# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/12/21

# 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 – 1/12/21

**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 – 1/12/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/12/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/12/21

# Eternal Encouragement

**Read:** [**2 Thessalonians 2:13–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3a13%e2%80%9317)

### **Stand Firm**

13But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3a13%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-29675a)] to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3a13%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-29677b)] we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

16May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Thessalonians 2:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3a13%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-29675) Some manuscripts because from the beginning God chose you
2. [2 Thessalonians 2:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3a13%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-29677) Or traditions

If you were a believer in the first century you would be faced with many difficult experiences. We know that these men and women, who publicly followed Christ, were challenged and tested. In one of Paul’s last letters to the believers in Thessalonica, he gave them some advice and encouragement on how to handle difficult times.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

Paul begins today’s text by giving thanks for the work God had already done in their lives. Their lives were a testament to God! Anything they had done or accomplished was evidence that God had brought them to this point (vv. 13–14). As a result, Paul encouraged them to “stand firm and hold to the teachings” they had received (v. 15). He knew that in difficult times it is easy to allow the Word of God to slip out of our lives. It is crucial that we hold firm so we can withstand the roller coasters life can bring.

Finally, Paul prays for the Thessalonians by first recalling what God had done for them (v. 16). The Lord’s encouragement and comfort in the past reassured them of the promise that He would be faithful and comfort them in the future. He does the same for us today.  When we remember what God has done for us it gives us strength and encouragement for the future. The word Paul uses for encouragement could also be translated as comfort. Paul’s big idea is that during difficult times, the God of eternal comfort and encouragement comes alongside us and gives us exactly what we need. The result of God’s eternal encouragement is that we can glorify Him through “every good deed and word” (v. 17). This message is one that everyone in 2021 needs.

**Apply the Word**

This New Year may be a difficult start for you. However, instead of dwelling on the negative, remember what God has done for you in the past. Let Him strengthen and encourage you to stand firm regardless of what comes your way.

### **Pray with Us**

Today, dear God, we recount the endless ways you have proven faithful throughout our lives. We take comfort in who you are, believing that you will continue to guide us, whatever lies ahead.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/12/21

# Breaking the Cycle

 **Read:** [**2 Corinthians 5:14–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.14%E2%80%9321)

14For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28895a" \o "See footnote a)] The old has gone, the new is here! 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21God made him who had no sin to be sin[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28899b)] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Corinthians 5:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28895) Or Christ, that person is a new creation.
2. [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A14%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28899) Or be a sin offering

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! [2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.17)

David’s first beating came at the hands of his father on his seventh birthday, after he accidentally broke a window. “He kicked me and punched me,” David said. “Afterward, he apologized. He was an abusive alcoholic, and it’s a cycle I’m doing my best to end now.”

But it took a long time for David to get to this point. Most of his teen years and twenties were spent in jail or on probation, and in and out of addiction treatment centers. When it felt like his dreams were entirely dashed, he found hope in a Christ-centered treatment center through a relationship with Jesus.

“I used to be filled with nothing but despair,” David says. “Now I’m pushing myself in the other direction. When I get up in the morning, the first thing I tell God is that I’m surrendering my will over to Him.”

When we come to God with lives shattered, whether by others’ wrongdoing or by our own, God takes our broken hearts and makes us new: “If anyone is in Christ, . . . the old has gone, the new is here!” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.17)). Christ’s love and life breaks into the cycles of our past, giving us a new future (vv. 14–15). And it doesn’t end there! Throughout our lives, we can find hope and strength in what God has done and continues to do in us—each and every moment.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where were you headed when you received Jesus as your Savior? How does it help to know that God continues to shape your life to increasingly resemble His?

Dear God, thank You for interrupting the downward trajectory of my life and making me a new creation! Make me ever more like You.

#### **Insight**

At the heart of the concept of becoming one with Jesus is His work of reconciliation in us. In [2 Corinthians 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205), Paul weaves several themes together—life, love, new creation, and the ministry of reconciliation—all framed by a call to act with urgency. It’s because of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection that we can be reconciled to God. Those who accept His gift of reconciliation should “no longer live for themselves” (v. 15). Instead, we’re compelled to view everyone differently (v. 16), as people in dire need of Jesus’ reconciliation. And what is this reconciliation? God will no longer “[count] people’s sins against them” (v. 19). With urgency, Paul tells us that we’re now Christ’s ambassadors of reconciliation and says, “We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (v. 20).

# God Calling – 1/12/21

# 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 – 1/13/21

# 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 – 1/13/21

**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 – 1/13/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/13/21

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# Today in the Word – 1/13/21

# Message of Perspective

**Read:** [**Luke 6:37–42**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+6%3a37%e2%80%9342)

### **Judging Others**

37“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

39He also told them this parable: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

41“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 42How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Nine years ago today, a cruise ship ran aground after hitting rocks and a sandbar off a small Italian island. According to the vessel’s owner, the captain “made an unapproved, unauthorized deviation in course.” Sadly, many people lost their lives, and the captain was found guilty of manslaughter because of his negligence. While it may seem obvious to us that the captain was at fault, we too often fail to see the dangers in front of us. We can all benefit from a new way to see.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Luke 6:41

Our text today is a parable we often learn as children in Sunday School. Jesus was teaching His listeners that they are to look to the Lord for direction and not to one another (v. 39). Then he tackled a sticky issue that is also prevalent today: hypocrisy. How do we judge others? To illustrate His point, Jesus used first-century humor, painting a picture of someone who points out a small piece of sawdust in another person’s eye, while having a large plank in his own eye (v. 41). In other words, we are far more tolerant and accepting of our own sin than we are of others.

When we dismiss our own sins and are quick to call out the sins in other people, Jesus calls us a “hypocrite” (v. 42). While it can be good to help our neighbor recognize the sin in his or her life, Jesus challenges us to deal with our sin first. This calls for a time of self-examination, confessing our own sins before God. When we are able to see clearly, it will help us traverse the waters of this world, and help us save other lost souls along the way.

