# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/7/20

# Intimate With Jesus



Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?’ —[John 14:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+14%3A9)

These words were not spoken as a rebuke, nor even with surprise; Jesus was encouraging Philip to draw closer. Yet the last person we get intimate with is Jesus. Before Pentecost the disciples knew Jesus as the One who gave them power to conquer demons and to bring about a revival (see [Luke 10:18-20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10:18-20)). It was a wonderful intimacy, but there was a much closer intimacy to come: ‘…I have called you friends…’ ([John 15:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:15)). True friendship is rare on earth. It means identifying with someone in thought, heart, and spirit. The whole experience of life is designed to enable us to enter into this closest relationship with Jesus Christ. We receive His blessings and know His Word, but do we really know Him?

Jesus said, ‘It is to your advantage that I go away…’ ([John 16:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:7)). He left that relationship to lead them even closer. It is a joy to Jesus when a disciple takes time to walk more intimately with Him. The bearing of fruit is always shown in Scripture to be the visible result of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (see [John 15:1-4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:1-4)).

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  Not Knowing Whither, 903 R

# CCEL – 1/7/20

**Think upon me, my God, for good.**—[NEH. 5:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.5.html" \l "Neh.5.19)

Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness.—I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.—I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you.—For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.—I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number.—Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered.

[Jer. 2:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.2.html" \l "Jer.2.2). -[Ezek. 16:60](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.60). -[Jer. 29:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.29.html" \l "Jer.29.10). -[Jer. 29:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.29.html" \l "Jer.29.11).[Isa. 55:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.9). -[Job. 5:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.5.html" \l "Job.5.8). -[Psa. 40:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.5).

‘For me to live is Christ.’ [Philippians 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.1.html" \l "Phil.1.21)

The believer did not always live to Christ. He began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Saviour making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and celestial birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our love, that it beats alone for him; to his glory we would live, and in defence of his gospel we would die; he is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul’s words mean more than most men think; they imply that the aim and end of his life was Christ—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he did eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it for Christ? Is it not done for self- aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, ‘Is that a mean reason?’ For the Christian it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing a spiritual adultery? Many there are who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dare say that he hath lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet, this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ Jesus. Lord, accept me; I here present myself, praying to live only in thee and to thee. Let me be as the bullock which stands between the plough and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, ‘Ready for either.’

# Word Live – 1/7/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/7/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/7/20

# The Flawless Word

**Read:** [**2 Peter 3:14–18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+3%3a14%e2%80%9318)

14So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

17Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. 18But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

You may have never heard the name Athanasius before, but you have been impacted by his steadfast commitment to God’s truth. Athanasius was an important church leader in Alexandria, Egypt, in the fourth century AD. A pastor and a biblical scholar, he was deeply concerned about the spread of false teaching. He was especially troubled by those who claimed Jesus was a created being. Athanasius was such a staunch defender of the truth about Jesus that after his death others called him a “pillar of the Church.”

And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times. Psalm 12:6

The apostle Peter was also concerned about the spread of false teaching and its moral effect on the church. In 2 Peter 3, the apostle Peter is encouraging believers to look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are jumping in near the end of his letter. However, even in his conclusion, Peter urges his readers to “be found spotless, blameless and at peace” (v. 14). He connects his own message to that of “our dear brother Paul” (v. 15).

Peter wants his readers to know that the Lord’s patience toward humankind’s sin leads to salvation for all who believe in Jesus (v. 15). But he warns them about the danger of “other Scriptures” which “ignorant and unstable people distort” (v. 16). Like in Peter’s time, and again in Athanasius’s, we must be careful not to be seduced by false teaching or doctrine. We must ask God to help us study His Word, and to guard our hearts and minds from what is false. As the Psalmist says, “the words of the Lord are flawless” (Ps. 12:6). Athanasius’s affection for God’s Word was apparent. He states, “These [letters] are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words that they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness.”

**>>** Ask God to open your eyes and mind this month to discovering new truths from His Word, and to impress His promises deeply on your heart. Only God’s truth can satisfy our deepest thirst.

### **Pray with Us**

We come to God with praise and thanksgiving for the beautiful treasure of His Word. Let’s remember with gratitude faithful Christians throughout church history who preserved and revered the canon of the Bible.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/7/20

# Secret Delivery

 **Read: Matthew 6:1–4**

### **Giving to the Needy**

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. [Matthew 6:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.3)

A clear, glass vase with bell-shaped lilies of the valley, pink tulips, and yellow daffodils greeted Kim at her front door. For seven months, an anonymous believer in Jesus sent Kim beautiful bouquets from a local flower shop. Each monthly gift arrived with a note filled with scriptural encouragement and signed: “Love, Jesus.”

Kim shared photos of these secret deliveries on Facebook. The flowers gave her opportunity to celebrate an individual’s kindness and to acknowledge the way God expressed His love to her through His people. As she trusted Him through her battle with a terminal disease, every colorful blossom and handwritten note affirmed God’s loving compassion for her.

The sender’s anonymity reflects the heart motive Jesus encourages His people to adopt when giving. He warns against practicing righteous acts “to be seen” by others ([Matthew 6:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.1)). Good deeds are intended to be expressions of worship overflowing from hearts grateful for all God’s done for us. Highlighting our own generosity with the hope or expectation of being honored can take the focus off the Giver of all good things—Jesus.

God knows when we give with good intentions (v. 4). He simply wants our generosity motivated by love as we give Him the glory, the honor, and the praise.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you place the spotlight on Jesus by giving to someone in secret this week? How can you give God credit while still accepting appreciation?

Jesus, thank You for reminding us that giving to others is a privilege and a wonderful way to thank You for all You’ve given us.

#### **Insight**

[Matthew 6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206) is part of Christ’s well-known Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5:3–7:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.3%E2%80%937.27)). In this chapter, He emphasizes three things believers should do in secret: give (vv. 1–4), pray (vv. 5–15), and fast (vv. 16–18). In explaining each of these actions Jesus starts with a prohibition, gives a command, and ends with a promise: “Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (vv. 4, 6, 18).

In contrast, hypocrites make their acts known “to be honored by others” (v. 2). The word hypocrite comes from the Greek hypokrites and refers to actors in a play. It implies a lack of sincerity and genuineness. Jesus is emphasizing the importance of the motive behind our actions.

By: [**Julie Schwab**](https://odb.org/author/jschwab95/)

# God Calling – 1/7/20

# The Secret Pearl

Look upon us with Thy favor, O Lord, while we behold ‘The land that is very far off’ and yet so near to the seeing eye and the listening ear.

Wait. Wonders are unfolding. Tremble with awe. No man can stand upon the threshold of Eternity unshaken. I give unto you Eternal Life. A free gift, a wonderful gift - the Life of the Ages.

**Silently comes the Kingdom**. No man can judge when it enters the heart of man, only in results. Listen quietly. Sometimes you may get no message. Meet thus all the same. You will absorb an atmosphere.

Cultivate silence. ‘God speaks in silences.’ A silence, a soft wind. Each can be a message to convey My meaning to the heart, though by no voice, or even word.

Each word or thought of yours can be like a pearl that you drop into the secret place of another heart, and in some hour of need, lo! the recipient finds the treasure and realizes for the first time its value.

Do not be too ready to do, just be. I said, ‘Be ye therefore perfect’ not ‘do’ perfect things. Try and grasp this. Individual efforts avail nothing. It is only the work of the Universal Spirit - My Spirit - that counts.

