# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/2/21

# The Constraint Of The Call



Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! — [1 Corinthians 9:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+9%3A16)

Beware of stopping your ears to the call of God. Everyone who is saved is called to testify to the fact; but that is not the call to preach, it is merely an illustration in preaching. Paul is referring to the pangs produced in him by the constraint to preach the Gospel. Never apply what Paul says in this connection to souls coming in contact with God for salvation. There is nothing easier than getting saved because it is God’s sovereign work – Come unto Me and I will save you. Our Lord never lays down the conditions of discipleship as the conditions of salvation. We are condemned to salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Discipleship has an option with it – “IF any man. . . “

Paul’s words have to do with being made a servant of Jesus Christ, and our permission is never asked as to what we will do or where we will go. God makes us broken bread and poured-out wine to please Himself. To be "separated unto the gospel" means to hear the call of God; and when a man begins to overhear that call, then begins agony that is worthy of the name. Every ambition is nipped in the bud, every desire of life quenched, every outlook completely extinguished and blotted out, saving one thing only – "separated unto the gospel." Woe be to the soul who tries to put his foot in any other direction when once that call has come to him. This College exists for you, and you – to see whether God has a man or woman here who cares about proclaiming His Gospel; to see whether God grips you. And beware of competitors when God does grip you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Our danger is to water down God’s word to suit ourselves. God never fits His word to suit me; He fits me to suit His word. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 2/2/21

**Oh that thou wouldest keep me from evil.**—[I CHR. 4:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.4.html#iChr.4.10)

Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.—I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.—He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.—The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

[Luke 22:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html#Luke.22.46). -[Matt. 26:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html#Matt.26.41).[Prov. 30:7-9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.30.html#Prov.30.7).[Psa. 121:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.121.html#Ps.121.7). -[Jer. 15:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.15.html#Jer.15.21). -[I John 5:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html#iJohn.5.18).[Rev. 3:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html#Rev.3.10). -[II Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.2.html#iiPet.2.9).

“Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” [Hebrews 9:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html#Heb.9.22)

This is the voice of unalterable truth. In none of the Jewish ceremonies were sins, even typically, removed without blood-shedding. In no case, by no means can sin be pardoned without atonement. It is clear, then, that there is no hope for me out of Christ; for there is no other blood-shedding which is worth a thought as an atonement for sin. Am I, then, believing in him? Is the blood of his atonement truly applied to my soul? All men are on a level as to their need of him. If we be never so moral, generous, amiable, or patriotic, the rule will not be altered to make an exception for us. Sin will yield to nothing less potent than the blood of him whom God hath set forth as a propitiation. What a blessing that there is the one way of pardon! Why should we seek another?

Persons of merely formal religion cannot understand how we can rejoice that all our sins are forgiven us for Christ’s sake. Their works, and prayers, and ceremonies, give them very poor comfort; and well may they be uneasy, for they are neglecting the one great salvation, and endeavouring to get remission without blood. My soul, sit down, and behold the justice of God as bound to punish sin; see that punishment all executed upon thy Lord Jesus, and fall down in humble joy, and kiss the dear feet of him whose blood has made atonement for thee. It is in vain when conscience is aroused to fly to feelings and evidences for comfort: this is a habit which we learned in the Egypt of our legal bondage. The only restorative for a guilty conscience is a sight of Jesus suffering on the cross. “The blood is the life thereof,” says the Levitical law, and let us rest assured that it is the life of faith and joy and every other holy grace.

“Oh! how sweet to view the flowing

Of my Saviour’s precious blood;

With divine assurance knowing

He has made my peace with God.”

# Word Live – 2/2/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/2/21

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# Today in the Word – 2/2/21

# Sin's Downward Spiral

**Read:** [**Romans 1:18–32**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a18%e2%80%9332)

### **God’s Wrath Against Sinful Humanity**

18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

One of the most famous sermons preached by 18th-century pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards was titled “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Edwards said that the sermon was “attended with many impressions upon the hearers.” Some, who felt convicted of their sin, cried out in fear. Others wept with joy over their salvation.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven. Romans 1:18

In today’s world, we hardly hear about God’s wrath. Yet Paul’s words make it clear that such a thing is very real. Paul explains its basis and the form it takes. God’s wrath is revealed because humanity suppresses what God has revealed about Himself. All people are accountable for this revelation because “God has made it plain to them” (v. 19). However, God does not express His wrath by flying into an emotional rage and showering the wicked with thunderbolts. Instead, He allows sinful humanity to go their way (v. 24). In other words, when sin entered the world through Adam, it produced a downward spiral of disobedience and distortion of truth.

The Bible’s language of divine wrath reminds us what it is like to be in an oppositional relationship with God. We all know how it feels to be the focus of someone’s displeasure or to experience rejection. The emphasis is not on God’s emotional state so much as it is on our position. Sin makes us God’s enemies. He is opposed to us because we are opposed to Him. Unrighteousness always places us at cross purposes with God so that we cannot be in harmony with Him.

**Apply the Word**

Have you ever considered that the worst thing that could happen to you might be for God to let you have your way? C. S. Lewis observed, “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”

### **Pray with Us**

Almighty God, we praise you for delivering us from slavery to our own desires. We ask that you sanctify our desires and align them to yours so we can sincerely pray, “Thy will be done.”

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/2/21

# Pruned to Thrive

 **Read:** [**John 15:1–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.1%E2%80%9312)

### **The Vine and the Branches**

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26702a)] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 15:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-26702) The Greek for he prunes also means he cleans.

Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. [John 15:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.2)

As I watched a bumblebee land lightly on the Russian sage, I marveled at the bush’s lush branches exploding with color. Its brilliant blue blossoms attracted eyes and bees alike. Yet only last fall, I’d wondered if it would ever blossom again. When my wife’s parents trimmed the periwinkle plant down to a stub, I’d assumed they’d decided to get rid of it. But now I was witnessing the radiant result of pruning that had seemed brutal to me.

The surprising beauty that results from harsh cuts may be one of the reasons Jesus chose pruning imagery to describe God’s work among believers. In [John 15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015), He says, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. . . . Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful” (vv. 1–2).

Jesus’ words remind us that in the good times and bad, God is always working in us toward spiritual renewal and fruitfulness (v. 5). During “pruning” seasons of suffering or emotional barrenness, we may wonder if we’ll ever thrive again. But Christ encourages us to continue to stick close to Him: “No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me” (v. 4).

As we continually draw spiritual nourishment from Jesus, the resulting beauty and fruitfulness in our lives (v. 8) will show the world God’s goodness.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How have you seen God use struggle in your life to produce growth and fruitfulness? How do you think time gives us the perspective to see God’s hand at work in our lives?

Father, help me to trust You during difficult seasons in my life, knowing that You’re at work to bring beauty and change.

For help in strengthening your faith, read [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0747.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0747.)

#### **Insight**

Jesus delivered the teaching found in [John 15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015) not long before His trial and crucifixion—His last opportunity to warn the disciples not to be like Judas but to be steadfast in their faith and to bear fruit. The fertility of the vine (a common plant in Israel at that time) naturally suggested spiritual fruit-bearing. This illustration was not new to those familiar with the Old Testament ([Psalm 80:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2080.8); [128:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20128.3); [Isaiah 5:1–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%205.1%E2%80%937)). The main emphasis of [John 15:1–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.1%E2%80%9317)—as evidenced by the word’s repetition eleven times—is the message to “remain” in Him: “If you remain in me . . . you will bear much fruit” (v. 5).

# God Calling – 2/2/21

# Practice Love

Watch over and protect us.