**Apply the Word**

Spend some time today examining your life. Do you have a “plank” in your eye that you are disregarding? Ask God to give you the strength to see your own sins clearly so you can help others.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, we who so easily recognize others’ failings are often willfully blind to our own. Please convict us of our sins so we can enjoy your gift of repentance.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/13/21

# What’s Your Song?

 **Read:** [**Deuteronomy 31:15–22**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.15%E2%80%9322)

15Then the Lord appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. 16And the Lord said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your ancestors, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. 17And in that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and calamities will come on them, and in that day they will ask, ‘Have not these disasters come on us because our God is not with us?’ 18And I will certainly hide my face in that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.

19“Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. 20When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their ancestors, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. 21And when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath.” 22So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.

So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites. [Deuteronomy 31:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.22)

Most Americans knew little about Alexander Hamilton—until 2015, when Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote his hit musical Hamilton. Now schoolchildren know Hamilton’s story by heart. They sing it to each other on the bus and at recess. He’s their favorite founding father.

God knows the power of music, and He told Moses to “write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it” ([Deuteronomy 31:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.19)). God knew that long after Moses was gone, when He had brought Israel into the Promised Land, they would rebel and worship other gods. So He told Moses, “This song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants” (v. 21).

Songs are nearly impossible to forget, so it’s wise to be selective about what we sing. Some songs are just for fun, and that’s fine, but we benefit from songs that boast in Jesus and encourage our faith. One of the ways we “[make] the most of every opportunity” is when we speak “to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.” So “sing and make music from your heart to the Lord” (see [Ephesians 5:15–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%205.15%E2%80%9319)).

Songs can be an indicator of the direction of our heart. Do the words make much of Jesus? Do we sing them wholeheartedly? What we sing will influence what we believe, so choose wisely and sing loudly.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What should you look for in a worship song? Is there a favorite song you can sing more often? Why?

Father, this song is my prayer to You. (Sing your favorite.)

#### **Insight**

The final chapters of the book of Deuteronomy may seem a strange way to conclude the books of the law (Genesis–Deuteronomy). In [Deuteronomy 31:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2031.27), Moses says, “If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!” Then he gives the people the song in 32:1–43, which contains a litany of dire warnings and predictions about Israel’s past and future rebellion against God. But Moses also said that the words in this song and in the entire book “are your life” (32:47) because they’d remind them of the goodness of God.

# God Calling – 1/13/21

# 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

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/14/21

# Called By God



I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." —[Isaiah 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+6%3A8)

God did not direct His call to Isaiah— Isaiah overheard God saying, “…who will go for Us?” The call of God is not just for a select few but for everyone. Whether I hear God’s call or not depends on the condition of my ears, and exactly what I hear depends upon my spiritual attitude. “Many are called, but few are chosen” ([Matthew 22:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22:14)). That is, few prove that they are the chosen ones. The chosen ones are those who have come into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and have had their spiritual condition changed and their ears opened. Then they hear “the voice of the Lord” continually asking, “…who will go for Us?” However, God doesn’t single out someone and say, “Now, you go.” He did not force His will on Isaiah. Isaiah was in the presence of God, and he overheard the call. His response, performed in complete freedom, could only be to say, “Here am I! Send me.”

Remove the thought from your mind of expecting God to come to force you or to plead with you. When our Lord called His disciples, He did it without irresistible pressure from the outside. The quiet, yet passionate, insistence of His “Follow Me” was spoken to men whose every sense was receptive ([Matthew 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4:19)). If we will allow the Holy Spirit to bring us face to face with God, we too will hear what Isaiah heard— “the voice of the Lord.” In perfect freedom we too will say, “Here am I! Send me.”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/14/21

**My Father is greater than I.**—[JOHN 14:28.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.28)

When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven.—My Father, and your Father; . . . my God and your God. As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.—The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.—Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?—I and my Father are one.—As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

[Luke 11:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.11.html" \l "Luke.11.2). -[John 20:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.20.html" \l "John.20.17).[John 14:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.31). -[John 14:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.10).[John 3:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.35). -[John 17:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.2).[John 14:8-10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.8). -[John 10:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.30). -[John 15:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.9)

“Mighty to save.” [Isaiah 63:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.1)

By the words “to save” we understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire onward to complete sanctification. The words are multum in parro: indeed, here is all mercy in one word. Christ is not only “mighty to save” those who repent, but he is able to make men repent. He will carry those to heaven who believe; but he is, moreover, mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them. He is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, and to constrain the despiser of his name to bend the knee before him. Nay, this is not all the meaning, for the divine power is equally seen in the after-work. The life of a believer is a series of miracles wrought by “the Mighty God.” The bush burns, but is not consumed. He is mighty to keep his people holy after he has made them so, and to preserve them in his fear and love until he consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ’s might doth not lie in making a believer and then leaving him to shift for himself; but he who begins the good work carries it on; he who imparts the first germ of life in the dead soul, prolongs the divine existence, and strengthens it until it bursts asunder every bond of sin, and the soul leaps from earth, perfected in glory. Believer, here is encouragement. Art thou praying for some beloved one? Oh, give not up thy prayers, for Christ is “mighty to save.” You are powerless to reclaim the rebel, but your Lord is Almighty. Lay hold on that mighty arm, and rouse it to put forth its strength. Does your own case trouble you? Fear not, for his strength is sufficient for you. Whether to begin with others, or to carry on the work in you, Jesus is “mighty to save;” the best proof of which lies in the fact that he has saved you. What a thousand mercies that you have not found him mighty to destroy!

# Word Live – 1/14/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/14/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/14/21

# Message of Thankfulness

**Read:** [**Luke 17:11–19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3a11%e2%80%9319)

### **Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy**

11Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3a11%e2%80%9319#fen-NIV-25664a)] met him. They stood at a distance 13and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

14When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

15One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

17Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 17:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3a11%e2%80%9319#en-NIV-25664) The Greek word traditionally translated leprosy was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

True thankfulness can stop us in our tracks and motivate us to action. That’s what happened to a leper whose life was forever changed by Jesus. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee, an ethnically diverse and tense region (v. 11). After hearing cries from a group of men with leprosy, Jesus instructed them to go show themselves to the priests (vv. 12–14). Once the priests declared them healed, they would be allowed to rejoin society.

