hours at a time. Doctors couldn’t find a treatment that would alleviate the symptoms while also keeping him conscious for at least part of the day. My parents cried out in prayer: “God, oh God, help us!”

Although their emotions were battered and their bodies exhausted, Paul and my parents received enough strength from God for each new day. In addition, my parents found comfort in the words of the Bible, including the book of Lamentations. Here Jeremiah voiced his grief over the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, remembering “the bitterness and the gall” (3:19). Yet Jeremiah didn’t lose hope. He called to mind the mercies of God, that His compassions “are new every morning” (v. 23). So too did my parents.

Whatever you’re facing, know that God is faithful every morning. He renews our strength day by day and gives us hope. And sometimes, as with my family, He brings relief. After several years, a new medication became available that stopped Paul’s continuous nighttime seizures, giving my family restorative sleep and hope for the future.

When our souls are downcast within us (v. 20), may we call to mind the promises of God that His mercies are new every morning.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has God sustained you through the trials you’ve faced? How could you support someone who’s enduring a challenging time?

God, Your love will never leave me. When I feel spent and without hope, remind me of Your mercies and compassion.

#### **Insight**

The writer of Lamentations isn’t named, but there are reasons to believe that Jeremiah wrote this book. Having prophesied for some forty-seven years (627–580 bc) to a disobedient, disbelieving Judah, Jeremiah writes as an eyewitness, lamenting the destruction and devastation of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian army. For two years (588–586 bc), Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. [Second Kings 25:1–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%2025.1%E2%80%934) tells of the desperate conditions within the besieged city. Jeremiah witnessed the eventual destruction of the city and temple ([Jeremiah 52:12–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2052.12%E2%80%9327)). In Lamentations, in five emotionally charged dirges or funeral laments, the prophet describes the sufferings of the people and the reasons for them. But he also writes of their hope in the midst of despair. God, who rightly judged their unfaithfulness, is still the God of hope, compassion, faithfulness, and salvation ([Lamentations 3:21–33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.21%E2%80%9333)).

# God Calling – 2/28/21

# Perfect Work

Spend more time alone with Me.

A strength and a Joy come from such times that will add much to your friendship, and much to your work.

Times of prayer are times of growth. Cut those times short and many well-filled hours of work may be profitless. Heaven's values are so different from the values of earth.

Remember that from the point of view of the Great Worker, one poor tool, working all the time, but doing bad work, is of small value compared with the sharp, keen, perfect instrument, used only a short time, but which turns out perfect work.

**UPHILL**

Does the road wind uphill all the way?

Yes, to the very end,

Will the journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

 -- C. G. Rossetti

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark 1:35

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/1/21

# The Piercing Question



Do you love Me? —[John 21:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+21%3A17)

Peter’s response to this piercing question is considerably different from the bold defiance he exhibited only a few days before when he declared, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” ([Matthew 26:35](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26:35); also see [Matthew 26:33-34](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26:33-34)). Our natural individuality, or our natural self, boldly speaks out and declares its feelings. But the true love within our inner spiritual self can be discovered only by experiencing the hurt of this question of Jesus Christ. Peter loved Jesus in the way any natural man loves a good person. Yet that is nothing but emotional love. It may reach deeply into our natural self, but it never penetrates to the spirit of a person. True love never simply declares itself. Jesus said, “Whoever confesses Me before men [that is, confesses his love by everything he does, not merely by his words], him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God” ([Luke 12:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+12:8)).

Unless we are experiencing the hurt of facing every deception about ourselves, we have hindered the work of the Word of God in our lives. The Word of God inflicts hurt on us more than sin ever could, because sin dulls our senses. But this question of the Lord intensifies our sensitivities to the point that this hurt produced by Jesus is the most exquisite pain conceivable. It hurts not only on the natural level, but also on the deeper spiritual level. “For the Word of God is living and powerful…, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit…”— to the point that no deception can remain (Hebrews 4:12). When the Lord asks us this question, it is impossible to think and respond properly, because when the Lord speaks directly to us, the pain is too intense. It causes such a tremendous hurt that any part of our life which may be out of line with His will can feel the pain. There is never any mistaking the pain of the Lord’s Word by His children, but the moment that pain is felt is the very moment at which God reveals His truth to us.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is impossible to read too much, but always keep before you why you read. Remember that “the need to receive, recognize, and rely on the Holy Spirit” is before all else. Approved Unto God, 11 L

# CCEL – 3/1/21

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

God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—Unto you . . . which believe he is precious.—We love him, because he first loved us.—The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.—This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.—Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.—Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

[I John 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.16). -[Rom. 5:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.5). -[I Pet. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.7). -[I John 4:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.19). -[II Cor. 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14).[I Thes. 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.9). -[John 15:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.12). -[I Pet. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.8). -[Eph. 5:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.2).

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” [Song of Solomon 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.16)

Anything is better than the dead calm of indifference. Our souls may wisely desire the north wind of trouble if that alone can be sanctified to the drawing forth of the perfume of our graces. So long as it cannot be said, “The Lord was not in the wind,” we will not shrink from the most wintry blast that ever blew upon plants of grace. Did not the spouse in this verse humbly submit herself to the reproofs of her Beloved; only entreating him to send forth his grace in some form, and making no stipulation as to the peculiar manner in which it should come? Did she not, like ourselves, become so utterly weary of deadness and unholy calm that she sighed for any visitation which would brace her to action? Yet she desires the warm south wind of comfort, too, the smiles of divine love, the joy of the Redeemer’s presence; these are often mightily effectual to arouse our sluggish life. She desires either one or the other, or both; so that she may but be able to delight her Beloved with the spices of her garden. She cannot endure to be unprofitable, nor can we. How cheering a thought that Jesus can find comfort in our poor feeble graces. Can it be? It seems far too good to be true. Well may we court trial or even death itself if we shall thereby be aided to make glad Immanuel’s heart. O that our heart were crushed to atoms if only by such bruising our sweet Lord Jesus could be glorified. Graces unexercised are as sweet perfumes slumbering in the cups of the flowers: the wisdom of the great Husbandman overrules diverse and opposite causes to produce the one desired result, and makes both affliction and consolation draw forth the grateful odours of faith, love, patience, hope, resignation, joy, and the other fair flowers of the garden. May we know by sweet experience, what this means.