Dwell in thought on this, more and more, saints have taken a lifetime to grasp it.

Be still, and know that I am God.  Psalm 46:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/8/20

# Is My Sacrifice Living?



Abraham built an altar…; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar… —[Genesis 22:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+22%3A9)

This event is a picture of the mistake we make in thinking that the ultimate God wants of us is the sacrifice of death. What God wants is the sacrifice through death which enables us to do what Jesus did, that is, sacrifice our lives. Not— ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You…to death’ ([Luke 22:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22:33)). But— ‘I am willing to be identified with Your death so that I may sacrifice my life to God.’

We seem to think that God wants us to give up things! God purified Abraham from this error, and the same process is at work in our lives. God never tells us to give up things just for the sake of giving them up, but He tells us to give them up for the sake of the only thing worth having, namely, life with Himself. It is a matter of loosening the bands that hold back our lives. Those bands are loosened immediately by identification with the death of Jesus. Then we enter into a relationship with God whereby we may sacrifice our lives to Him.

It is of no value to God to give Him your life for death. He wants you to be a ‘living sacrifice’— to let Him have all your strengths that have been saved and sanctified through Jesus ([Romans 12:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Roman+12:1)). This is what is acceptable to God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The Bible does not thrill; the Bible nourishes. Give time to the reading of the Bible and the recreating effect is as real as that of fresh air physically.  Disciples Indeed, 387 R

# CCEL – 1/8/20

**They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.**—[PSA. 9:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.9.html" \l "Ps.9.10)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.—I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord **JEHOVAH** is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.—For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.—The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.—Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

[Prov. 18:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.18.html" \l "Prov.18.10). -[Isa. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.12.html#Isa.12.2).[Psa. 37:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.25). -[Psa. 37:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.28). -[I Sam. 12:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.22). -[II Cor. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.10).[Heb. 13:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.5).

‘The iniquity of the holy things.’ [Exodus 28:38](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.28.html" \l "Exod.28.38)

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, luke-warmness, irreverence, wandering of heart and forgetfulness of God, what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief, what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity, what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, ‘My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the melioration of both, proceed either from pride or vanity or indolence. I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, ‘In what fine order is my garden kept!’ This is pride. Or, it may be that my neighbours may look over the wall and say, ‘How finely your garden flourishes!’ This is vanity. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence.’ So that even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought, that when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things he wore upon his brow the words, ‘Holiness to the Lord:’ and even so while Jesus bears our sin, he presents before his Father’s face not our unholiness, but his own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!

# Word Live – 1/8/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/8/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/8/20

# God Uses Our Groaning

**Read:** [**Romans 8:22–30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a22%e2%80%9330)

22We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

26In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a22%e2%80%9330#fen-NIV-28145a)] have been called according to his purpose. 29For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 8:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a22%e2%80%9330#en-NIV-28145) Or that all things work together for good to those who love God, who; or that in all things God works together with those who love him to bring about what is good—with those who

Sixty-four years ago today, Nate Saint and four other American missionaries were killed by the Auca tribe (now called Waoranis) in Ecuador while trying to share the gospel. Their story inspired thousands of people to dedicate their lives to missions, particularly to minister to unreached people groups. Decades later, Nate’s son Steve reflected on what happened to his father, as well as the bond he had now built with the tribe, declaring, “What the Waorani meant for evil, God used for good.”

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. Romans 8:28

In our Scripture reading today, Paul acknowledges to the believers in Rome that there would be pain, suffering, and mourning on this earth. He describes these feelings as “groans” or “groaning” (vv. 22, 23, and 26). In the original language, a groan could also mean an inward, unexpressed feeling of sorrow. There is no doubt that when we receive awful news about a friend, are given a life-altering diagnosis, or lose a loved one, we feel an enormous amount of “groaning.” Sometimes, it may even be difficult to know how to pray. Paul says in verse 26 and 27 that during these times the Spirit Himself intercedes on our behalf.

Paul then changes the dynamics of his thoughts and boldly declares that even in the midst of suffering, God is still in control! He promises to use even our groaning for His good (vv. 28–30). Paul asserts that God’s sovereignty is ultimately for the Lord’s glory. This reflects what Jesus told His disciples, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Even though pain and suffering are common to all of us, God can and will use our groaning for His good.

**>>** Have you seen God use a difficult circumstance in your life for His good? Even when we don’t know how to pray, we can ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for us. Perhaps something significant is happening to a friend or a family member today. Spend time praying for them during this time of groaning.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, help us stay faithful even in the most difficult seasons of our lives. You said that in this life we will have tribulations, so we ask that during times of trials and hardships we will see your loving kindness and grace for us.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/8/20

# A Hundred Years from Now

 **Read: Job 19:21–27**

21“Have pity on me, my friends, have pity,  
    for the hand of God has struck me.  
22Why do you pursue me as God does?  
    Will you never get enough of my flesh?

23“Oh, that my words were recorded,  
    that they were written on a scroll,  
24that they were inscribed with an iron tool on[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13322a)] lead,  
    or engraved in rock forever!  
25I know that my redeemer[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13323b)] lives,  
    and that in the end he will stand on the earth.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13323c)]  
26And after my skin has been destroyed,  
    yet[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13324d)] in[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13324e)] my flesh I will see God;  
27I myself will see him  
    with my own eyes—I, and not another.  
    How my heart yearns within me!

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Job 19:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#en-NIV-13322) Or and
2. [Job 19:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#en-NIV-13323) Or vindicator
3. [Job 19:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#en-NIV-13323) Or on my grave
4. [Job 19:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#en-NIV-13324) Or And after I awake, / though this body has been destroyed, / then
5. [Job 19:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+19%3A21%E2%80%9327&version=NIV#en-NIV-13324) Or destroyed, / apart from

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. [Job 19:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%2019.25)

“I just want people to remember me a hundred years from now,” said screenwriter Rod Serling in 1975. Creator of the TV series The Twilight Zone, Serling wanted people to say of him, “He was a writer.” Most of us can identify with Serling’s desire to leave a legacy—something to give our lives a sense of meaning and permanence.

The story of Job shows us a man struggling with meaning amid life’s fleeting days. In a moment, not just his possessions but those most precious to him, his children, were taken. Then his friends accused him of deserving this fate. Job cried out: “Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!” ([Job 19:23–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%2019.23%E2%80%9324)).

Job’s words have been “engraved in rock forever.” We have them in the Bible. Yet Job needed even more meaning in his life than the legacy he’d leave behind. He discovered it in the character of God. “I know that my redeemer lives,” Job declared, “and that in the end he will stand on the earth” (19:25). This knowledge gave him the right longing. “I myself will see him,” Job said. “How my heart yearns within me!” (v. 27).

In the end, Job didn’t find what he expected. He found much more—the Source of all meaning and permanence (42:1–6).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why do you think Job wanted his words preserved forever? How do you want people to remember you one hundred years from now?

God, everything is fleeting except for You. We praise You for Your unshakable character. Show us what is truly important.

#### **Insight**

Accused of secret sin that had caused his suffering, Job maintained his innocence. In [Job 19:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Job%2019.25), he speaks of a Redeemer who will one day vindicate him. The word used here for “Redeemer” frequently refers in the Old Testament to the kinsman-redeemer, the person who defended or avenged the cause of another, or who provided protection or legal aid for close relatives who could not do so for themselves ([Leviticus 25:47–55](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lev%2025.47%E2%80%9355); [Ruth 3:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ruth%203.9); [Proverbs 23:10–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2023.10%E2%80%9311); [Jeremiah 50:34](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2050.34)). Some see a correlation between the Old Testament kinsman-redeemer and the redemptive ministry of Jesus.