Want of Love will block the way. You must love all. Those that fret you and those who do not.

Practice Love. It is a great lesson, and you have a great Teacher. You must love, how otherwise can you dwell in Me, when nothing unloving can come? Practice this and I will bless you exceedingly, above all you cannot only ask, but imagine.

No limit to My Power. Do all you can and leave to Me the rest. Peace will come, and Trust. Fear not, I am your Advocate, your Mediator.

"And this is his commandment... love one another, as he gave us commandment." 1 John 3:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/3/21

# Becoming the “Filth of the World”



We have been made as the filth of the world… —[1 Corinthians 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+4%3A13)

These words are not an exaggeration. The only reason they may not be true of us who call ourselves ministers of the gospel is not that Paul forgot or misunderstood the exact truth of them, but that we are too cautious and concerned about our own desires to allow ourselves to become the refuse or “filth of the world.” “Fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ…” ([Colossians 1:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1:24)) is not the result of the holiness of sanctification, but the evidence of consecration— being “separated to the gospel of God…” ([Romans 1:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1:1)).

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you…” (1 Peter 4:12). If we do think the things we encounter are strange, it is because we are fearful and cowardly. We pay such close attention to our own interests and desires that we stay out of the mire and say, “I won’t submit; I won’t bow or bend.” And you don’t have to— you can be saved by the “skin of your teeth” if you like. You can refuse to let God count you as one who is “separated to the gospel….” Or you can say, “I don’t care if I am treated like ‘the filth of the world’ as long as the gospel is proclaimed.” A true servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to experience martyrdom for the reality of the gospel of God. When a moral person is confronted with contempt, immorality, disloyalty, or dishonesty, he is so repulsed by the offense that he turns away and in despair closes his heart to the offender. But the miracle of the redemptive reality of God is that the worst and the vilest offender can never exhaust the depths of His love. Paul did not say that God separated him to show what a wonderful man He could make of him, but “to reveal His Son in me…” ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The main characteristic which is the proof of the indwelling Spirit is an amazing tenderness in personal dealing, and a blazing truthfulness with regard to God’s Word. Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 2/3/21

**Be strong, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.**—[HAG. 2:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hag.2.html" \l "Hag.2.4)

I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.—I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Thus said the Lord of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets.—Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.—The Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might.

If God be for us, who can be against us?—Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[John 15:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.5). -[Phi. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.13). -[Eph. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.10). -[Neh. 8:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.8.html" \l "Neh.8.10).[Zech. 8:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.8.html" \l "Zech.8.9). -[Isa. 35:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.35.html" \l "Isa.35.3). -[Judg. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Judg.6.html" \l "Judg.6.14).[Rom. 8:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.31). -[II Cor. 4:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.1).[Gal. 6:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.9). -[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57).

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors.” [Romans 8:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.12)

As God’s creatures, we are all debtors to him: to obey him with all our body, and soul, and strength. Having broken his commandments, as we all have, we are debtors to his justice, and we owe to him a vast amount which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian it can be said that he does not owe God’s justice anything, for Christ has paid the debt his people owed; for this reason the believer owes the more to love. I am a debtor to God’s grace and forgiving mercy; but I am no debtor to his justice, for he will never accuse me of a debt already paid. Christ said, “It is finished!” and by that he meant, that whatever his people owed was wiped away forever from the book of remembrance. Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied divine justice; the account is settled; the handwriting is nailed to the cross; the receipt is given, and we are debtors to God’s justice no longer. But then, because we are not debtors to our Lord in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we should have been otherwise. Christian, pause and ponder for a moment. What a debtor thou art to divine sovereignty! How much thou owest to his disinterested love, for he gave his own Son that he might die for thee. Consider how much you owe to his forgiving grace, that after ten thousand affronts he loves you as infinitely as ever. Consider what you owe to his power; how he has raised you from your death in sin; how he has preserved your spiritual life; how he has kept you from falling; and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been able to hold on your way. Consider what you owe to his immutability. Though you have changed a thousand times, he has not changed once. Thou art as deep in debt as thou canst be to every attribute of God. To God thou owest thyself, and all thou hast—yield thyself as a living sacrifice, it is but thy reasonable service.

# Word Live – 2/3/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/3/21

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# Today in the Word – 2/3/21

# Moral Sinners

**Read:** [**Romans 2:1–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a1%e2%80%9316)

### **God’s Righteous Judgment**

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? 4Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

5But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6God “will repay each person according to what they have done.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a1%e2%80%9316#fen-NIV-27969a)] 7To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11For God does not show favoritism.

12All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) 16This will take place on the day when God judges people’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 2:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a1%e2%80%9316#en-NIV-27969) Psalm 62:12; Prov. 24:12

After the Pharisees condemned Jesus for healing a blind man on the Sabbath, He told them, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” Some who heard Him say this replied, “What? Are we blind too?” Jesus answered, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains” (John 9:39–41).

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else. Romans 2:1

No sinner is as hard to reach as a moral sinner. That is the kind of person Paul has in mind in today’s passage. In particular, he takes aim at the pious Jew who believed that it was possible to become righteous by faithfully keeping the Old Testament law. They would have rightly condemned the kinds of behavior Paul described in the previous chapter. Their mistake was that they did not think that, because they obeyed the letter of the law, they were candidates for God’s judgment. When they passed judgment on others, they condemned themselves (v. 1). The solution was not to ignore sin but to acknowledge the truth about themselves.

It is not just hypocrisy that Paul condemns in these verses but also the unrealistic view they have of themselves. They were right to agree with God’s standard. They were wrong to think they had met it. Those who possessed God’s law were not any more successful in their attempts to keep it than the Gentiles who dismissed God’s moral standard.

**Apply the Word**

The apostle describes the stark outcome in verse 12: “All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.” Paul’s point is clear. Those who sin without the law will perish. Those who have the law will be judged by it and prove that they have fallen short of its standard.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s passage is a humbling reminder that our hope is not in our own righteousness, but in being joined with our righteous Savior. Father, thank you for sending your Son to fulfill the requirements of the law on our behalf.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/3/21

# Waiting for a Blessing

 **Read:** [**Habakkuk 1:12–2:4**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hab%201.12%E2%80%932.4)

### **Habakkuk’s Second Complaint**

12Lord, are you not from everlasting?  
    My God, my Holy One, you[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22744a)] will never die.  
You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment;  
    you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.  
13Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;  
    you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.  
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?  
    Why are you silent while the wicked  
    swallow up those more righteous than themselves?  
14You have made people like the fish in the sea,  
    like the sea creatures that have no ruler.  
15The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks,  
    he catches them in his net,  
he gathers them up in his dragnet;  
    and so he rejoices and is glad.  
16Therefore he sacrifices to his net  
    and burns incense to his dragnet,  
for by his net he lives in luxury  
    and enjoys the choicest food.  
17Is he to keep on emptying his net,  
    destroying nations without mercy?

2 I will stand at my watch  
    and station myself on the ramparts;  
I will look to see what he will say to me,  
    and what answer I am to give to this complaint.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22750b)]

### The Lord’s Answer

2Then the Lord replied:

“Write down the revelation  
    and make it plain on tablets  
    so that a herald[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22751c)] may run with it.  
3For the revelation awaits an appointed time;  
    it speaks of the end  
    and will not prove false.  
Though it linger, wait for it;  
    it[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22752d)] will certainly come  
    and will not delay.