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. Psalm 9:1

While on the journey to receive medical clearance, the lepers began to notice that evidence of their skin disease was supernaturally disappearing. We can imagine their pace quickening as their hopes of being reunited with loved ones intensified. Suddenly, one of them stopped and turned around, deciding to take a moment to thank Jesus. The actions of this one leper should teach us something as well. When Jesus gives us new life, He also gives us a message of profound thankfulness.

A detail often overlooked in this narrative is that this man was a Samaritan, a foreigner (vv. 16, 18). Not only was he an outsider because of his leprosy, but he was also an outcast to the outcasts because he was from Samaria. Nonetheless, because of what Jesus did, he was drastically moved to an attitude of thankfulness. This man was healed both physically and, more importantly, spiritually. His faith in Christ’s authority over the powers of this world made him well (v. 19). This thankfulness to God would travel with him for the rest of his life. And thankfulness is a part of our new life in Christ also. This new message of thankfulness for what the Lord has done in our lives ought to travel with us wherever we go. Be someone who is quick to thank God, even if you are standing alone.

**Apply the Word**

When you thank the Lord for His work in your life, don’t forget to thank those around you who have helped and supported you along the way

### Pray with Us

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/14/21

# Our Compassionate God

 **Read:** [**Psalm 138**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20138)

#### **Of David.**

1I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;  
    before the “gods” I will sing your praise.  
2I will bow down toward your holy temple  
    and will praise your name  
    for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,  
for you have so exalted your solemn decree  
    that it surpasses your fame.  
3When I called, you answered me;  
    you greatly emboldened me.

4May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,  
    when they hear what you have decreed.  
5May they sing of the ways of the Lord,  
    for the glory of the Lord is great.

6Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;  
    though lofty, he sees them from afar.  
7Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
    you preserve my life.  
You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;  
    with your right hand you save me.  
8The Lord will vindicate me;  
    your love, Lord, endures forever—  
    do not abandon the works of your hands.

You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes. [Psalm 138:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20138.7)

The winter night was cold when someone threw a large stone through a Jewish child’s bedroom window. A star of David had been displayed in the window, along with a menorah to celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. In the child’s town of Billings, Montana, thousands of people—many of them believers in Jesus—responded to the hateful act with compassion. Choosing to identify with the hurt and fear of their Jewish neighbors, they pasted pictures of menorahs in their own windows.

As believers in Jesus, we too receive great compassion. Our Savior humbled Himself to live among us ([John 1:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.14)), identifying with us. On our behalf, He, “being in very nature God . . . made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” ([Philippians 2:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%202.6%E2%80%937)). Then, feeling as we feel and weeping as we weep, He died on a cross, sacrificing His life to save ours.

Nothing we struggle with is beyond our Savior’s concern. If someone “throws rocks” at our lives, He comforts us. If life brings disappointments, He walks with us through despair. “Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar” ([Psalm 138:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20138.6)). In our troubles, He preserves us, stretching out His hand against both “the anger of [our] foes” (v. 7) and our own deepest fears. Thank You, God, for Your compassionate love.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what areas of your life do you need God’s compassion? How can you show His care and love to others?

O God, I thank You for understanding my struggles and comforting me with loving care. Remind me always to share Your compassion with others.

Learn to love like Jesus at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0208.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0208.)

#### **Insight**

In [Psalm 138:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20138.4%E2%80%935), David calls the kings of the earth to praise God. The surrounding verses explain the reasons he issues this call: God is loving and faithful and answers those who call (vv. 1–3); He’s kind and compassionate to “the lowly”; He saves those who are oppressed (vv. 6–8).

David’s call to the kings of the earth in verses 4–5 could be considered a hopeful calling. In the days of the Old Testament, kings (outside of Israel) didn’t praise God. They were, more often than not, rebellious and resistant to Him (see [Psalms 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%202) and [48](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2048)). In Revelation, however, David’s hope is fulfilled as the kings of the earth bring their riches to the New Jerusalem ([Revelation 21:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.24)).

# God Calling – 1/14/21

# Mighty and Marvelous

Glad indeed are the souls with whom I walk. Walking with Me is security. The coming of My Spirit into a life, and the working are imperceptible, but the result is might.

Learn of Me. Kill the self. Every blow to self is used to shape the real, eternal, imperishable you.

Be very candid and rigorous with yourselves.  "Did self prompt that?" and if it did, oust it at all costs.

When I died on the Cross, I died embodying all the human self. Once that was crucified, I could conquer even death.

When I bore your sins in My own body on the Tree I bore the self-human nature of the world. As you too kill self, you gain the overwhelming power I released for a weary world, and you too will be victorious.

It is not life and its difficulties you have to conquer, only the self in you. As I said to My disciples, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."  You could not understand them. But as you go on obeying Me and walking with Me, and listening to Me, you will, and then you will see how glorious, how marvelous My revelations are, and My teachings.

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.  1 Corinthians 15:31

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/15/21

# Do You Walk In White?



We were buried with Him…that just as Christ was raised from the dead…even so we also should walk in newness of life. —[Romans 6:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+6%3A4)

No one experiences complete sanctification without going through a “white funeral” — the burial of the old life. If there has never been this crucial moment of change through death, sanctification will never be more than an elusive dream. There must be a “white funeral,” a death with only one resurrection— a resurrection into the life of Jesus Christ. Nothing can defeat a life like this. It has oneness with God for only one purpose— to be a witness for Him.

Have you really come to your last days? You have often come to them in your mind, but have you really experienced them? You cannot die or go to your funeral in a mood of excitement. Death means you stop being. You must agree with God and stop being the intensely striving kind of Christian you have been. We avoid the cemetery and continually refuse our own death. It will not happen by striving, but by yielding to death. It is dying— being “baptized into His death” ([Romans 6:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:3)).

Have you had your “white funeral,” or are you piously deceiving your own soul? Has there been a point in your life which you now mark as your last day? Is there a place in your life to which you go back in memory with humility and overwhelming gratitude, so that you can honestly proclaim, “Yes, it was then, at my ‘white funeral,’ that I made an agreement with God.”