# God Calling – 1/8/20

# Love Bangs the Door

Life with Me is not immunity from difficulties, but peace in difficulties.  My guidance is often by shut doors. Love bangs as well as opens.

Joy is the result of faithful trusting acceptance of My Will, when It seems not joyous.

St. Paul, my servant, learnt this lesson of the banged doors when he said ‘our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’  Expect rebuffs until this is learned - it is the only way.

Joy is the daughter of calm.

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. Psalm 125:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/9/20

# Prayerful Inner-Searching



May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless… —[1 Thessalonians 5:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Thessalonians+5%3A23)

“Your whole spirit….” The great, mysterious work of the Holy Spirit is in the deep recesses of our being which we cannot reach. Read [Psalm 139](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+139). The psalmist implies— “O Lord, You are the God of the early mornings, the God of the late nights, the God of the mountain peaks, and the God of the sea. But, my God, my soul has horizons further away than those of early mornings, deeper darkness than the nights of earth, higher peaks than any mountain peaks, greater depths than any sea in nature. You who are the God of all these, be my God. I cannot reach to the heights or to the depths; there are motives I cannot discover, dreams I cannot realize. My God, search me.”

Do we believe that God can fortify and protect our thought processes far beyond where we can go? “…the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). If this verse means cleansing only on our conscious level, may God have mercy on us. The man who has been dulled by sin will say that he is not even conscious of it. But the cleansing from sin we experience will reach to the heights and depths of our spirit if we will “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). The same Spirit that fed the life of Jesus Christ will feed the life of our spirit. It is only when we are protected by God with the miraculous sacredness of the Holy Spirit that our spirit, soul, and body can be preserved in pure uprightness until the coming of Jesus-no longer condemned in God’s sight.

We should more frequently allow our minds to meditate on these great, massive truths of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We begin our Christian life by believing what we are told to believe, then we have to go on to so assimilate our beliefs that they work out in a way that redounds to the glory of God. The danger is in multiplying the acceptation of beliefs we do not make our own. Conformed to His Image, 381 L

# CCEL – 1/9/20

**Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.**—[PSA. 60:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.60.html" \l "Ps.60.4)

Jehovah Nissi (The Lord my banner).—When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.—The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.—We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—The captain of our salvation.

My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—Valiant for the truth.—Fight the Lord's battles.—Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: fear ye not.—Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.—Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

[Exo. 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.17.html" \l "Exod.17.15). -[Isa. 59:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.19).[Psa. 20:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.20.html" \l "Ps.20.5). -[Jer. 51:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.51.html" \l "Jer.51.10). -[Rom. 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37). -[I Cor. 15:57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.57). -[Heb. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.10).[Eph. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.10). -[Jer. 9:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.9.html" \l "Jer.9.3). -[I Sam. 18:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.18.html" \l "iSam.18.17). -[Hag. 2:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hag.2.html" \l "Hag.2.4). -[John 4:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.35). -[Heb. 10:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.37).

“I will be their God.” [Jeremiah 31:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.31.html" \l "Jer.31.33)

Christian! here is all thou canst require. To make thee happy thou wantest something that shall satisfy thee; and is not this enough? If thou canst pour this promise into thy cup, wilt thou not say, with David, “My cup runneth over; I have more than heart can wish”? When this is fulfilled, “I am thy God”, art thou not possessor of all things? Desire is insatiable as death, but he who filleth all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? But the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it. I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine? Dost thou want anything but God? Is not his all-sufficiency enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail? But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction; thou desirest rapturous delight. Come, soul, here is music fit for heaven in this thy portion, for God is the Maker of Heaven. Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, can yield such melody as this sweet promise, “I will be their God.” Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; swim an age, and thou shalt find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and thou shalt find no bottom. “I will be their God.” If this do not make thine eyes sparkle, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state. But thou wantest more than present delights—thou cravest something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more canst thou hope for than the fulfilment of this great promise, “I will be their God”? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below, and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of thy Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and fatness which this portion yields thee. Live up to thy privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.

# Word Live – 1/9/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/9/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/9/20

# The Power of Prayer

**Read:** [**Matthew 6:5–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313)

### **Prayer**

5“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9“This, then, is how you should pray:

“‘Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
10your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
    on earth as it is in heaven.  
11Give us today our daily bread.  
12And forgive us our debts,  
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
13And lead us not into temptation,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313" \l "fen-NIV-23296a" \o "See footnote a)]  
    but deliver us from the evil one.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-23296b)]’

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 6:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-23296) The Greek for temptation can also mean testing.
2. [Matthew 6:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-23296) Or from evil; some late manuscripts one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Not many Christians have heard of Emma Dryer. In the late 1800s, Dryer left her successful career as an educator to join evangelist D. L. Moody in Chicago. For over a decade she helped begin a training school called the Chicago Evangelization Society, today called Moody Bible Institute. D. L. Moody described Dryer as “the best teacher of the Word of God in the United States.” Biographers note that the power behind Emma Dryer’s life was her devotion to prayer. Dryer was a devoted prayer warrior!

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16

The power and nature of prayer is shown in today’s passage. Jesus taught His disciples that when they pray, they should avoid the outlandish and gaudy prayers which were common practices of the day (v. 5). Jesus encouraged His disciples to find a secluded space and speak directly to the Father (v. 6a). This approach allowed those who prayed to be open, authentic, and humble as opposed to fake or full of pride. Jesus taught that a quiet prayer would be rewarded (v. 6b).

Jesus then gave His disciples what we call The Lord’s Prayer. This template shows us how to pray (vv. 9–13). We address the Lord as Our Father. In Romans 8:15, we are told that as the adopted children of God, we can cry out “Abba Father”—an intimate way of addressing God, much as a child will call out for Daddy. This is followed by recognizing that we serve the God Almighty who resides in heaven. His name is holy (v. 9).

Jesus concludes by outlining three portions of prayer: give us, forgive us, and lead us. This approach and template is one Emma Dryer also adopted. The Lord used her prayers and life to impact the world with the Word of God and the powerful message of Jesus Christ.

**>>** Even though it may take years to see an answer, you can be assured that your prayers are being heard. Let’s pray to the Lord in a reverent and humble manner: “Holy Father, Give us. Forgive us. Lead us.”

### **Pray with Us**

Join us as we thank the Lord for the women of faith He calls to ministry. One of them was Emma Dryer whose life demonstrated the power of prayer. May we also be prayer warriors!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/9/20

# The Leaning Tower

 **Read: Matthew 7:24–27**

### **The Wise and Foolish Builders**

24“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [Matthew 7:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24)

You’ve probably heard of the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, but have you heard of the leaning tower of San Francisco? It’s called the Millennium Tower. Built in 2008, this fifty-eight-story skyscraper stands proudly—but slightly crookedly—in downtown San Francisco.

The problem? Its engineers didn’t dig a deep enough foundation. So now they’re being forced to retrofit the foundation with repairs that may cost more than the entire tower did when it was originally built—a fix that some believe is necessary to keep it from collapsing during an earthquake.

The painful lesson here? Foundations matter. When your foundation isn’t solid, catastrophe could ensue. Jesus taught something similar near the end of His Sermon on the Mount. In [Matthew 7:24–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24%E2%80%9327), He contrasts two builders, one who built on a rock, another on sand. When a storm inevitably came, only the house with a solid foundation was left standing.