4“See, the enemy is puffed up;  
    his desires are not upright—  
    but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22753e)]—

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Habakkuk 1:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#en-NIV-22744) An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition; Masoretic Text we
2. [Habakkuk 2:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#en-NIV-22750) Or and what to answer when I am rebuked
3. [Habakkuk 2:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#en-NIV-22751) Or so that whoever reads it
4. [Habakkuk 2:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#en-NIV-22752) Or Though he linger, wait for him; / he
5. [Habakkuk 2:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A12%E2%80%932%3A4&version=NIV#en-NIV-22753) Or faith

Though it linger, wait for it. [Habakkuk 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hab%202.3)

A popular restaurant in Bangkok serves soup from a broth that has been cooking for forty-five years and is replenished a bit each day. The practice, called “perpetual stew,” dates back to medieval times. Just as some “leftovers” taste better a few days later, the extended cooking time blends and creates unique flavors. The restaurant has won multiple awards for the most delicious broth in Thailand.

Good things often take time, but our human nature struggles with patience. The question “How long?” occurs throughout the Bible. One poignant example is from the prophet Habakkuk, who begins his book by asking, “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?” ([Habakkuk 1:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hab%201.2)). Habakkuk (whose name means “grappler”) prophesied God’s judgment on his country (Judah) through the invasion of the ruthless Babylonian Empire, and he wrestled with how God could allow corrupt people to prosper as they exploited others. But God promised hope and restoration in His own time: “For the revelation [of God’s help] awaits an appointed time . . . . Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay” (2:3).

The Babylonian captivity lasted seventy years. By human reckoning that’s a long time, but God is always faithful and true to His Word.

Some of God’s best blessings may be long in coming. Though they linger, keep looking to Him! He prepares every blessing with perfect wisdom and care—and He’s always worth waiting for.

By:  [James Banks](https://odb.org/author/jamesbanks/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What blessings are you waiting for from God? How do you plan to worship Him regardless of when blessings come?

Abba, Father, thank You for Your kindness and faithfulness in every season and blessing of life. Help me to look forward to You most of all.

#### **Insight**

The prophecy of Habakkuk is more than 2,600 years old, yet the prophet spoke for us all when he asked God, “Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?” (1:3). Habakkuk realized the people of Judah must be judged for rejecting God, but the Babylonians, who inflicted the judgment, were even worse. How could God use them? God sees all evil and will judge it. He called Babylon “guilty people, whose own strength is their god” (v. 11). God reminded His people that “the righteous person will live by his faithfulness” (2:4). To turn away from this life-affirming choice will lead to despair.

# God Calling – 2/3/21

# If Man Oppose

Only believe. The walls of Jericho fell down. Was it axes or human implements that brought them down? Rather the Songs of Praise of the people and My Thought carried out in action.

All walls shall fall before you, too. There is no earth-power. It falls like a house of paper, at My miracle-working touch. Your faith and My power -- the only to essentials. Nothing else is needed.

So, if Man's petty opposition still holds good it is only because I choose to let it stand between you and what would be a mistake for you. If not -- a word -- a thought -- from Me, and it is gone. The hearts of Kings are in My rule and governance. All men can be moved at My wish.

Rest in this certainty. Rely on Me.

"Be not afraid, only believe." Mark 5:36

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/4/21

# The Compelling Majesty of His Power



The love of Christ compels us… —[2 Corinthians 5:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14)

Paul said that he was overpowered, subdued, and held as in a vise by “the love of Christ.” Very few of us really know what it means to be held in the grip of the love of God. We tend so often to be controlled simply by our own experience. The one thing that gripped and held Paul, to the exclusion of everything else, was the love of God. “The love of Christ compels us….” When you hear that coming from the life of a man or woman it is unmistakable. You will know that the Spirit of God is completely unhindered in that person’s life.

When we are born again by the Spirit of God, our testimony is based solely on what God has done for us, and rightly so. But that will change and be removed forever once you “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). Only then will you begin to realize what Jesus meant when He went on to say, “…you shall be witnesses to Me….” Not witnesses to what Jesus can do— that is basic and understood— but “witnesses to Me….” We will accept everything that happens as if it were happening to Him, whether we receive praise or blame, persecution or reward. No one is able to take this stand for Jesus Christ who is not totally compelled by the majesty of His power. It is the only thing that matters, and yet it is strange that it’s the last thing we as Christian workers realize. Paul said that he was gripped by the love of God and that is why he acted as he did. People could perceive him as mad or sane— he did not care. There was only one thing he lived for— to persuade people of the coming judgment of God and to tell them of “the love of Christ.” This total surrender to “the love of Christ” is the only thing that will bear fruit in your life. And it will always leave the mark of God’s holiness and His power, never drawing attention to your personal holiness.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus; and yet He says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love for Him.   So Send I You, 1301 L

# CCEL – 2/4/21

**The Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.**—[DEUT. 17:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.17.html" \l "Deut.17.16)

Truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.—The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.—No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

[Heb. 11:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.15),[25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.25). -[Heb. 10:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.38). -[Luke 9:62](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.9.html" \l "Luke.9.62).[Gal. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.14). -[II Cor. 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17).[Phi. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.6).

“The love of the Lord.” [Hosea 3:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.3.html" \l "Hos.3.1)

Believer, look back through all thine experience, and think of the way whereby the Lord thy God has led thee in the wilderness, and how he hath fed and clothed thee every day—how he hath borne with thine ill manners—how he hath put up with all thy murmurings, and all thy longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt—how he has opened the rock to supply thee, and fed thee with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how his grace has been sufficient for thee in all thy troubles—how his blood has been a pardon to thee in all thy sins—how his rod and his staff have comforted thee. When thou hast thus looked back upon the love of the Lord, then let faith survey his love in the future, for remember that Christ’s covenant and blood have something more in them than the past. He who has loved thee and pardoned thee, shall never cease to love and pardon. He is Alpha, and he shall be Omega also: he is first, and he shall be last. Therefore, bethink thee, when thou shalt pass through the valley of the shadow of death, thou needest fear no evil, for he is with thee. When thou shalt stand in the cold floods of Jordan, thou needest not fear, for death cannot separate thee from his love; and when thou shalt come into the mysteries of eternity thou needest not tremble, “For I am persuaded, that neither death; nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Now, soul, is not thy love refreshed? Does not this make thee love Jesus? Doth not a flight through illimitable plains of the ether of love inflame thy heart and compel thee to delight thyself in the Lord thy God? Surely as we meditate on “the love of the Lord,” our hearts burn within us, and we long to love him more.

# Word Live – 2/4/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/4/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/4/21

# Right on the Inside

**Read:** [**Romans 2:17–29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a17%e2%80%9329)

### **The Jews and the Law**

17Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; 18if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; 19if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, 20an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— 21you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? 22You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a17%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-27987a)]

25Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. 26So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? 27The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a17%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-27990b)] written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

28A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. 29No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 2:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a17%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-27987) Isaiah 52:5 (see Septuagint); Ezek. 36:20,22
2. [Romans 2:27](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3a17%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-27990) Or who, by means of a

In most television dramas, the conclusion to a courtroom scene is usually very dramatic. During a final cross-examination, the prosecuting attorney will successfully provoke the accused to break down and confess to the crime. But in real life that dramatic courtroom conclusion rarely happens, cases are often settled through plea bargaining, where lawyers broker a deal outside of the courtroom.

You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? Romans 2:21

In today’s passage, Paul continues to focus on those who think they can be made righteous by observing the law of Moses. He questions them with the force of a television prosecutor. The verses in today’s reading describe the self-perception of those Paul has in view. They are Jews who “rely on the law,” know and approve of God’s will and are convinced that they possess the truth (v. 17). They believed they were qualified to provide spiritual guidance to others.