“This is the will of God, your sanctification…” ([1 Thessalonians 4:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+4:3)). Once you truly realize this is God’s will, you will enter into the process of sanctification as a natural response. Are you willing to experience that “white funeral” now? Will you agree with Him that this is your last day on earth? The moment of agreement depends on you.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Sincerity means that the appearance and the reality are exactly the same.  
[Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](https://dhp.org/0098.html)

# CCEL – 1/15/21

**My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.**—[PSA. 119:25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.25)

If ye . . . be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For your life is hid with Christ in God.—Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.—Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

[Col. 3:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.1). -[Phi. 3:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.20).[Gal. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.17). -[Rom. 8:12.13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.12). -[I Pet. 2:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.11).

“Do as thou hast said.” [2 Samuel 7:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.7.html" \l "iiSam.7.25)

God’s promises were never meant to be thrown aside as waste paper; he intended that they should be used. God’s gold is not miser’s money, but is minted to be traded with. Nothing pleases our Lord better than to see his promises put in circulation; he loves to see his children bring them up to him, and say, “Lord, do as thou hast said.” We glorify God when we plead his promises. Do you think that God will be any the poorer for giving you the riches he has promised? Do you dream that he will be any the less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you imagine he will be any the less pure for washing you from your sins? He has said “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Faith lays hold upon the promise of pardon, and it does not delay, saying, “This is a precious promise, I wonder if it be true?” but it goes straight to the throne with it, and pleads, “Lord, here is the promise, ‘Do as thou hast said.’” Our Lord replies, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” When a Christian grasps a promise, if he does not take it to God, he dishonours him; but when he hastens to the throne of grace, and cries, “Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this, ‘Thou hast said it;’” then his desire shall be granted. Our heavenly Banker delights to cash his own notes. Never let the promise rust. Draw the sword of promise out of its scabbard, and use it with holy violence. Think not that God will be troubled by your importunately reminding him of his promises. He loves to hear the loud outcries of needy souls. It is his delight to bestow favours. He is more ready to hear than you are to ask. The sun is not weary of shining, nor the fountain of flowing. It is God’s nature to keep his promises; therefore go at once to the throne with “Do as thou hast said.”

# Word Live – 1/15/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/15/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/15/21

# A New Heart and Mouth

**Read:** [**Matthew 15:1–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320)

### **That Which Defiles**

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

3Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? 4For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320" \l "fen-NIV-23638a" \o "See footnote a)] and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-23638b)] 5But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ 6they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8“‘These people honor me with their lips,  
    but their hearts are far from me.  
9They worship me in vain;  
    their teachings are merely human rules.’[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#fen-NIV-23643c)]”

10Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

12Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

13He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. 14Leave them; they are blind guides.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320" \l "fen-NIV-23648d" \o "See footnote d)] If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

15Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

16“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. 17“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 15:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23638) Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16
2. [Matthew 15:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23638) Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9
3. [Matthew 15:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23643) Isaiah 29:13
4. [Matthew 15:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3a1%e2%80%9320#en-NIV-23648) Some manuscripts blind guides of the blind

Several years ago, my friend called with a frantic voice. Muddy water was coming out of his faucets. Upon further inspection from professionals, he discovered that an underground pipe had cracked and dirt was seeping its way into his house. Workers needed to dig up large sections of his yard to fix the problem. As believers, we can be guilty of allowing filth to come out of our mouths because it has unconsciously seeped into our hearts. Thankfully, God is in the business of digging into our lives to fix our damaged hearts.

What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them. Matthew 15:11

In our text, the Pharisees were reaching a boiling point. The masses were beginning to follow Jesus, listen to His teachings, and experience healing by His power. In an attempt to undermine this rapidly growing movement, they sent a delegation from Jerusalem to expose Jesus as a heretic (vv. 1–2). For the Pharisees and teachers of the law, tradition was their mission. So when they tried to call out Jesus’ disciples on a technicality of living defiled lives because they were not washing their hands before meals, Jesus responded in brilliant fashion. He argued that they were honoring God only by their mouths and not by their lives (vv. 3–9).

The Pharisees were obsessed with keeping rituals. However, when Jesus stepped onto the scene, He began teaching something altogether different. He said that what makes you unclean comes from within. For Him, it was not a mouth issue as much as it was a heart issue. What comes out of the mouth is actually coming from the heart (v. 19). Jesus’ new message required them, and us, to check not only their mouths but also their hearts.

**Apply the Word**

Do you ever find yourself saying something that later you are ashamed of? Perhaps a comment to a friend or even a subtle remark under your breath? Allow the Lord to work on your heart so that you can honor Him with both your mouth and your life.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, we often undermine the importance of our words, excusing vulgarity as humor and irreverence as authenticity. Today, make us aware of our words and what they say about our hearts.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/15/21

# All Roads?

 **Read:** [**John 14:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.1%E2%80%937)

### **Jesus Comforts His Disciples**

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26670a)]; believe also in me. 2My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4You know the way to the place where I am going.”

### **Jesus the Way to the Father**

5Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you really know me, you will know[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26676b)] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 14:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-26670) Or Believe in God
2. [John 14:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-26676) Some manuscripts If you really knew me, you would know

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” [John 14:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.6)

“Don’t get on the expressway!” That text came from my daughter one day as I was leaving work. The highway home had become a virtual parking lot. I began trying alternate routes, but after experiencing gridlock on other roads, I gave up. The trip home would have to wait till later in the day, so I drove in the opposite direction to an athletic event my granddaughter was involved in.

Discovering that no roads would lead me home made me think about people who say that all roads lead to an eternal relationship with God. Some believe the road of kindness and good behavior will get you there. Others choose the road of doing religious things.

Relying on those roads, however, leads to a dead end. There’s only one road to take to God’s eternal presence. Jesus clarified this when He said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” ([John 14:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.6)). He was revealing that He was going to die to open the way for us to enter His Father’s house—to His presence and the real life He provides for today and eternity.

Skip the blocked highways that don’t lead to God’s presence. Instead, trust Jesus as Savior, for “whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” (3:36). And for those who already believe in Him, rest in the way He’s provided.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why is it vital to know that only Jesus can save us? Why are we prone to try to add to what it takes to be welcomed into His family?