What does this mean for us? Jesus clearly states that our lives must be built through obedience and trust upon Him (v. 24). When we rest in Him, our lives can find solid ground through God’s power and unending grace.

Christ doesn’t promise us that we’ll never face storms. But He does say that when He’s our rock, those storms and torrents will never wash away our faith-fortified foundation in Him.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has your faith helped you to weather the worst storms you’ve faced? What are some practical ways you can strengthen your faith each day?

Father, storms are inevitable in life. Help us to choose to dwell daily in Scripture and strengthen our strong foundation in You.

#### **Insight**

Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Mount with the story of the wise and foolish builders ([Matthew 7:24–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24%E2%80%9327)) for good reason. He’s telling His hearers that regardless of how they try to live up to the instructions He’s just given them, their efforts are in vain if they build on the wrong foundation. The right foundation is Jesus Himself. This helps us greatly as we consider the entire sermon. Christ had just told the people some remarkable things: “Blessed are those who mourn” (5:4); “Blessed are you when people . . . persecute you” (v. 11); “Love your enemies” (v. 44); “Do not worry” (6:25). Now Jesus cautions the people against thinking they can achieve this by their own efforts. Jesus accomplished what we can’t. He fulfilled both the Law and the Old Testament prophecies about Himself (5:17). Anything we do must be constructed on the bedrock of faith in Him.

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

# God Calling – 1/9/20

# No Strain

Be calm, no matter what may befall you. Rest in Me. Be patient, and let patience have her perfect work. Never think things overwhelming. How can you be overwhelmed when I am with you?

Do not feel the strain of life.  There is no strain for My children.  Do you not see I am a Master Instrument-maker?  Have I not fashioned each part? Do I not know just what it can bear without a strain? Would I, the maker of so delicate an instrument, ask of it anything that could destroy or strain?

No! The Strain is only when you are serving another master, the world, fame, the good opinion of men - or carrying two days' burden on the one day.

Remember that it must not be.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Psalm 37:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/10/20

# The Opened Sight



I now send you, to open their eyes…that they may receive forgiveness of sins… —[Acts 26:17-18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A17-18)

This verse is the greatest example of the true essence of the message of a disciple of Jesus Christ in all of the New Testament.

God’s first sovereign work of grace is summed up in the words, “…that they may receive forgiveness of sins….” When a person fails in his personal Christian life, it is usually because he has never received anything. The only sign that a person is saved is that he has received something from Jesus Christ. Our job as workers for God is to open people’s eyes so that they may turn themselves from darkness to light. But that is not salvation; it is conversion— only the effort of an awakened human being. I do not think it is too broad a statement to say that the majority of so-called Christians are like this. Their eyes are open, but they have received nothing. Conversion is not regeneration. This is a neglected fact in our preaching today. When a person is born again, he knows that it is because he has received something as a gift from Almighty God and not because of his own decision. People may make vows and promises, and may be determined to follow through, but none of this is salvation. Salvation means that we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God on the authority of Jesus Christ, namely, forgiveness of sins.

This is followed by God’s second mighty work of grace: “…an inheritance among those who are sanctified….” In sanctification, the one who has been born again deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God’s ministry to others.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 R

# CCEL – 1/10/20

**I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—[I THES. 5:23.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.23)

Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.—Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God . . . passeth all understanding.—Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.—Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Eph. 5:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.25),[27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.27). -[Col. 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.28).[Phi. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.7). -[Col. 3:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.15).[II Thes. 2:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html#iiThess.2.16). -[I Cor. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.8).

“There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” [2 Timothy 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.4.html" \l "iiTim.4.8)

Doubting one! thou hast often said, “I fear I shall never enter heaven.” Fear not! all the people of God shall enter there. I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home; I have sent all before me; God’s finger is on the latch of my door, and I am ready for him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?” “Nay,” said he, “nay; there is one crown in heaven which the angel Gabriel could not wear, it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven which Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! thy portion is secure; “there remaineth a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No, it is entailed. If I be a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there. Come with me, believer, and let us sit upon the top of Nebo, and view the goodly land, even Canaan. Seest thou that little river of death glistening in the sunlight, and across it dost thou see the pinnacles of the eternal city? Dost thou mark the pleasant country, and all its joyous inhabitants? Know, then, that if thou couldst fly across thou wouldst see written upon one of its many mansions, “This remaineth for such a one; preserved for him only. He shall be caught up to dwell forever with God.” Poor doubting one, see the fair inheritance; it is thine. If thou believest in the Lord Jesus, if thou hast repented of sin, if thou hast been renewed in heart, thou art one of the Lord’s people, and there is a place reserved for thee, a crown laid up for thee, a harp specially provided for thee. No one else shall have thy portion, it is reserved in heaven for thee, and thou shalt have it ere long, for there shall be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

# Word Live – 1/10/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/10/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/10/20

# In the Name of Jesus

**Read:** [**Acts 2:14–39**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339)

### **Peter Addresses the Crowd**

14Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17“‘In the last days, God says,  
    I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
    your young men will see visions,  
    your old men will dream dreams.  
18Even on my servants, both men and women,  
    I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
    and they will prophesy.  
19I will show wonders in the heavens above  
    and signs on the earth below,  
    blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
20The sun will be turned to darkness  
    and the moon to blood  
    before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.  
21And everyone who calls  
    on the name of the Lord will be saved.’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-26971a)]

22“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339" \l "fen-NIV-26973b" \o "See footnote b)] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25David said about him:

“‘I saw the Lord always before me.  
    Because he is at my right hand,  
    I will not be shaken.  
26Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
    my body also will rest in hope,  
27because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
    you will not let your holy one see decay.  
28You have made known to me the paths of life;  
    you will fill me with joy in your presence.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-26978c)]

29“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord:  
    “Sit at my right hand  
35until I make your enemies  
    a footstool for your feet.”’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-26985d)]

36“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 2:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-26971) Joel 2:28-32
2. [Acts 2:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-26973) Or of those not having the law (that is, Gentiles)
3. [Acts 2:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-26978) Psalm 16:8-11 (see Septuagint)
4. [Acts 2:35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a14%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-26985) Psalm 110:1

We don’t know exactly what the apostle Peter’s favorite verse would have been, but a continual theme in his ministry, preaching, and writings was Jesus Christ’s resurrection. This message from Peter and the other disciples rang true from the beginning and is the foundation on which Christianity rests. In the beginning of Peter’s first letter to Christians scattered around the northern regions he writes, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

In today’s passage, we get to listen in on the first sermon Peter preached. After the Holy Spirit’s presence was felt at Pentecost, Peter stood up and addressed the confused crowd. He directly confronted the crowd’s misconception that the men were drunk on wine because they were speaking in other languages. He joked with them saying, “They are not drunk, it is only nine in the morning!” After quoting from the prophet Joel as the foundation for his message (vv. 17–21), Peter got to the central point: Jesus.

Peter made his listeners aware that Jesus was at their doorstep. They had seen, interacted with, and played a crucial part in His death. However, instead of condemning their actions, Peter concluded his sermon with one central idea, “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah” (v. 36).

Then, Peter urged them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (v. 38). By doing so, they would publicly declare that they were no longer going to live by the ways of the world. Instead, they would surrender their lives to the only one who could truly save people from their sins, the risen Lord Jesus.

**>>** Perhaps you believe in Jesus but have not yet been baptized. If so, reach out to your pastor to talk about publicly proclaiming your allegiance to Jesus, our resurrected King.