The implied answers to Paul’s questions show that they were guilty of the very sins they condemned in others. Given the high view these moralists had of themselves, it seems unlikely that they would have agreed with Paul’s assessment. That is why the apostle brings forward an irrefutable witness to testify against them: God Himself! In verse 24, he quotes the last part of Isaiah 52:5 from the Greek translation known as the Septuagint (a similar thought is expressed in Ezekiel 36:20–23). Paul’s point is that even the biblical record shows that those who have the law do not necessarily obey the law. If anything, biblical history provides ample evidence that even those who affirm it prove themselves to be sinners, just like the rest.

**Apply the Word**

The question we should consider today is this: Who can claim to have a relationship with God? The answer? Only God can make someone a child of God. It is not a question of your parent’s religion or your ethnicity, but a spiritual relationship between you and God, your “circumcision of the heart by the Spirit” (v. 29).

### **Pray with Us**

We confess that we are powerless to save ourselves, whether through inherent righteousness, good works, or birthright. Lord, we are your children because you have adopted us, and we owe everything to you.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/4/21

# Faith Investments

[Deuteronomy 11:18–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2011.18%E2%80%9320)

18Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 19Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Teach [these words of mine] to your children. [Deuteronomy 11:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2011.19)

On his twelfth Christmas, the boy eagerly awaited the opening of the gifts under the tree. He was yearning for a new bike, but his hopes were dashed—the last present he received was a dictionary. On the first page, he read: “To Charles from Mother and Daddy, 1958. With love and high hopes for your best work in school.”

In the next decade, Chuck did do well in school. He graduated from college and later, aviation training. He became a pilot working overseas, fulfilling his passion to help people in need and to share Jesus with them. Now some sixty years after receiving this gift, he shared the well-worn dictionary with his grandchildren. It had become for him a symbol of his parents’ loving investment in his future, and Chuck still treasures it. But he’s even more grateful for the daily investment his parents made in building his faith by teaching him about God and the Scriptures.

[Deuteronomy 11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2011) talks about the importance of taking every opportunity to share the words of Scripture with children: “Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (v. 19).

For Chuck, the eternal values planted when he was a boy bloomed into a lifetime of service for his Savior. With God’s enablement, who knows how much our investment in someone’s spiritual growth will yield.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who invested in your spiritual life as you were growing up? How can you direct children’s hearts to the wisdom found in Scripture?

Father, help me take time to read the Bible and share it with others.

Download these seven devotionals from Our Daily Bread for Kids at [go.odb.org/ODBforKids-7.](https://go.odb.org/ODBforKids-7.)

#### **Insight**

In the Hebrew Scriptures, books were named for their opening words. Deuteronomy was called Devarim (“words”), representing the opening phrase of [Deuteronomy 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%201.1): “These are the words Moses spoke.” In our Bible, books were often named for their purpose, which explains the title Deuteronomy (“second law”). Deuteronomy records a second telling of the Mosaic law, which was important for two reasons. First, the people entering the land were a different generation than the one who had received the law at Sinai forty years earlier. That generation had died in the wilderness because of their rebellion. Second, the people had been together for these four decades as one vast tribal community. Upon entry into the land, they would scatter to the parcels set aside for each of the tribes. These significant realities made a retelling of the law a timely preparation for a different way of living than they had known in the wilderness.

# God Calling – 2/4/21

# Drop Your Crutch

Just go step by step. My will shall be revealed as you go. You will never cease to be thankful for this time when you felt at peace and trustful, and yet had no human security.

That is the time of the True learning of trust in Me. "When thy Father and Mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up." This is a literal dependence on Me.

When human support or material help of any kind is removed, then My power can become operative. I cannot teach a man to walk who is trusting to a crutch. Away with your crutch, and My power shall so invigorate you that you shall indeed walk on to victory. Never limit My power. It is limitless.

"God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Psalm 62:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/5/21

# Are You Ready To Be Poured Out As an Offering? (1)



If I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. —[Philippians 2:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Philippians+2%3A17)

Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for the work of another believer—to pour out your life sacrificially for the ministry and faith of others? Or do you say, “I am not willing to be poured out right now, and I don’t want God to tell me how to serve Him. I want to choose the place of my own sacrifice. And I want to have certain people watching me and saying, ‘Well done.’ ”

It is one thing to follow God’s way of service if you are regarded as a hero, but quite another thing if the road marked out for you by God requires becoming a “doormat” under other people’s feet. God’s purpose may be to teach you to say, “I know how to be abased…” ([Philippians 4:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:12)). Are you ready to be sacrificed like that? Are you ready to be less than a mere drop in the bucket— to be so totally insignificant that no one remembers you even if they think of those you served? Are you willing to give and be poured out until you are used up and exhausted— not seeking to be ministered to, but to minister? Some saints cannot do menial work while maintaining a saintly attitude, because they feel such service is beneath their dignity.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/5/21

**I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**—[JOHN 10:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.10)

In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.—She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.—Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—Our Saviour Jesus Christ, . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

[Gen. 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.2.html" \l "Gen.2.17). -[Gen. 3:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.3.html" \l "Gen.3.6).[Rom. 6:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.23). -[Rom. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.17). -[I Cor. 15:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.21). -[II Tim. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.10).[I John 5:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.11). -[John 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.17).

“The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” [1 John 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.14)

It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ did not come forth without his Father’s permission, authority, consent, and assistance. He was sent of the Father, that he might be the Saviour of men. We are too apt to forget that, while there are distinctions as to the persons in the Trinity, there are no distinctions of honour. We too frequently ascribe the honour of our salvation, or at least the depths of its benevolence, more to Jesus Christ than we do the Father. This is a very great mistake. What if Jesus came? Did not his Father send him? If he spake wondrously, did not his Father pour grace into his lips, that he might be an able minister of the new covenant? He who knoweth the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost as he should know them, never setteth one before another in his love; he sees them at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and on Calvary, all equally engaged in the work of salvation. O Christian, hast thou put thy confidence in the Man Christ Jesus? Hast thou placed thy reliance solely on him? And art thou united with him? Then believe that thou art united unto the God of heaven. Since to the Man Christ Jesus thou art brother, and holdest closest fellowship, thou art linked thereby with God the Eternal, and “the Ancient of days” is thy Father and thy friend. Didst thou ever consider the depth of love in the heart of Jehovah, when God the Father equipped his Son for the great enterprise of mercy? If not, be this thy day’s meditation. The Father sent him! Contemplate that subject. Think how Jesus works what the Father wills. In the wounds of the dying Saviour see the love of the great I AM. Let every thought of Jesus be also connected with the Eternal, ever-blessed God, for “It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.”

# Word Live – 2/5/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/5/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/5/21

# The Lesson of God's Law

**Read:** [**Romans 3:1–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320)

### **God’s Faithfulness**

3 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? 2Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.

3What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness? 4Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written:

“So that you may be proved right when you speak  
    and prevail when you judge.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-27996a)]

5But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) 6Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? 7Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?” 8Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is just!

### **No One Is Righteous**

9What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. 10As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;  
11    there is no one who understands;  
    there is no one who seeks God.  
12All have turned away,  
    they have together become worthless;  
there is no one who does good,  
    not even one.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28004b)]  
13“Their throats are open graves;  
    their tongues practice deceit.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28005c)]  
“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28005d)]  
14    “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28006e)]  
15“Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
16    ruin and misery mark their ways,  
17and the way of peace they do not know.”[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28009f)]  
18    “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-28010g)]

19Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 3:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-27996) Psalm 51:4
2. [Romans 3:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28004) Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20
3. [Romans 3:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28005) Psalm 5:9
4. [Romans 3:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28005) Psalm 140:3
5. [Romans 3:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28006) Psalm 10:7 (see Septuagint)
6. [Romans 3:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28009) Isaiah 59:7,8
7. [Romans 3:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-28010) Psalm 36:1

When I was in graduate school, one professor told us that he designed his tests so that nobody could get a 100 percent. Then, he told us not to worry because he graded on a curve. Some believe that God’s law works the same way. They realize that they have not lived a life 100 percent free of sin, but they are hoping that God will at least consider them at the top of the pack.