# Word Live – 3/1/21

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

# Scripture Union –3/1/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/1/21

# https://www.todayintheword.org/siteassets/header-images/2021/03/titw_march_mobile_1200x630.jpgEve - In His Image

**Read:** [**Genesis 1:26–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3a26%e2%80%9331+)

26Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3a26%e2%80%9331+" \l "fen-NIV-26a" \o "See footnote a)] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27So God created mankind in his own image,  
    in the image of God he created them;  
    male and female he created them.

28God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 1:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3a26%e2%80%9331+#en-NIV-26) Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text the earth

Most of us ask the question “Who am I?” at some point in our lives—often in seasons of crisis or change. This question contains just three simple words, but it’s a surprisingly complicated mix of identity and purpose, belonging, and autonomy. The answer to this question can drive our decisions about the future and, simultaneously, force us to face our past.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

Genesis 1 is full of vital answers to this universal inquiry: 1) We are created by God—male and female—in His image and likeness (v. 27); 2) We are given dominion over all of creation (v. 28); 3) We are blessed by God and instructed to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it (v. 28); and 4) We are pronounced by God—along with the rest of His creation—to be “very good” (v. 31).

Really, numbers 2–4 are the outworking of that all-important number 1. Our primary point of identity—as a man or as a woman—is as an image-bearer of God. We exist to reveal and reflect His likeness for all the world to see. There is no greater truth that highlights our worth and our value. It follows, then, that a main way in which we “image” God is by ruling over the earth. We are stewards of His kingdom and caretakers of His creation.

Genesis 5:1–3 uses the same word for “image” to describe how Seth bore the likeness of his father Adam (v. 3). Just as Seth grew in the image of Adam, and just as Jesus grew in wisdom and stature—in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52)—so, too, we are created to grow in our likeness of God.

### **Apply the Word**

As we begin our study of the women of the Old Testament, think about these questions: Since “image-bearer of God” and “caretaker of creation” are key aspects of your identity, do you need to change the ways you think and act? Are there any ways in which you might act differently toward someone else since they also share that identity?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, as we live and work with those around us, remind us of our shared identity as your image-bearers, so we may treat all people with value and respect.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/1/21

# Never Give Up

 **Read:** [**Joshua 1:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%201.1%E2%80%939)

### **Joshua Installed as Leader**

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: 2“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. 3I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips. [Joshua 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%201.8)

“Time went by. War came in.” That’s how Bishop Semi Nigo of the Keliko people of South Sudan described delays in his church’s long struggle to get the Bible in their own language. Not one word, in fact, had ever been printed in the Keliko language. Decades earlier, Bishop Nigo’s grandfather had courageously started a Bible translation project, but war and unrest kept halting the effort. Yet, despite repeated attacks on their refugee camps in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the bishop and fellow believers kept the project alive.

Their persistence paid off. After nearly three decades, the New Testament Bible in Keliko was delivered to the refugees in a rousing celebration. “The motivation of the Keliko is beyond words,” said one project consultant.

The commitment of the Keliko reflects the perseverance God asked of Joshua. As God told him, “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” ([Joshua 1:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%201.8)). With equal persistence, the Keliko pursued the translation of Scripture. Now, “when you see them in the camps, they are smiling,” said one translator. Hearing and understanding the Bible “gives them hope.” Like the Keliko people, may we never give up seeking the power and wisdom of Scripture.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What will help you persist in reading Scripture? How could another person help you better understand it?

Loving God, stir up in me a greater hunger to seek, study, and know the Bible, never giving up my quest to understand Your wisdom.

To learn more about how to study the Bible, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/SF106.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/SF106.)

#### **Insight**

We have limited background information about Joshua the son of Nun, but he was clearly a man who trusted God. Joshua is first referenced in [Exodus 17:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2017.9), when Moses instructed him to lead Israel’s troops into battle against the Amalekites. In [Exodus 24:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2024.13), Joshua is portrayed as Moses’ assistant and companion. When the time came to explore the promised land, Joshua was among the men sent for that purpose ([Numbers 13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2013%E2%80%9314)). Most significantly, it was Joshua whom God selected to replace Moses and lead the people of Israel into the promised land ([Deuteronomy 3:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%203.28)).

# God Calling – 3/1/21

# Shower Love



I always hear your cry. No sound escapes Me.

Many, many in the world cry to Me, but oh! how few wait to hear Me speak to them and yet to the soul, My speaking to it matters so much.

My words are Life. Think then, to hear Me speak is to find Life, and healing and strength. Trust Me in all things. Love showered on all brings truly a quick return.

Just carry out My wishes and leave Me to carry out yours. Treat Me as Savior and King, but also with the tender intimacy of One much beloved.

Keep to the rules I have laid down for you, persistently, perseveringly, lovingly, patiently, hopefully, and in faith, and every mountain of difficulty shall be laid low, the rough places of poverty shall be made smooth, and all who know you shall know that I, your Lord, am the Lord.

Shower love.

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth." - Psalm 34:17