### **Pray with Us**

Today, Moody Aviation’s new student orientation is happening on our Spokane, Wash., campus. Will you pray for these future missionary aviation pilots and mechanics, as they train to bring the gospel to hard-to-reach places?

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/10/20

# Here Be Dragons?



**Read: 2 Timothy 1:6–14**

### **Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel**

6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 8So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. 9He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

13What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. [2 Timothy 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.7)

Legend has it that at the edges of medieval maps, marking the boundaries of the world the maps’ creators knew at the time, there’d be inscribed the words “Here be dragons”—often alongside vivid illustrations of the terrifying beasts supposedly lurking there.

There’s not much evidence medieval cartographers actually wrote these words, but I like to think they could have. Maybe because “here be dragons” sounds like something I might’ve written at the time—a grim warning that even if I didn’t know exactly what would happen if I ventured into the great unknown, it likely wouldn’t be good!

But there’s one glaring problem with my preferred policy of self-protection and risk-aversion: it’s the opposite of the courage to which I’m called as a believer in Jesus ([2 Timothy 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.7)).

One might even say I’m misguided about what’s really dangerous. As Paul explained, in a broken world bravely following Christ will sometimes be painful (v. 8). But as those brought from death to life and entrusted with the Spirit’s life flowing in and through us (vv. 9–10,14), how could we not?

When God gives us a gift this staggering, to fearfully shrink back would be the real tragedy—far worse than anything we might face when we follow Christ’s leading into uncharted territory (vv. 6–8, 12). He can be trusted with our hearts and our future (v. 12).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Is there a particularly debilitating fear God may be calling you to confront? How might the support and love of other believers encourage you as you walk through your fears?

Loving God, thank You for the new life You’ve given us, for freedom from all that would cripple us in fear and shame. Help us to find peace in You.

For further study, read Hope: Choosing Faith Instead of Fear at [discoveryseries.org/q0733](https://discoveryseries.org/q0733).

#### **Insight**

Paul’s second letter to Timothy gives us a chance to reflect on the last recorded words of a battle-scarred apostle. Abandoned by fellow believers in Jesus and imprisoned in Rome ([2 Timothy 1:15–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.15%E2%80%9318)), Paul urges a young man he loved like a son (v. 2) to remain strong in the face of looming opposition and hardship (v. 8). In the process, he reminds Timothy of the commissioning ceremony by which he and other church leaders (v. 6; [1 Timothy 4:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%204.14)) had recognized Timothy’s readiness to join them in leading others and suffering for the gospel ([2 Timothy 1:8–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.8%E2%80%9314)).

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

# God Calling – 1/10/20

# Influence

When you come to Me, and I give you that Eternal Life I give it to all who believe in Me, it alters your whole existence, the words you speak, the influences you have.

These are all eternal. They must be.  They spring from the life within you, My Life, Eternal Life, so that they too live forever.  Now you see how vast, how stupendous, is the work of any soul that has Eternal Life. The words, the influence, go on down the ages forever.

You must ponder on these truths I give you.  They are not surface facts, but the secrets of My Kingdom, the hidden pearls of rare price.

Meditate upon them. Work at them in your minds and hearts.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.  John 10:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/11/20

# What My Obedience to God Costs Other People



As they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon…, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. —[Luke 23:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+23%3A26)

If we obey God, it is going to cost other people more than it costs us, and that is where the pain begins. If we are in love with our Lord, obedience does not cost us anything— it is a delight. But to those who do not love Him, our obedience does cost a great deal. If we obey God, it will mean that other people’s plans are upset. They will ridicule us as if to say, “You call this Christianity?” We could prevent the suffering, but not if we are obedient to God. We must let the cost be paid.

When our obedience begins to cost others, our human pride entrenches itself and we say, “I will never accept anything from anyone.” But we must, or disobey God. We have no right to think that the type of relationships we have with others should be any different from those the Lord Himself had (see [Luke 8:1-3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+8:1-3)).

A lack of progress in our spiritual life results when we try to bear all the costs ourselves. And actually, we cannot. Because we are so involved in the universal purposes of God, others are immediately affected by our obedience to Him. Will we remain faithful in our obedience to God and be willing to suffer the humiliation of refusing to be independent? Or will we do just the opposite and say, “I will not cause other people to suffer”? We can disobey God if we choose, and it will bring immediate relief to the situation, but it will grieve our Lord. If, however, we obey God, He will care for those who have suffered the consequences of our obedience. We must simply obey and leave all the consequences with Him.

Beware of the inclination to dictate to God what consequences you would allow as a condition of your obedience to Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/11/20

**Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion.**—[PSA. 65:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.65.html" \l "Ps.65.1)

To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.—All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.—By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.—Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

[I Cor. 8:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.8.html" \l "iCor.8.6). -[John 5:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.23). -[Heb. 13:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.15). -[Psa. 50:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.50.html" \l "Ps.50.23).[Rev. 7:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.9),[12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.12).

“These have no root.” [Luke 8:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.8.html" \l "Luke.8.13)

My soul, examine thyself this morning by the light of this text. Thou hast received the word with joy; thy feelings have been stirred and a lively impression has been made; but, remember, that to receive the word in the ear is one thing, and to receive Jesus into thy very soul is quite another; superficial feeling is often joined to inward hardness of heart, and a lively impression of the word is not always a lasting one. In the parable, the seed in one case fell upon ground having a rocky bottom, covered over with a thin layer of earth; when the seed began to take root, its downward growth was hindered by the hard stone and therefore it spent its strength in pushing its green shoot aloft as high as it could, but having no inward moisture derived from root nourishment, it withered away. Is this my case? Have I been making a fair show in the flesh without having a corresponding inner life? Good growth takes place upwards and downwards at the same time. Am I rooted in sincere fidelity and love to Jesus? If my heart remains unsoftened and unfertilized by grace, the good seed may germinate for a season, but it must ultimately wither, for it cannot flourish on a rocky, unbroken, unsanctified heart. Let me dread a godliness as rapid in growth and as wanting in endurance as Jonah’s gourd; let me count the cost of being a follower of Jesus, above all let me feel the energy of his Holy Spirit, and then I shall possess an abiding and enduring seed in my soul. If my mind remains as obdurate as it was by nature, the sun of trial will scorch, and my hard heart will help to cast the heat the more terribly upon the ill-covered seed, and my religion will soon die, and my despair will be terrible; therefore, O heavenly Sower, plough me first, and then cast the truth into me, and let me yield thee a bounteous harvest.

# Word Live – 1/11/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/11/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/11/20

# The Mt. Everest Passage

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Footnotes:**

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

For nearly 60 years, Haddon Robinson taught thousands of seminary students how to preach. His textbook on homiletics sold more than 300,000 copies in many languages. Recently, he went to be with the Lord, but his legacy on evangelical homiletics continues. Before he passed, Robinson chose to have Isaiah 53 read at his memorial service. He called it “The Mt. Everest Passage of the Bible.”

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son. Galatians 4:4

In his sermon on today’s passage, Robinson notes that we see the “other- side” of God. Throughout the Old Testament, God expresses His power, might, strength, and dominance. In this passage, however, we see the other side of God, portrayed here as meek, humble, and a silent sheep being led to the slaughter. This is what Robinson means by the “other-side” of God. The ruler and commander of the universe is portrayed as a suffering servant.