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law. Romans 3:20

Paul expected similar reasoning from those who read this letter. The obvious objection to his assertion that the rite of circumcision did not give the Jewish person a special status in God’s eyes is stated in verse 1: “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew?” Paul’s answer is emphatic: “Much in every way!” (v. 2). The benefit was that they had received the clear revelation of God through His Word.

The second question in verse 3 is raised by Paul as part of his retort. The failure of those who received the oracles of God and did not heed them does not reflect poorly on God. The fact that they are unfaithful or unbelieving does not mean that He is false. God and His Word are still true, no matter how people respond.

Paul’s third question voices the false accusation some had made about his gospel. Since our unrighteousness is in sharp contrast to God’s righteousness, doesn’t God benefit from our sinfulness? Paul condemns this reasoning and clarifies his point with a long quote, which strings together several statements from the Psalms. In case his readers missed the point, Paul spells it out for them in verses 19–20. Those who wanted to be declared righteous by following the law of Moses missed its central point. God does not grade on a curve.

**Apply the Word**

We’re learning many lessons (and important words) from Paul about the doctrine of faith. Start a list and note this lesson of the law: everyone fails. All of us! We are all sinners in need of a savior. Only God can make you righteous through Jesus Christ.

### **Pray with Us**

All of us have failed your standards, God. Knowing this increases our humility, deepens our gratitude, and fills us with awe at your overwhelming mercy. Move us to tell others about your gift of compassion.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/5/21

# Hold Steady

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 41:10–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2041.10%E2%80%9313)

10So do not fear, for I am with you;  
    do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
    I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11“All who rage against you  
    will surely be ashamed and disgraced;  
those who oppose you  
    will be as nothing and perish.  
12Though you search for your enemies,  
    you will not find them.  
Those who wage war against you  
    will be as nothing at all.  
13For I am the Lord your God  
    who takes hold of your right hand  
and says to you, Do not fear;  
    I will help you.

I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand. [Isaiah 41:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2041.13)

Harriet Tubman was one of the great American heroes of the nineteenth century. Showing remarkable courage, she guided more than three hundred fellow slaves to freedom after she first escaped slavery by crossing into free territory in the United States North. Not content to simply enjoy her own freedom, she ventured back into slave states nineteen times to lead friends, family, and strangers to freedom, sometimes guiding people on foot all the way to Canada.

What drove Tubman to such brave action? A woman of deep faith, she at one time said this: “I always told God, I’m going to hold steady on you, and you’ve got to see me through.” Her dependence on God’s guidance as she led people out of slavery was a hallmark of her success.

What does it mean to “hold steady” to God? A verse in the prophecy of Isaiah might help us see that in reality it’s He who holds us as we grab His hand. Isaiah quotes God, who said, “I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (41:13).

Harriet held tightly to God, and He saw her through. What challenges are you facing? Hold steady to God as He “takes hold” of your hand and your life. “Do not fear.” He will help you.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What’s your biggest challenge right now? What can you do or say to let God know you trust Him?

Father in heaven, life is hard when I try to do it alone, so I need Your help. Please come alongside me in my greatest challenges and help me know I’m not alone.

Learn to face life’s challenges through your study of Soul Care at [ChristianUniversity.org/CC201.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/CC201.)

#### **Insight**

[Isaiah 41:10–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2041.10%E2%80%9313) begins with a call to courage: “Do not fear.” But this call isn’t an exhortation to “dig deep” and find the grit and determination to keep going. God doesn’t call anyone to forge ahead on their own. Instead, the summons is followed with these encouraging words: “I am with you” (v. 10). This phrase is repeated throughout Scripture, and is intended to give strength and courage. God said these words to Moses when he was sent back to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh ([Exodus 3:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%203.12)). And Jesus spoke these words to His disciples when He commissioned them to go into the world to spread the knowledge of the kingdom of God and to make disciples ([Matthew 28:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.20)). God’s dwelling with humanity came in Jesus (Immanuel). He now indwells believers in Christ through the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.9); [Ephesians 2:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.22); [1 John 4:15–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%204.15%E2%80%9316)).

# God Calling – 2/5/21

# You Shall Know

Walk with Me. I will teach you. Listen to Me and I will speak. Continue to meet Me, in spite of all opposition and every obstacle, in spite of the days when you may hear no voice, and there may come no intimate heart-to-heart telling.

As you persist in this, and make a life-habit of it, in many marvelous ways I will reveal My will to you. You shall have more sure knowing of both the present and the future. But that will be only the reward of the regular coming to meet Me.

Life is a school. There are many teachers. Not to everyone do I come personally. Believe literally that the problems and difficulties of your lives can be explained by Me more clearly and effectually than by any other.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/6/21

# Are You Ready To Be Poured Out As an Offering? (2)



I am already being poured out as a drink offering… —[2 Timothy 4:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Timothy+4%3A6)

Are you ready to be poured out as an offering? It is an act of your will, not your emotions. Tell God you are ready to be offered as a sacrifice for Him. Then accept the consequences as they come, without any complaints, in spite of what God may send your way. God sends you through a crisis in private, where no other person can help you. From the outside your life may appear to be the same, but the difference is taking place in your will. Once you have experienced the crisis in your will, you will take no thought of the cost when it begins to affect you externally. If you don’t deal with God on the level of your will first, the result will be only to arouse sympathy for yourself.

“Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar” ([Psalm 118:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118:27)). You must be willing to be placed on the altar and go through the fire; willing to experience what the altar represents— burning, purification, and separation for only one purpose— the elimination of every desire and affection not grounded in or directed toward God. But you don’t eliminate it, God does. You “bind the sacrifice…to the horns of the altar” and see to it that you don’t wallow in self-pity once the fire begins. After you have gone through the fire, there will be nothing that will be able to trouble or depress you. When another crisis arises, you will realize that things cannot touch you as they used to do. What fire lies ahead in your life?

Tell God you are ready to be poured out as an offering, and God will prove Himself to be all you ever dreamed He would be.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The truth is we have nothing to fear and nothing to overcome because He is all in all and we are more than conquerors through Him. The recognition of this truth is not flattering to the worker’s sense of heroics, but it is amazingly glorifying to the work of Christ. Approved Unto God, 4 R

# CCEL – 2/6/21

**The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.**—[I TIM. 1:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.1.html" \l "iTim.1.14)

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.—For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.—According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

[II Cor. 8:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.8.html" \l "iiCor.8.9). -[Rom. 5:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.20).[Eph. 2:7-9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.7). -[Gal. 2:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.16). -[Tit. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.5).