Dear God, I want to trust You for eternity. Thank You for the salvation found in Jesus alone.

Read about the difference between relationship with Jesus and religion at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0215.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0215.)

#### **Insight**

Before going to the cross, Jesus began His final teaching time with His disciples with these words of peace: “Do not let your hearts be troubled” ([John 14:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.1)). He knew what was coming and how troubling it would be for them. In addition to speaking of His return, Jesus also promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (vv. 15–31); a life of fruitfulness when connected to Him, the vine (ch. 15); and encouragement for upcoming challenges (ch. 16). Then, after describing the joys and struggles of living for Christ in a world that doesn’t know Him, Jesus closed His message the way it began—with words of comfort and encouragement: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (16:33). His victory secures our peace.

# God Calling – 1/15/21

# Relax

Relax, do not get tense, have no fear. All is for the best. How can you fear change when your life is hid with Me in God, who changeth not - and I am the same yesterday, today, and forever.

You must learn poise, soul-balance and poise, in a vacillating, changing world.

Claim My power. The same power with which I cast out devils is yours today. Use it.  If not, I withdraw it. Use it ceaselessly.

You cannot ask too much. Never think you are too busy. As long as you get back to Me and replenish after each task no work can be too much.  My Joy I give you. Live in it. Bathe your Spirit in it. Reflect it.

Jesus came and spoke with them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.  Matthew 28:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/16/21

# The Voice of the Nature of God



I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" —[Isaiah 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+6%3A8)

When we talk about the call of God, we often forget the most important thing, namely, the nature of Him who calls. There are many things calling each of us today. Some of these calls will be answered, and others will not even be heard. The call is the expression of the nature of the One who calls, and we can only recognize the call if that same nature is in us. The call of God is the expression of God’s nature, not ours. God providentially weaves the threads of His call through our lives, and only we can distinguish them. It is the threading of God’s voice directly to us over a certain concern, and it is useless to seek another person’s opinion of it. Our dealings over the call of God should be kept exclusively between ourselves and Him.

The call of God is not a reflection of my nature; my personal desires and temperament are of no consideration. As long as I dwell on my own qualities and traits and think about what I am suited for, I will never hear the call of God. But when God brings me into the right relationship with Himself, I will be in the same condition Isaiah was. Isaiah was so attuned to God, because of the great crisis he had just endured, that the call of God penetrated his soul. The majority of us cannot hear anything but ourselves. And we cannot hear anything God says. But to be brought to the place where we can hear the call of God is to be profoundly changed.

**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 – 1/16/21

**It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.**—[COL. 1:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.19)

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.—God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.—By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.—And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—Of his fulness have all we received.

[John 3:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html#John.3.35). -[Phi. 2:9-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.9). -[Eph. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.21). -[Col. 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.16).[Rom. 14:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.9). -[Col. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16).

“I will help thee, saith the Lord.” [Isaiah 41:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.14)

This morning let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: “I will help thee.” “It is but a small thing for me, thy God, to help thee. Consider what I have done already. What! not help thee? Why, I bought thee with my blood. What! not help thee? I have died for thee; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? Help thee! It is the least thing I will ever do for thee; I have done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose thee. I made the covenant for thee. I laid aside my glory and became a man for thee; I gave up my life for thee; and if I did all this, I will surely help thee now. In helping thee, I am giving thee what I have bought for thee already. If thou hadst need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it thee; thou requirest little compared with what I am ready to give. 'Tis much for thee to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. ‘Help thee?’ Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of thy granary asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a handful of thy wheat; and thou art nothing but a tiny insect at the door of my all-sufficiency. ‘I will help thee.’”

O my soul, is not this enough? Dost thou need more strength than the omnipotence of the United Trinity? Dost thou want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring hither thine empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Haste, gather up thy wants, and bring them here—thine emptiness, thy woes, thy needs. Behold, this river of God is full for thy supply; what canst thou desire beside? Go forth, my soul, in this thy might. The Eternal God is thine helper!

“Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismay'd!

I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.”

# Word Live – 1/16/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/16/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/16/21

# A New Task

**Read:** [**John 1:19–28**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328)

### **John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah**

19Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-26064a)] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

21They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

He answered, “No.”

22Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

23John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-26068b)]

24Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

26“I baptize with[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-26071c)] water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. 27He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

28This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 1:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-26064) The Greek term traditionally translated the Jews (hoi Ioudaioi) refers here and elsewhere in John’s Gospel to those Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus; also in 5:10, 15, 16; 7:1, 11, 13; 9:22; 18:14, 28, 36; 19:7, 12, 31, 38; 20:19.
2. [John 1:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-26068) Isaiah 40:3
3. [John 1:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3a19%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-26071) Or in; also in verses 31 and 33 (twice)

One of the most interesting characters in the Bible has to be John the Baptist. This hairy man, wearing camel’s skin and eating locust and honey, had a very important job. His focus was never on himself, but rather he strived to shine the spotlight on Christ. God gave this man the responsibility to prepare the way for Jesus.

I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, “Make straight the way for the Lord.” John 1:23

In today’s text, the curious Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites on a mission to discover more about this man in the wilderness who was teaching people something new about God. When questioned about his identity, at first, John was reluctant to say much. Perhaps he was still wondering what his role would be in the coming of the Messiah. However, when pressed, John unequivocally stated that he was not the Messiah, but rather a “voice of one calling in the wilderness” (v. 23). John was a messenger who would help people prepare their hearts and lives for something brand new.

Some Pharisees pushed back and questioned John about why he was baptizing people at all (v. 25). But John responded by stating that he was simply preparing people for not just someone, but the One. The one, “whose sandals I am not worthy to untie,” John says (v. 27). His dedication to the Lord and his new task consumed him. John’s new task was getting everything, and everyone, ready for someone they had long-awaited.

As followers of Christ, our new task is similar to John’s mission. We are called to turn the spotlight off ourselves and shine it on Christ. We have been called to be a voice in our own wilderness and help people prepare themselves for an encounter with the Lord.