At first glance, you were probably able to pick out several verses that are fulfilled by the life and death of Jesus. However, the entire chapter summarizes Jesus’ life, death, and reaction caused by His suffering: From the initial prophecy in verse 2 of growing up as a tender root in the midst of a hostile environment (Roman rule and reign) to the final verse describing the suffering servant as bearing the sin of many and making intercession for the transgressors (v. 12). Even details of His suffering and burial are predicted here (vv. 8–9). Jesus Christ fulfills all the prophesies in our passage.

The prophet Isaiah wrote these words some 700 years before the birth of Jesus! Here we read about Jesus, whose life was “an offering for sin” (v. 1). Isaiah gives us a behind-the- scenes look at what the God of the Universe would endure through His life and death. He enables us to see the “other-side” of God.

**>>** Reread today’s passage and meditate on the sacrifice Christ made on your behalf. Ask God to allow the Spirit to speak to you through the Word.

### **Pray with Us**

Moody’s undergraduate and seminary students arrive at the Chicago campus today, some for the very first time. As they unpack boxes and open suitcases, pray that God will also open their hearts and minds for what He’ll teach them this semester.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/11/20

# The Only King

 **Read: Matthew 2:1–12**

### **The Magi Visit the Messiah**

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23171a)] from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

6“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
    who will shepherd my people Israel.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23176b)]”

7Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

9After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 2:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-23171) Traditionally wise men
2. [Matthew 2:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-23176) Micah 5:2,4

They bowed down and worshiped him. [Matthew 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%202.11)

As five-year-old Eldon listened to the pastor talk about Jesus leaving heaven and coming to earth, he gasped when the pastor thanked Him in prayer for dying for our sins. “Oh, no! He died?” the boy said in surprise.

From the start of Christ’s life on earth, there were people who wanted Him dead. Wise men came to Jerusalem during the reign of King Herod inquiring, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him” ([Matthew 2:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%202.2)). When the king heard this, he became fearful of one day losing his position to Jesus. So he sent soldiers to kill all the boys two years old and younger around Bethlehem. But God protected His Son and sent an angel to warn His parents to leave the area. They fled, and He was saved (vv. 13–18).

When Jesus completed His ministry, He was crucified for the sins of the world. The sign placed above His cross, though meant in mockery, read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” (27:37). Yet three days later He rose in victory from the grave. After ascending to heaven, He sat down on the throne as King of kings and Lord of lords ([Philippians 2:8–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.8%E2%80%9311)).

The King died for our sins—yours, mine, and Eldon’s. Let’s allow Him to rule in our hearts.

By: [Anne Cetas](https://odb.org/author/annecetas/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What does it mean for you to have Jesus as your King? Are there areas of your life where He’s not?

Jesus, thank You for willingly dying for our sins and offering forgiveness. Teach us to submit to Your rule.

To learn more about Christ’s life, visit [christianuniversity.org/tgs.](https://christianuniversity.org/tgs)

#### **Insight**

Herod apparently knew that the prophecies about the Messiah must be true. That’s why he asked the “chief priests and teachers of the law” to tell him where the Messiah would be born ([Matthew 2:4–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%202.4%E2%80%936)). Yet, having learned what the Scriptures prophesied, Herod tried to thwart that prophecy by killing the baby boys in Bethlehem.

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

# God Calling – 1/11/20

# The Ache of Love

Use My unlimited stores for your needs and those of others.  Seek My wonderful truths and you shall find.

There may come times when you sit in silence, when it seems as if you were left alone. Then, I command you to remember I have spoken to you.

You will have the consciousness of My Presence when you hear no voice. Abide in that Presence. "I am the light of the world," but sometimes in tender pity, I withhold too glaring a light, lest, in its dazzling brightness, you should miss your daily path and work.

Not until Heaven is reached, do souls sit and drink in the ecstasy of God's revelation to His Own. At the moment you are pilgrims and need only your daily marching orders, and strength and guidance for the day.

Oh! Listen to My Voice, eagerly, joyfully. Never crowd it out. I have no rival claimants and if men seek the babble of the world, then I withdraw.

Life has hurt you. Only scarred lives can really save.

You cannot escape the discipline. It is the hallmark of discipleship. My children, trust Me always. Never rebel.

The trust given to Me today, takes away the ache of rejection of My love, that I suffered on earth, and have suffered through the ages. "I died for you, My children, and could ye treat Me so?"

And the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. John 10:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/12/20

# Have You Ever Been Alone with God? (1)



When they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples. —[Mark 4:34](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+4%3A34)

**Our Solitude with Him.** Jesus doesn’t take us aside and explain things to us all the time; He explains things to us as we are able to understand them. The lives of others are examples for us, but God requires us to examine our own souls. It is slow work— so slow that it takes God all of time and eternity to make a man or woman conform to His purpose. We can only be used by God after we allow Him to show us the deep, hidden areas of our own character. It is astounding how ignorant we are about ourselves! We don’t even recognize the envy, laziness, or pride within us when we see it. But Jesus will reveal to us everything we have held within ourselves before His grace began to work. How many of us have learned to look inwardly with courage?

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves. That is always the last bit of pride to go. The only One who understands us is God. The greatest curse in our spiritual life is pride. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we will never say, “Oh, I’m so unworthy.” We will understand that this goes without saying. But as long as there is any doubt that we are unworthy, God will continue to close us in until He gets us alone. Whenever there is any element of pride or conceit remaining, Jesus can’t teach us anything. He will allow us to experience heartbreak or the disappointment we feel when our intellectual pride is wounded. He will reveal numerous misplaced affections or desires— things over which we never thought He would have to get us alone. Many things are shown to us, often without effect. But when God gets us alone over them, they will be clear.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 R

# CCEL – 1/12/20

**The only wise God our Saviour**—[JUDE 25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.25)

Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.—The mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.—The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

[I Cor. 1:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.30). -[Job 11:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.11.html" \l "Job.11.7).[I Cor. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.7). -[Eph. 3:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html" \l "Eph.3.9).[Jas. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.5). -[Jas. 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.3.html" \l "Jas.3.17).

“Ye are Christ's.” [1 Corinthians 3:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.3.html" \l "iCor.3.23)

“Ye are Christ's.” You are his by donation, for the Father gave you to the Son; his by his bloody purchase, for he counted down the price for your redemption; his by dedication, for you have consecrated yourself to him; his by relation, for you are named by his name, and made one of his brethren and joint-heirs. Labour practically to show the world that you are the servant, the friend, the bride of Jesus. When tempted to sin, reply, “I cannot do this great wickedness, for I am Christ's.” Immortal principles forbid the friend of Christ to sin. When wealth is before you to be won by sin, say that you are Christ's, and touch it not. Are you exposed to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are Christ's. Are you placed where others are sitting down idly, doing nothing? Rise to the work with all your powers; and when the sweat stands upon your brow, and you are tempted to loiter, cry, “No, I cannot stop, for I am Christ's. If I were not purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens; but I am Christ's, and cannot loiter.” When the siren song of pleasure would tempt you from the path of right, reply, “Thy music cannot charm me; I am Christ's.” When the cause of God invites thee, give thy goods and thyself away, for thou art Christ's. Never belie thy profession. Be thou ever one of those whose manners are Christian, whose speech is like the Nazarene, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see you may know that you are the Saviour's, recognizing in you his features of love and his countenance of holiness. “I am a Roman!” was of old a reason for integrity; far more, then, let it be your argument for holiness, “I am Christ's!”