“Praying always.” [Ephesians 6:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.18)

What multitudes of prayers we have put up from the first moment when we learned to pray. Our first prayer was a prayer for ourselves; we asked that God would have mercy upon us, and blot out our sin. He heard us. But when he had blotted out our sins like a cloud, then we had more prayers for ourselves. We have had to pray for sanctifying grace, for constraining and restraining grace; we have been led to crave for a fresh assurance of faith, for the comfortable application of the promise, for deliverance in the hour of temptation, for help in the time of duty, and for succour in the day of trial. We have been compelled to go to God for our souls, as constant beggars asking for everything. Bear witness, children of God, you have never been able to get anything for your souls elsewhere. All the bread your soul has eaten has come down from heaven, and all the water of which it has drank has flowed from the living rock—Christ Jesus the Lord. Your soul has never grown rich in itself; it has always been a pensioner upon the daily bounty of God; and hence your prayers have ascended to heaven for a range of spiritual mercies all but infinite. Your wants were innumerable, and therefore the supplies have been infinitely great, and your prayers have been as varied as the mercies have been countless. Then have you not cause to say, “I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication”? For as your prayers have been many, so also have been God’s answers to them. He has heard you in the day of trouble, has strengthened you, and helped you, even when you dishonoured him by trembling and doubting at the mercy-seat. Remember this, and let it fill your heart with gratitude to God, who has thus graciously heard your poor weak prayers. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

# Word Live – 2/6/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/6/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/6/21

# The Good and Bad News

**Read:** [**Romans 3:21–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a21%e2%80%9331)

### **Righteousness Through Faith**

21But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22This righteousness is given through faith in[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a21%e2%80%9331#fen-NIV-28014a)] Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a21%e2%80%9331" \l "fen-NIV-28017b" \o "See footnote b)] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

27Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. 28For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 3:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a21%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-28014) Or through the faithfulness of
2. [Romans 3:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3a21%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-28017) The Greek for sacrifice of atonement refers to the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant (see Lev. 16:15,16).

When someone is going to deliver a difficult message, they’ll sometimes ask you: Which do you want first, the good news or the bad news? The word gospel comes from a Greek word that means good news. It was a technical term for a message of victory. But first, Paul delivers what some might consider bad news.

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Romans 3:22

Paul explains that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (v. 23). It makes no difference if you are Jewish or Gentile, devout, or irreligious. We are all sinners and without excuse. There is more to this than merely recognizing that we are not God. Not only have we disobeyed God when Adam sinned, but with that act, humanity fundamentally changed. Sin affects every aspect of our human character. No part of our nature is left untouched by sin.  As bad as this news may be, the universality of sin opens the door for good news. Since all have sinned, we all may experience redemption by grace through Jesus Christ (v. 24). God can offer this gift without compromising His standard of righteousness because “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement” (v. 25).

Atonement is the same word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to refer to the mercy-seat, the gold covering on the Ark of the Covenant, where the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled (Lev. 16:14). Such language indicates that Jesus’ death was a propitiation or sacrifice for sin. By sending Jesus to die on our behalf, the Father was able to offer the grace of forgiveness freely without compromising His standard. He was able to “be just” (righteous) and “the one who justifies” (vindicates or declares righteous) at the same time (v. 26).

**Apply the Word**

The bad news is that our sinfulness means we have no reason to boast before God. The good news is that we can receive righteousness through Jesus Christ. His sacrifice on our behalf does not set aside God’s law, it upholds it. Only Jesus can make you right with God.

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, only you can perfectly preserve justice within mercy. Teach us not to shy away from acknowledging our fallenness, for the more perfectly we grasp our hopeless state, the more we understand the greatness of your compassion.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/6/21

# What’s Your Reputation?

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 5:8–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.8%E2%80%9314)

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10and find out what pleases the Lord. 11Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
    rise from the dead,  
    and Christ will shine on you.”

Now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. [Ephesians 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.8)

At local high school sporting events, Ted was the largest and loudest cheerleader in the stands. Before a degenerative condition took its toll on him, he stood six feet six inches tall and weighed 290 pounds. Ted’s crowd-stirring chants of “Blue!” (the school’s color) and candy-tossing at school events were legendary, earning him the name “Big Blue.”

But Ted’s reputation in his community wasn’t just for cheerleading. Neither was it for the alcohol addiction he experienced as a younger man. No, he will be remembered for his love for God and family, for his generosity and kindness. At a four-hour “home-going service” that celebrated his life, person after person came forward to testify about the vibrant Christlike ways of a man who’d been rescued from darkness by the power of Jesus through the gospel.

In [Ephesians 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.8), Paul reminded believers that they “were once darkness” but quickly noted, “but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.” Such is the call for every believer in Jesus. Children of light, like Ted, have much to offer those engulfed in this world’s darkness. “Fruitless deeds of darkness” are to be avoided (see vv. 3–4, 11). Those in our communities and throughout the world need the brilliant, distinctive witness of those upon whom Jesus has shined (v. 14). How distinctive? As different as light is from darkness.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What are some reasons you hesitate to more intentionally spread Christ’s light in this world? Where are the places around you that need His light?

Father, forgive me for my passivity about being light. Lead me and use me as light in the dark spaces of this world.

#### **Insight**

In the book of Ephesians, Paul doesn’t mention specific people and situations like he does in other letters. This shows that this letter was likely intended for all believers in Jesus in Asia Minor. However, the book may have been named according to where the letter was first sent.

In [Ephesians 5:8–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.8%E2%80%9314), Paul refers to all believers in Christ when he explains that before following Him they were in darkness (v. 8). It was a part of their being, not simply a state they were living in. He then explains that living “as children of light” means living in “goodness, righteousness and truth” (vv. 8–9). Respectively, the three original words are practical, showing that believers are to take interest in the well-being of others, to conform to God’s standards, and to follow the truth in Scripture rather than living by the ways of the world.

# God Calling – 2/6/21

# God's Longing

To the listening ear I speak, to the waiting heart I come. Sometimes, I may not speak. I may ask you merely to wait in My Presence, to know that I am with you.

Think of the multitudes who thronged Me when I was on earth all eager for something. Eager to be healed, or taught, or fed.

Think as I supplied their many wants, and granted their manifold requests, what it meant to Me, to find amid the crowd, some one or two, who followed Me just to be near Me, just to dwell in My Presence. How some longing of the Eternal Heart was satisfied thereby.

Comfort Me, a while, by letting Me know that you would seek Me just to dwell in My Presence, to be near Me, not even for teaching, not for material gain, not even for a message -- but for Me. The longing of the human heart to be loved for itself is something caught from the Great Divine Heart.

I bless you. Bow your heads.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in his word do I hope." Psalm 130:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/7/21

# Spiritual Dejection

# Spiritual Dejection

We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. —[Luke 24:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+24%3A21)

Every fact that the disciples stated was right, but the conclusions they drew from those facts were wrong. Anything that has even a hint of dejection spiritually is always wrong. If I am depressed or burdened, I am to blame, not God or anyone else. Dejection stems from one of two sources— I have either satisfied a lust or I have not had it satisfied. In either case, dejection is the result. Lust means “I must have it at once.” Spiritual lust causes me to demand an answer from God, instead of seeking God Himself who gives the answer. What have I been hoping or trusting God would do? Is today “the third day” and He has still not done what I expected? Am I therefore justified in being dejected and in blaming God? Whenever we insist that God should give us an answer to prayer we are off track. The purpose of prayer is that we get ahold of God, not of the answer. It is impossible to be well physically and to be dejected, because dejection is a sign of sickness. This is also true spiritually. Dejection spiritually is wrong, and we are always to blame for it.