**Apply the Word**

What areas are you in that seem like a wilderness and are in desperate need of Christ? Begin praying for opportunities, wisdom, and the courage for your new task of being a voice pointing people to Him.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, let us not forget that you are our reason for living. Teach us to walk in such close step with you that all who know us can’t help but see you.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/16/21

# Mighty

 **Read:** [**1 Samuel 17:32**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.32)

32David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

**Read:** [**1 Samuel 17:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.32)[**41–47**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%2017.41%E2%80%9347)

41Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. 43He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44“Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!”

45David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

[Goliath] looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy. [1 Samuel 17:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.42)

Baby Saybie, born as a “micro-preemie” at 23 weeks, weighed only 8.6 ounces. Doctors doubted Saybie would live and told her parents they’d likely have only an hour with their daughter. However, Saybie kept fighting. A pink card near her crib declared “Tiny but Mighty.” After five months in the hospital, Saybie miraculously went home as a healthy five-pound baby. And she took a world record with her: the world’s tiniest surviving baby.

It’s powerful to hear stories of those who beat the odds. The Bible tells one of these stories. David, a shepherd boy, volunteered to fight Goliath—a mammoth warrior who defamed God and threatened Israel. King Saul thought David was ridiculous: “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth” ([1 Samuel 17:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.33)). And when the boy David stepped onto the battlefield, Goliath “looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy” (v. 42). However, David didn’t step into battle alone. He came “in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel” (v. 45). And when the day was done, a victorious David stood above a dead Goliath.

No matter how enormous the problem, when God is with us there’s nothing that we need to fear. With His strength, we’re also mighty.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When do you feel small and insignificant? How can you see God present with you and strengthening you despite insurmountable odds?

God, I feel tiny today. Left to myself, there’s no way forward. But I trust You to be with me and guide me. I’m trusting in Your strength.

#### **Insight**

Goliath considered it an insult to have David fight him because David was “little more than a boy” ([1 Samuel 17:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.42))—“a youth” (esv)—while he was a battle-seasoned warrior (v. 33). David, the eighth and the “youngest” (16:11; 17:12, 14, Hebrew haqqāṭān) of Jesse’s sons, was consistently looked down upon, even by his own family (17:28). Haqqāṭān can mean “smallest in size” as well as youngest. To serve in the army, an Israelite male needed to be at least twenty years old ([Numbers 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%201.3)). Three of his older brothers were in Saul’s army at this time ([1 Samuel 17:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2017.13)). Assuming the remaining four brothers were one year apart in age, scholars estimate David would be about fourteen to fifteen years old when he fought Goliath.

# God Calling – 1/16/21

# Friend in Drudgery

Nothing in the day is too small to be a part of My scheme.

It is the daily strivings that count, not the momentary heights. The obeying of My Will day in, day out, in the wilderness plains, rather than the occasional Mount of Transfiguration.

Perseverance is nowhere needed so much as in the religious life. The drudgery of the Kingdom it is that secures My intimate Friendship. I am the Lord of little things, the Divine Control of little happenings.

Nothing in the day is too small to be a part of My scheme. The little stones in a mosaic play a big part.

Joy in Me. Joy is the God-given cement that secures the harmony and beauty of My mosaic.

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me? - Jeremiah 32:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/17/21

# The Call of the Natural Life



When it pleased God…to reveal His Son in me… —[Galatians 1:15-16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+1%3A15-16)

The call of God is not a call to serve Him in any particular way. My contact with the nature of God will shape my understanding of His call and will help me realize what I truly desire to do for Him. The call of God is an expression of His nature; the service which results in my life is suited to me and is an expression of my nature. The call of the natural life was stated by the apostle Paul— “When it pleased God…to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him [that is, purely and solemnly express Him] among the Gentiles….”

Service is the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. But strictly speaking, there is no call to that. Service is what I bring to the relationship and is the reflection of my identification with the nature of God. Service becomes a natural part of my life. God brings me into the proper relationship with Himself so that I can understand His call, and then I serve Him on my own out of a motivation of absolute love. Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an expression of my nature, and God’s call is an expression of His nature. Therefore, when I receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and out of devotion to Him service becomes my everyday way of life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/17/21

**Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.**—[ISA. 38:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.38.html" \l "Isa.38.17)

God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.—O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.—When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.—I waited patiently for the Lord. He brought me up . . . out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock.

[I John 4:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.9).[Mic. 7:18-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.7.html" \l "Mic.7.18). -[Psa. 30:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.30.html" \l "Ps.30.2). -[Jon. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jonah.2.html" \l "Jonah.2.7). -[Psa. 40:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.1).

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion.” [Revelation 14:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.14.html" \l "Rev.14.1)

The apostle John was privileged to look within the gates of heaven, and in describing what he saw, he begins by saying, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!” This teaches us that the chief object of contemplation in the heavenly state is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” Nothing else attracted the apostle’s attention so much as the person of that Divine Being, who hath redeemed us by his blood. He is the theme of the songs of all glorified spirits and holy angels. Christian, here is joy for thee; thou hast looked, and thou hast seen the Lamb. Through thy tears thine eyes have seen the Lamb of God taking away thy sins. Rejoice, then. In a little while, when thine eyes shall have been wiped from tears, thou wilt see the same Lamb exalted on his throne. It is the joy of thy heart to hold daily fellowship with Jesus; thou shalt have the same joy to a higher degree in heaven; thou shalt enjoy the constant vision of his presence; thou shalt dwell with him forever. “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!” Why, that Lamb is heaven itself; for as good Rutherford says, “Heaven and Christ are the same thing;” to be with Christ is to be in heaven, and to be in heaven is to be with Christ. That prisoner of the Lord very sweetly writes in one of his glowing letters—“O my Lord Jesus Christ, if I could be in heaven without thee, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell, and have thee still, it would be a heaven to me, for thou art all the heaven I want.” It is true, is it not, Christian? Does not thy soul say so?

“Not all the harps above

Can make a heavenly place,

If God his residence remove,

Or but conceal his face.”

All thou needest to make thee blessed, supremely blessed, is “to be with Christ.”