# Word Live – 1/12/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/12/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/12/20

# Saved by Grace

**Read:** [**Ephesians 2:1–10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1%e2%80%9310)

### **Made Alive in Christ**

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1%e2%80%9310#fen-NIV-29233a)] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 2:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3a1%e2%80%9310#en-NIV-29233) In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

Dr. James Gray was Moody Bible Institute’s third president (1904–1934). One historian noted, “His leadership during the critical and turbulent years following the death of Mr. Moody probably has resulted in him being held the most responsible more than any other man for the shape of the Institute as it is known today.” Some may not know that Gray also loved to write hymns. He penned the lyrics for the hymn, titled “Only a Sinner.” Influenced by Ephesians 2:8, the refrain reads, “Only a sinner saved by grace! Only a sinner saved by grace! This is my story, to God be the glory. I’m only a sinner saved by grace!”

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. Ephesians 2:8

In Ephesians 2:1–7, Paul was writing to the believers in Ephesus, now in modern-day Turkey. The apostle was explaining their past, present, and future position with Christ. Verses 1–3 describe our struggle with sin which ultimately leads to death and deserves God’s wrath. However, Paul appears to do a complete 180-degree switch in verses 4 and 5, beginning with the word “but.” He states that God intervened because of His enormous and unconditional love for us. The future awaiting the believer is shown in verses 6 and 7. We will be seated with Christ in the heavenly realms and fully receive the Lord’s incomparable riches of grace.

In verses 8 and 9, Paul summarizes this emotional and spiritual journey: “It is by grace you have been saved.” We are not saved by ourselves. No amount of effort can achieve what God has given. That is why the gift of salvation is so precious. This has been the story of countless people who have put their trust in Jesus Christ, and it is no wonder that Dr. Gray wanted to make it the focal point of his hymn. It was the central theme not only of this song but also of his life.

**>>** Have you received the grace and forgiveness that comes only from Jesus? We encourage you to do so today. If you already have accepted His gift of salvation, take a minute to thank God. It is completely undeserved! And it secures your eternal future.

### **Pray with Us**

We invite you to reflect on the powerful, amazing words that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus—our Scripture reading today. During your time with God, thank Him for the precious gift of salvation, extended to all, through faith.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/12/20

# A Lifestyle of Praise

 **Read: Psalm 146**

1Praise the Lord.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+146&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16343a" \o "See footnote a)]

Praise the Lord, my soul.

2I will praise the Lord all my life;  
    I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.  
3Do not put your trust in princes,  
    in human beings, who cannot save.  
4When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;  
    on that very day their plans come to nothing.  
5Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
    whose hope is in the Lord their God.

6He is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
    the sea, and everything in them—  
    he remains faithful forever.  
7He upholds the cause of the oppressed  
    and gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord sets prisoners free,  
8    the Lord gives sight to the blind,  
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,  
    the Lord loves the righteous.  
9The Lord watches over the foreigner  
    and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
    but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

10The Lord reigns forever,  
    your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 146:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+146&version=NIV#en-NIV-16343) Hebrew Hallelu Yah; also in verse 10

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. [Psalm 146:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20146.2)

Wallace Stegner’s mother died at the age of fifty. When Wallace was eighty, he finally wrote her a note—“Letter, Much Too Late”—in which he praised the virtues of a woman who grew up, married, and raised two sons in the harshness of the early Western United States. She was the kind of wife and mother who was an encourager, even to those that were less than desirable. Wallace remembered the strength his mother displayed by way of her voice. Stegner wrote: “You never lost an opportunity to sing.” As long as she lived, Stegner’s mother sang, grateful for blessings large and small.

The psalmist too took opportunities to sing. He sang when the days were good, and when they weren’t so good. The songs were not forced or coerced, but a natural response to the “Maker of heaven and earth” (146:6) and how He “gives food to the hungry” (v. 7) and “gives sight to the blind” (v. 8) and “sustains the fatherless and the widow” (v. 9). This is really a lifestyle of singing, one that builds strength over time as daily trust is placed in “the God of Jacob” who “remains faithful forever” (vv. 5–6).

The quality of our voices isn’t the point, but our response to God’s sustaining goodness—a lifestyle of praise. As the old hymn puts it: “There’s within my heart a melody.”

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you make singing praises to God a regular part of your day? What’s your favorite song of praise? Tell us why on our Facebook page.

Maker of heaven and earth, when I pause and reflect, Your provision for and protection of me is overwhelming. May my life be a continuous song of praise to You for as long as I live.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 146](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20146) doesn’t include a superscription, which means we don’t have information about the author’s identity or the circumstances surrounding the song’s composition. What we do know, however, is how [Psalm 146](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20146) was viewed by the religious community. While many scholars believe [Psalm 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201) was intentionally written to open the book of Psalms, [Psalms 145–150](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145%E2%80%93150) were praise songs selected to close the Hebrew hymnal. This closing flourish of praise has been called by one writer “the endless hallelujah.” The Bible Knowledge Commentary agrees, stating that these songs are “the grand doxology of the entire collection, for praise plays a greater part of [Psalms 145–150](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20145%E2%80%93150) than in most of the others. The word ‘praise’ occurs 46 times in these six psalms.”

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

# God Calling – 1/12/20

# Thanks for Trials

You must say "Thank You" for everything, even seeming trials and worries.

Joy is the whole being's attitude of "Thank You" to Me. Be glad. Rejoice. A father loves to see his children happy.

I am revealing so much to you. Pass it on. Each Truth is a jewel. Some poor spirit-impoverished friend will be glad of it. Drop one here and there.

Seek to find a heart-home for each Truth I have imparted to you. More Truths will flow in.  Use all I give you. Help others, I ache to find a way into each life and heart, for all to cry expectantly, "Even so come Lord Jesus."

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.  1Thessalonias 5:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/13/20

# Have You Ever Been Alone with God? (2)



When He was alone…the twelve asked Him about the parable. —[Mark 4:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+4%3A10)

**His Solitude with Us.** When God gets us alone through suffering, heartbreak, temptation, disappointment, sickness, or by thwarted desires, a broken friendship, or a new friendship— when He gets us absolutely alone, and we are totally speechless, unable to ask even one question, then He begins to teach us. Notice Jesus Christ’s training of the Twelve. It was the disciples, not the crowd outside, who were confused. His disciples constantly asked Him questions, and He constantly explained things to them, but they didn’t understand until after they received the Holy Spirit (see [John 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:26)).

As you journey with God, the only thing He intends to be clear is the way He deals with your soul. The sorrows and difficulties in the lives of others will be absolutely confusing to you. We think we understand another person’s struggle until God reveals the same shortcomings in our lives. There are vast areas of stubbornness and ignorance the Holy Spirit has to reveal in each of us, but it can only be done when Jesus gets us alone. Are we alone with Him now? Or are we more concerned with our own ideas, friendships, and cares for our bodies? Jesus cannot teach us anything until we quiet all our intellectual questions and get alone with Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We can understand the attributes of God in other ways, but we can only understand the Father’s heart in the Cross of Christ.  The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 558 L

# CCEL – 1/13/20

**Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.**—[ISA. 26:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3)

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.—I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord **JEHOVAH** is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?—Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.—In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.

The effect of righteousness [shall be] quietness and assurance for ever.—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—Peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come.

[Psa. 55:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.55.html" \l "Ps.55.22). -[Isa. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.12.html" \l "Isa.12.2).[Matt. 8:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.8.html" \l "Matt.8.26). -[Phi. 4:6-7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.6). -[Isa. 30:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.15).[Isa. 32:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.32.html" \l "Isa.32.17). -[John 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.27). -[Rev. 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.1.html" \l "Rev.1.4).

“Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber” [1 Kings 22:48](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iKgs.22.html" \l "iKgs.22.48)

Solomon’s ships had returned in safety, but Jehoshaphat’s vessels never reached the land of gold. Providence prospers one, and frustrates the desires of another, in the same business and at the same spot, yet the Great Ruler is as good and wise at one time as another. May we have grace today, in the remembrance of this text, to bless the Lord for ships broken at Ezion-geber, as well as for vessels freighted with temporal blessings; let us not envy the more successful, nor murmur at our losses as though we were singularly and specially tried. Like Jehoshaphat, we may be precious in the Lord’s sight, although our schemes end in disappointment.

The secret cause of Jehoshaphat’s loss is well worthy of notice, for it is the root of very much of the suffering of the Lord’s people; it was his alliance with a sinful family, his fellowship with sinners. In [2 Ch. 20:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiChr.20.html" \l "iiChr.20.37), we are told that the Lord sent a prophet to declare, “Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works.” This was a fatherly chastisement, which appears to have been blest to him; for in the verse which succeeds our morning’s text we find him refusing to allow his servants to sail in the same vessels with those of the wicked king. Would to God that Jehoshaphat’s experience might be a warning to the rest of the Lord’s people, to avoid being unequally yoked together with unbelievers! A life of misery is usually the lot of those who are united in marriage, or in any other way of their own choosing, with the men of the world. O for such love to Jesus that, like him, we may be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; for if it be not so with us, we may expect to hear it often said, “The Lord hath broken thy works.”

# Word Live – 1/13/20

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

# Scripture Union – 1/13/20

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

# Today in the Word – 1/13/20

# God Protects Us

**Read:** [**Psalm 91**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91)

1Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
    will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91" \l "fen-NIV-15397a" \o "See footnote a)]  
2I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,  
    my God, in whom I trust.”

3Surely he will save you  
    from the fowler’s snare  
    and from the deadly pestilence.  
4He will cover you with his feathers,  
    and under his wings you will find refuge;  
    his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
5You will not fear the terror of night,  
    nor the arrow that flies by day,  
6nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
    nor the plague that destroys at midday.  
7A thousand may fall at your side,  
    ten thousand at your right hand,  
    but it will not come near you.  
8You will only observe with your eyes  
    and see the punishment of the wicked.

9If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”  
    and you make the Most High your dwelling,  
10no harm will overtake you,  
    no disaster will come near your tent.  
11For he will command his angels concerning you  
    to guard you in all your ways;  
12they will lift you up in their hands,  
    so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.  
13You will tread on the lion and the cobra;  
    you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

14“Because he[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91#fen-NIV-15410b)] loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him;  
    I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.  
15He will call on me, and I will answer him;  
    I will be with him in trouble,  
    I will deliver him and honor him.  
16With long life I will satisfy him  
    and show him my salvation.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 91:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91#en-NIV-15397) Hebrew Shaddai
2. [Psalm 91:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91#en-NIV-15410) That is, probably the king

On her daily Moody Radio program, Janet Parshall addresses cultural issues through a biblical lens. Based in Washington, D.C., Parshall is known for her unflinching look at complex topics. When asked about her favorite Bible verse, Parshall responded, “I will say of the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust’” (Ps. 91:2, NASB). She explains, “People will disappoint us, institutions will fail us, and life comes with turbulence and tribulation. But God, who loves and protects us, can always be trusted.”

He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust. Psalm 91:2

This truth is exactly what the Psalmist wanted to share in today’s Scripture passage. Psalm 91 can be divided into four segments: verses 1–2, 3–8, 9–13, and 14–16. The beginning of this psalm (vv. 1–4) is more than just the introduction, it presents the main idea. The psalmist declares that the person who takes up residence in the shelter of God, the Most High, will find rest (v. 1). Verse 2 expounds on this thought by stating that we can confidently place our trust in the Lord who is a strong and mighty fortress for protection.

The next two major sections of this psalm, verses 3–8 and 9–13, expand on those first two verses by describing what the Lord’s sovereignty and protection look like. As you read these two sections, notice how often the psalmist uses the word “will.” He wants us to know that when we dwell in the shelter of the Most High, placing our trust in God alone, protection and guidance will come.

In the final section the word will is used again. This time, the psalmist explains what will come alongside God’s protection and presence: His deliverance and salvation. Parshall was exactly right, the God who loves and protects us, can always be trusted.

**>>**Do you make notations in your Bible? If so, underline every time the psalmist uses the word “will.” These are the “will” promises the Lord makes to us! Commit your day to the Lord, take refuge in Him, and see what will happen.

### **Pray with Us**

Today the spring semester begins at Moody. Will you remember our faculty in prayer as they begin their classes and ministry to students? May they be refreshed from winter break and come ready for the tasks of the new season.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/13/20

# Everyone Needs Compassion

 **Read: Matthew 9:27–38**

### **Jesus Heals the Blind and the Mute**

27As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

28When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

29Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; 30and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.” 31But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

32While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. 33And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

34But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.”

### **The Workers Are Few**

35Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [Matthew 9:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%209.36)

When Jeff was a new believer in Jesus and fresh out of college, he worked for a major oil company. In his role as a salesman, he traveled; and in his travels he heard people’s stories—many of them heartbreaking. He realized that what his customers most needed wasn’t oil, but compassion. They needed God. This led Jeff to attend seminary to learn more about the heart of God and eventually to become a pastor.

Jeff’s compassion had its source in Jesus. In [Matthew 9:27–33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%209.27%E2%80%9333) we get a glimpse of Christ’s compassion in the miraculous healing of two blind men and one demon-possessed man. Throughout His earthly ministry, He went about preaching the gospel and healing “through all the towns and villages” (v. 35). Why? “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (v. 36).

The world today is still full of troubled and hurting people who need the Savior’s gentle care. Like a shepherd who leads, protects, and cares for his sheep, Jesus extends His compassion to all who come to Him (11:28). No matter where we are in life and what we’re experiencing, in Him we find a heart overflowing with tenderness and care. And when we’ve been a beneficiary of God’s loving compassion, we can’t help but want to extend it to others.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you experienced God’s tender care? Who can you reach out to in compassion?

Heavenly Father, we’re so grateful You had compassion on us! We would be lost without You. Help us to extend Your overflowing compassion to ot

#### **Insight**

God’s sovereignty is described three times in [Matthew 9:37–38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%209.37%E2%80%9338). First, God is the Lord of the harvest. This means He owns the field and watches over it, and the results of the harvest are given to Him.

He’s also the one who hires and sends the workers. The workers perform the work, but they don’t go of their own accord—the Lord of the harvest sends them. Finally, the field belongs to Him. The field is His, He sends the workers, and the harvest goes to Him.

# God Calling – 1/13/20

# Friends Unseen

Never despair, never despond. Be just a channel of helpfulness for others.

Have more sympathy. Feel more tenderness towards others. Your lives shall not be all care. Gold does not stay in the crucible - only until it is refined.  Already I hear the music and the marching of the unseen host, rejoicing at your victory.

No follower of Mine would ever err or fall, if once the veil were withdrawn which prevents him seeing how these slips delight the evil spirits, and the pain and the disappointment of those who long for him to conquer in My Strength, and Name, and the ecstasy of rejoicing when victory is won.

My Strength is the same as that in which I conquered Satan in the Wilderness - depression and sorrow in the Garden, and even Death on Calvary.

Think of that.

Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. 1 Peter 5:7