We look for visions from heaven and for earth-shaking events to see God’s power. Even the fact that we are dejected is proof that we do this. Yet we never realize that all the time God is at work in our everyday events and in the people around us. If we will only obey, and do the task that He has placed closest to us, we will see Him. One of the most amazing revelations of God comes to us when we learn that it is in the everyday things of life that we realize the magnificent deity of Jesus Christ.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“I have chosen you” (John 15:16). Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you.  My Utmost for His Highest, October 25, 837 R

# CCEL – 2/7/21

**When thou has eaten and are full, . . . thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.**—[DEUT. 8:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.10)

Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God.—One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.—He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks.—The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, . . . who forgiveth all thine iniquities; . . . who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

[Deut. 8:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.11). -[Luke 17:15-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.15).[I Tim. 4:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.4.html" \l "iTim.4.4). -[Rom. 14:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.6). -[Prov. 10:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.10.html" \l "Prov.10.22).[Psa. 103:1-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.1).

“Arise, and depart.” [Micah 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.2.html" \l "Mic.2.10)

The hour is approaching when the message will come to us, as it comes to all—“Arise, and go forth from the home in which thou hast dwelt, from the city in which thou hast done thy business, from thy family, from thy friends. Arise, and take thy last journey.” And what know we of the journey? And what know we of the country to which we are bound? A little we have read thereof, and somewhat has been revealed to us by the Spirit; but how little do we know of the realms of the future! We know that there is a black and stormy river called “Death.” God bids us cross it, promising to be with us. And, after death, what cometh? What wonder-world will open upon our astonished sight? What scene of glory will be unfolded to our view? No traveller has ever returned to tell. But we know enough of the heavenly land to make us welcome our summons thither with joy and gladness. The journey of death may be dark, but we may go forth on it fearlessly, knowing that God is with us as we walk through the gloomy valley, and therefore we need fear no evil. We shall be departing from all we have known and loved here, but we shall be going to our Father’s house—to our Father’s home, where Jesus is—to that royal “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” This shall be our last removal, to dwell forever with him we love, in the midst of his people, in the presence of God. Christian, meditate much on heaven, it will help thee to press on, and to forget the toil of the way. This vale of tears is but the pathway to the better country: this world of woe is but the stepping-stone to a world of bliss.

“Prepare us, Lord, by grace divine,

For thy bright courts on high;

Then bid our spirits rise, and join

The chorus of the sky.”

# Word Live – 2/7/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/7/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/7/21

# Earning Righteousness

**Read:** [**Romans 4:1–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a1%e2%80%9312)

### **Abraham Justified by Faith**

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-28026a)]

4Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7“Blessed are those  
    whose transgressions are forgiven,  
    whose sins are covered.  
8Blessed is the one  
    whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a1%e2%80%9312#fen-NIV-28031b)]

9Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 4:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-28026) Gen. 15:6; also in verse 22
2. [Romans 4:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a1%e2%80%9312#en-NIV-28031) Psalm 32:1,2

A popular children’s song goes: “Father Abraham had many sons / Many sons had Father Abraham. / I am one of them and so are you. / So let’s just praise the Lord!” Today’s reading explains why those who are in Christ can rightfully say that they are one of Abraham’s sons.

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6

Paul calls Abraham “our forefather according to the flesh” (v. 1). Abraham, from whom the Jewish people trace their lineage, was believed to have obeyed the law before it was given. When Abraham entered into a covenant with God, he was told to circumcise, “every male among you” (Gen. 17:9–10).  Yet Paul points out that this came after “Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:9). The order indicates that Abraham obtained righteousness by faith before action. Circumcision and obedience followed his faith. Paul’s opponents had it backward. They taught that righteous standing before God was attained by first being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses.

Paul cites Psalm 32, where David speaks of the blessedness of forgiveness (vv. 7–8). These two examples are connected by the use of the word “count” in Psalm 32:2. Together, Abraham and David show the two sides of God’s action toward believers in justification. The Father counts our sin as forgiven and considers us to be righteous because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The cross is the only payment that satisfies the debt of sin. Christ’s righteousness is the only righteousness that God will accept. Still today, many people believe they must complete a checklist in order to earn God’s approval. They try to become good enough for God. Paul reminds us that our journey begins with the simple act of faith.

**Apply the Word**

Today’s word is “righteousness.” Have you followed Abraham’s example by trusting God to make you righteous through Jesus Christ? Take the next step by sharing that decision with your pastor or another believer today! They will be happy to welcome you into the family of God.

### **Pray with Us**

Sometimes we live as if we can be righteous by checking off a list of good works. But our rules do nothing to save us, Father. You have given us your Son Jesus, and we joyfully lay claim to His righteousness.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/7/21

# Recovering What’s Lost

 **Read:** [**1 Samuel 30:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2030.1%E2%80%936)

### **David Destroys the Amalekites**

30 David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, 2and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

3When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 4So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. 5David’s two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 30:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2030.1%E2%80%936)[**18–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%2030.18%E2%80%9319)

18David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. 19Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

But David found strength in the Lord his God. [1 Samuel 30:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2030.6)

At the phone store, the young pastor steeled himself for bad news. His smartphone, accidentally dropped during our Bible class, was a total loss, right? Actually, no. The store clerk recovered all of the pastor’s data, including his Bible videos and photos. She also recovered “every photo I’d ever deleted,” he said. The store also “replaced my broken phone with a brand-new phone.” As he said, “I recovered all I had lost and more.”

David once led his own recovery mission after an attack by the vicious Amalekites. Spurned by Philistine rulers, David and his army discovered the Amalekites had raided and burned down their town of Ziklag—taking captive “the women and everyone else in it,” including all their wives and children ([1 Samuel 30:2–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2030.2%E2%80%933)). “So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep” (v. 4). The soldiers were so bitter with their leader David that they talked of “stoning him” (v. 6).

“But David found strength in the Lord his God” (v. 6). As God promised, David pursued the Amalekites and “recovered everything the Amalekites had taken . . . . Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back” (vv. 18–19). As we face spiritual attacks that “rob” us even of hope, may we find renewed strength in God. He will be with us in every challenge of life.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What spiritual attacks or life loss are you experiencing? Turning from your despair to God, how will you find renewed strength in Him?

God, help me to find hope in You even as I face life’s challenges.

#### **Insight**

When God enabled David to rescue abducted loved ones ([1 Samuel 30:1–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2030.1%E2%80%9320)), his success called attention to the failures of Saul to help his own family. Outnumbered by the Philistine army, Saul asked God for help, but he received no answer (28:4–6). Desperate, he turned to a medium in an attempt to call back from the dead his faithful advisor Samuel (vv. 7–9). Samuel did appear, but he told Saul what he didn’t want to hear. The next day the army of Israel would be defeated and Saul, together with his sons, would die (vv. 16–20).

Saul and David both helped show us our need for another King who, by breaking the power of sin and death, would come to the rescue even of His enemies.

# God Calling – 2/7/21

# Light Ahead

Trust and be not afraid. Life is full of wonder. Open child-trusting eyes to all I am doing for you. Fear not.

Only a few steps more and then My Power shall be seen and known. You are, yourselves, now walking in the tunnel-darkness. Soon, you yourselves shall be lights to guide feet that are afraid.

The cries of your sufferings have pierced even to the ears of God himself -- My Father in Heaven, your Father in Heaven. To hear, with God, is to answer. For only a cry from the heart, a cry to Divine Power to help human weakness, a trusting cry, ever reaches the Ear Divine.

Remember, trembling heart, that with God, to hear is to answer. Your prayers, and they have been many, are answered.

"Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/8/21

# The Cost of Sanctification

May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely… —[1 Thessalonians 5:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Thessalonians+5%3A23)

When we pray, asking God to sanctify us, are we prepared to measure up to what that really means? We take the word sanctification much too lightly. Are we prepared to pay the cost of sanctification? The cost will be a deep restriction of all our earthly concerns, and an extensive cultivation of all our godly concerns. Sanctification means to be intensely focused on God’s point of view. It means to secure and to keep all the strength of our body, soul, and spirit for God’s purpose alone. Are we really prepared for God to perform in us everything for which He separated us? And after He has done His work, are we then prepared to separate ourselves to God just as Jesus did? “For their sakes I sanctify Myself…” ([John 17:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:19)). The reason some of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized the meaning of sanctification from God’s perspective. Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the nature that controlled Him will control us. Are we really prepared for what that will cost? It will cost absolutely everything in us which is not of God.

Are we prepared to be caught up into the full meaning of Paul’s prayer in this verse? Are we prepared to say, “Lord, make me, a sinner saved by grace, as holy as You can”? Jesus prayed that we might be one with Him, just as He is one with the Father (see [John 17:21-23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:21-23)). The resounding evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life is the unmistakable family likeness to Jesus Christ, and the freedom from everything which is not like Him. Are we prepared to set ourselves apart for the Holy Spirit’s work in us?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 2/8/21

**Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends.**—[JOHN 15:15.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.15)

The Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?—It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.—God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.—Even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.—The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his covenant.—I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

[Gen. 18:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.18.html" \l "Gen.18.17). -[Matt. 13:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.11). -[I Cor. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.10). -[I Cor. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.7).[Psa. 65:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.65.html" \l "Ps.65.4). -[Psa. 25:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.25.html" \l "Ps.25.14). -[John 17:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.8).[John 15:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.14).

“Thou shalt call his name Jesus.” [Matthew 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.21)

When a person is dear, everything connected with him becomes dear for his sake. Thus, so precious is the person of the Lord Jesus in the estimation of all true believers, that everything about him they consider to be inestimable beyond all price. “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,” said David, as if the very vestments of the Saviour were so sweetened by his person that he could not but love them. Certain it is, that there is not a spot where that hallowed foot hath trodden—there is not a word which those blessed lips have uttered—nor a thought which his loving Word has revealed—which is not to us precious beyond all price. And this is true of the names of Christ—they are all sweet in the believer’s ear. Whether he be called the Husband of the Church, her Bridegroom, her Friend; whether he be styled the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the King, the Prophet, or the Priest—every title of our Master—Shiloh, Emmanuel, Wonderful, the Mighty Counsellor—every name is like the honeycomb dropping with honey, and luscious are the drops that distil from it. But if there be one name sweeter than another in the believer’s ear, it is the name of Jesus. Jesus! it is the name which moves the harps of heaven to melody. Jesus! the life of all our joys. If there be one name more charming, more precious than another, it is this name. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. It is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity; a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.

“Jesus, I love thy charming name,

’Tis music to mine ear.”

# Word Live – 2/8/21

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

# Scripture Union – 2/8/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/8/21

# The Promise of Faith

**Read:** [**Romans 4:13–25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a13%e2%80%9325)

13It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

16Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a13%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-28040a)] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a13%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-28041b)] 19Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. 20Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” 23The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 4:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a13%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-28040) Gen. 17:5
2. [Romans 4:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3a13%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-28041) Gen. 15:5

David Macaulay has authored a popular series of books for children (and loved by many adults) that describe The Way Things Work. Using colorful and precisely detailed illustrations, he explains the inner workings of things we encounter every day, such as computers or light or sound waves.

The promise comes by faith. Romans 4:16

In Romans 4, Paul explains the way justification works. Using Abraham as his model, the apostle shows us that righteousness cannot come through the law. If Abraham’s inheritance had been based on how perfectly he followed the law, it would have rendered God’s promise “worthless” (v. 14). Instead, God determined to justify Abraham by faith so that righteousness would be a gift instead of an earned wage. An additional reason for linking righteousness to faith was that the law is unable to produce what it demands. Instead of making us righteous, “the law brings wrath” (v. 15). The best the law can do is to reveal the standard and show that we have violated it.

Attempts to be justified through the law only heighten our separation from God because they prove that we have fallen short. The law highlights our inability or weakness. Abraham exemplified this weakness when he believed God’s promise to make him “a father of nations” because his body “was as good as dead” (v. 19). Abraham showed his faith by believing that God could do what he could not do for himself.

Abraham’s blessing was not meant for him alone. The promise is for us as well. God will count as righteous all who believe that Jesus was “delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (v. 25). That is indeed good news!

**Apply the Word**

Let this truth about justification soak in! God has done for you what you could never do for yourself! Have you believed God’s promise to forgive your sins and credit Christ’s righteousness to your account? If you would like to talk to someone about this, call (800) DL MOODY.

### **Pray with Us**

As we meditate on your gift of justification, help us grasp the magnitude of your grace. May we embrace the knowledge that we are utterly dependent on you for every good and perfect thing.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/8/21

# Trust the Light

 **Read:** [**John 12:25–33**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.25%E2%80%9333)

25Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

27“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” 29The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

30Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32And I, when I am lifted up[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+%2C+35%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26613a)] from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 12:32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+12%3A25%E2%80%9333+%2C+35%E2%80%9336&version=NIV#en-NIV-26613) The Greek for lifted up also means exalted.

**Read:** [**John 12:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.25%E2%80%9333)[**35–36**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.35%E2%80%9336)

35Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.Believe in the light . . . so that you may become children of light. [John 12:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.36)

The weather forecast said bomb cyclone. That’s what happens when a winter storm rapidly intensifies as the atmospheric pressure drops. By the time night fell, the blizzard conditions made the highway to the Denver airport almost impossible to see. Almost. But when it’s your daughter who’s flying home to visit, you do what you have to do. You pack extra clothes and water (just in case you get stranded on the highway), drive very slowly, pray without ceasing, and last but not least, trust your headlights. And sometimes you can achieve the almost impossible.

Jesus foretold of a storm on the horizon, one that would involve His death ([John 12:31–33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.31%E2%80%9333)), and one that would challenge His followers to stay faithful and serve (v. 26). It was going to get dark and be almost impossible to see. Almost. So what did Jesus tell them to do? Believe, or trust, the Light (v. 36). That was the only way they could keep going forward and stay faithful.

Jesus would only be with them a little while longer. But believers have His Spirit as our constant guide to light the way. We too will face dark times when it’s almost impossible to see the way ahead. Almost. But by believing, or trusting in the Light, we can press on.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What dark season have you been through lately? How did Jesus, the Light, help you keep going?

Jesus, thank You for being the light in my darkness. Help me to trust and keep going.

#### **Insight**

The Greek word φῶς phōs (light) is used five times in [John 12:35–36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.35%E2%80%9336), and is one of the apostle John’s favorite words. Jesus’ references to Himself as light in John include His words in [John 8:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.12): “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” As light, Jesus is the true source of radiance, illumination, and revelation. Those who truly believe in Him (12:36) become children of light—they become His disciples and a part of the light force in the world ([Matthew 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.14)).

# God Calling – 2/8/21

# On Me Alone

I am your Lord, your Supply. You must rely on Me. Trust to the last uttermost limit. Trust and be not afraid. You must depend on Divine Power only. I have not forgotten you. Your help is coming. You shall know and realize My Power.

Endurance is faith tried almost to breaking point. You must wait, and trust, and hope, and joy in Me. You must not depend on man but on Me, on Me, your Strength, your Help, your Supply.

This is the great test. Am I your supply or not? Every great work for Me has had to have this great test-time.

Possess your souls in patience and rejoice. You must wait until I show the way. Heaven itself cannot contain more joy than that soul knows, when, after the waiting-test, I crown it Victor, but no disciple of Mine can be victor, who does not wait until I give the order to start. You cannot be anxious if you know that I am your supply.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:4