# Word Live – 1/17/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/17/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/17/21

# A New Identity

**Read:** [**Colossians 3:1–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3a1%e2%80%9311)

### **Living as Those Made Alive in Christ**

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3a1%e2%80%9311" \l "fen-NIV-29522a" \o "See footnote a)] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3a1%e2%80%9311" \l "fen-NIV-29524b" \o "See footnote b)] 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Colossians 3:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3a1%e2%80%9311#en-NIV-29522) Some manuscripts our
2. [Colossians 3:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3a1%e2%80%9311#en-NIV-29524) Some early manuscripts coming on those who are disobedient

Do you have a hard time throwing away old shoes? I do. Whether it is hiking boots, dress shoes, or sandals, I usually feel a bit apprehensive about letting go of what is familiar and comfortable. Getting rid of the past is hard for many of us. The past is where we used to live and where our memories reside. But our Scripture today reminds us that while we remember and even treasure the past, when we become a follower of Christ, we have a new identity in Him.

Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Colossians 3:10

Paul reminds the Christians in Colossae that Jesus’ resurrection changed everything. Because Christ was raised, those who believe in Him have a new life and new identity. Paul urges followers to set their hearts and minds on things above and not on earthly desires and passions (vv. 1–2). Paul is obviously not referring to physical death in verse three when he states, “For you died,” but rather the fact that they have put their old life and former ways behind them. Their new life is now concealed or “hidden” with Christ (v. 3). Paul repeats this truth in verse four by stating that when Christ appears, believers will also appear with Him in glory which is only possible by being found in Him.

In the original language, Paul begins verse five with the word “therefore,” but the active imperative Paul stresses is “put to death” anything and everything that belongs to worldly ways. Because of their new identity in Christ, believers are to abandon their old lives and be renewed into the image and likeness of God our Creator (v. 10). Holding on to the past is easy, but living for Christ is so much better.

**Apply the Word**

What are some old ways of living that have either crept back into your life or have been hiding from sight and need to be renewed? Even though it  
is hard to fully get rid of the past, your new identity in Christ is worth it.

### **Pray with Us**

The past testifies to your work in our lives, reminding us of what you have delivered us from. Father, help us to move forward in your righteousness, looking back only to praise you.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/17/21

# The Wonderful One

 **Read:** [**Revelation 4:4–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%204.4%E2%80%9311)

4Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. 5From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4%3A4%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30774a)] of God. 6Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“‘Holy, holy, holy

is the Lord God Almighty,’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4%3A4%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30777b)]

who was, and is, and is to come.”

9Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

11“You are worthy, our Lord and God,  
    to receive glory and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
    and by your will they were created  
    and have their being.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Revelation 4:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4%3A4%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-30774) That is, the sevenfold Spirit
2. [Revelation 4:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+4%3A4%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-30777) Isaiah 6:3

There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. [Revelation 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%204.2)

In The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion return to Oz with the broomstick that empowered the Wicked Witch of the West. The Wizard had promised, in return for the broomstick, that he would give the four their deepest desires: a ride home for Dorothy, a brain for the Scarecrow, a heart for the Tin Man, and courage for the Cowardly Lion. But the Wizard stalls and tells them to come back the next day.

While they plead with the Wizard, Dorothy’s dog Toto pulls back the curtain, behind which the Wizard spoke, to reveal that the Wizard isn’t a wizard at all, he’s just a fearful, fidgety man from Nebraska.

It’s said that the author, L. Frank Baum, had a serious problem with God, so he wanted to send the message that only we have the power to solve our problems.

In contrast, the apostle John pulls back the veil to reveal the truly Wonderful One behind the “curtain.” Words fail John (note the repeated use of the preposition like in the passage), but the point is well made: God is seated on His throne, surrounded by a sea of glass ([Revelation 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%204.2), [6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Revelation%204.6)). Despite the troubles that plague us here on earth (chs. 2–3), God isn’t pacing the floor and biting His nails. He’s actively at work for our good, so we can experience His peace.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What do you fear today? How does it help you to know that God controls the troubles that surround you? How can you better trust and surrender to Him?

I’m grateful, God, that I can count on You to walk with me through everything. Thank You for Your peace.

#### **Insight**

In [Revelation 4:8–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%204.8%E2%80%9311), the elders, angels, and four living creatures remind us God is worthy of worship. “The Lord God Almighty” (v. 8) is a term that means “powerful and immovable.” Additionally, God’s eternality and authority are reflected in the reference to Him as the one “who was, and is, and is to come” (v. 8). This indicates that He’s sovereign over time—past, present, and future. The elders show their honor of God by laying down their crowns—their symbols of authority—before Him (v. 10). He’s worthy of the praise of His creation (v. 11).

# God Calling – 1/17/21

# God's Rush To Give

Love and Trust are the solvents for the worry and cares and frets of a life.

Silence. Be silent before Me. Seek to know, and then to do My will in all things.

Abide in My Love. An atmosphere of loving understanding to all men. This your part to carry out, and then I surround you with a protective screen that keeps all evil from you. It is fashioned by your own attitude of mind, words, and deeds, towards others.

I want to give you all things, good measure, pressed down and running over. Be quick to learn. You know little yet of the Divine Impatience which longs to rush to give. Does one worrying thought enter your mind, one impatient thought? Fight it at once.

Love and Trust are the solvents for the worry and cares and frets of a life. Apply them at once. You are channels and though the channel may not be altogether blocked, fret and impatience and worry corrode, and in time would become beyond your help.

Persevere, oh! persevere. Never lose heart. All is well.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." - Proverbs 3:5,6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/18/21

# “It Is the Lord!”



Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" —[John 20:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+20%3A28)

“Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink’ ” ([John 4:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4:7)). How many of us are expecting Jesus Christ to quench our thirst when we should be satisfying Him! We should be pouring out our lives, investing our total beings, not drawing on Him to satisfy us. “You shall be witnesses to Me…” ([Acts 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:8)). That means lives of pure, uncompromising, and unrestrained devotion to the Lord Jesus, which will be satisfying to Him wherever He may send us.

Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of true devotion to Jesus is the service we do for Him. It is easier to serve than to pour out our lives completely for Him. The goal of the call of God is His satisfaction, not simply that we should do something for Him. We are not sent to do battle for God, but to be used by God in His battles. Are we more devoted to service than we are to Jesus Christ Himself?

**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 – 1/18/21

**Him that was to come.**—[ROM. 5:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.14)

Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.—One died for all.—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.—That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.—God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.—God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.—Thou hast given him power over all flesh.

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

[Heb. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.9). -[II Cor. 5:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14). -[Rom. 5:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.19).[I Cor. 15:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.45). -[I Cor. 15:46](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.46). -[Gen. 1:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.1.html" \l "Gen.1.26). -[Heb. 1:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.1). -[John 17:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html#John.17.2).[I Cor. 15:47,48](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.47).

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” [Hebrews 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.9)

How different will be the state of the believer in heaven from what it is here! Here he is born to toil and suffer weariness, but in the land of the immortal, fatigue is never known. Anxious to serve his Master, he finds his strength unequal to his zeal: his constant cry is, “Help me to serve thee, O my God.” If he be thoroughly active, he will have much labour; not too much for his will, but more than enough for his power, so that he will cry out, “I am not wearied of the labour, but I am wearied in it.” Ah! Christian, the hot day of weariness lasts not forever; the sun is nearing the horizon; it shall rise again with a brighter day than thou hast ever seen upon a land where they serve God day and night, and yet rest from their labours. Here, rest is but partial, there, it is perfect. Here, the Christian is always unsettled; he feels that he has not yet attained. There, all are at rest; they have attained the summit of the mountain; they have ascended to the bosom of their God. Higher they cannot go. Ah, toil-worn labourer, only think when thou shalt rest forever! Canst thou conceive it? It is a rest eternal; a rest that “remaineth.” Here, my best joys bear “mortal” on their brow; my fair flowers fade; my dainty cups are drained to dregs; my sweetest birds fall before Death’s arrows; my most pleasant days are shadowed into nights; and the flood-tides of my bliss subside into ebbs of sorrow; but there, everything is immortal; the harp abides unrusted, the crown unwithered, the eye undimmed, the voice unfaltering, the heart unwavering, and the immortal being is wholly absorbed in infinite delight. Happy day! happy! when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the Eternal Sabbath shall begin.

# Word Live – 1/18/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/18/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/18/21

# You Are Valuable

**Read:** [**Luke 7:36–50**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+7%3a36%e2%80%9350)

### **Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman**

36When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

39When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

40Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”

“Tell me, teacher,” he said.

41“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+7%3a36%e2%80%9350" \l "fen-NIV-25237a" \o "See footnote a)] and the other fifty. 42Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

43Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

44Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

48Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

49The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

50Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 7:41](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+7%3a36%e2%80%9350#en-NIV-25237) A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see Matt. 20:2).

Martin Luther King Jr. often gave this advice, “Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” For the woman in today’s narrative, her first step must have seemed like a giant leap. The Pharisees referred to her as a “sinner,” and so it was likely that she was one of the town’s known prostitutes (vv. 37, 39).

Your faith has saved you; go in peace. Luke 7:50

While she may have felt unwelcome in this gathering of the religious elites and Jesus, she did not let a lack of an invitation stop her. Nothing could prevent her from worshiping at the feet of Jesus. For most of her life, she had found her value from men who took advantage of her, using and abusing her. But now, perhaps for the first time ever, she found someone who showed her that she was valuable to God. Our text doesn’t record a word she says, but her actions speak volumes (vv. 37, 38).

The appearance and bold actions of this woman frustrated Simon the Pharisee. However, Jesus used the situation as a teaching moment for both Simon and the woman—and for us. He clearly demonstrated that all people are valuable to God. Therefore, our lives ought to be an outpouring of appreciation and service to Jesus (vv. 44–47) because only He is able to forgive us our sins (v. 48).

Regardless of your past, Jesus has the power to forgive you. We are all sinners saved by grace. The apostle Paul even says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim. 1:15). We are all in need of forgiveness and to be reminded that we are valuable to God.

**Apply the Word**

Where do you put your value and self-worth? Next time you look in the mirror, remind yourself that you are looking at someone who is valuable to God.

### **Pray with Us**

Our value is not from ourselves or from anything we do or don’t do. Our worth is from you, O God. Thank you that we are your creation, your children, and the blessed recipients of your unconditional love.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/18/21

# A Legacy of Acceptance

 **Read:** [**Romans 15:5–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.5%E2%80%9313)

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

7Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28312a)] on behalf of God’s truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;  
    I will sing the praises of your name.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28313b)]

10Again, it says,

“Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28314c)]

11And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;  
    let all the peoples extol him.”[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28315d)]

12And again, Isaiah says,

“The Root of Jesse will spring up,  
    one who will arise to rule over the nations;  
    in him the Gentiles will hope.”[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28316e)]

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

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 15:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28312) Greek circumcision
2. [Romans 15:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28313) 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49
3. [Romans 15:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28314) Deut. 32:43
4. [Romans 15:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28315) Psalm 117:1
5. [Romans 15:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+15%3A5%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-28316) Isaiah 11:10 (see Septuagint)

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. [Romans 15:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.7)

In his book Breaking Down Walls, Glen Kehrein writes about climbing to the roof of his college dorm in Chicago after the assassination of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. “The sound of gunfire bounced eerily back and forth off the large buildings, and soon my rooftop perch provided a near panoramic, yet horrific, view. . . . How in the world did I get from a Wisconsin cornfield to a war zone in the inner city of Chicago in less than two years?” Compelled by his love for Jesus and people whose backgrounds were different from his, Glen lived on Chicago’s West Side and led a ministry there that provided food, clothing, shelter, and other services until his death in 2011.

Glen’s life mirrors the efforts of believers in Jesus who’ve come to grips with the need to embrace those who are different from themselves. Paul’s teaching and example helped Roman believers see that God’s plan to rescue wayward humanity included Jews and gentiles ([Romans 15:8–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.8%E2%80%9312)). Believers are called to follow His example of acceptance of others (v. 7); prejudice and discord have no place among those called to glorify God with “one mind and one voice” (v. 6). Ask God to help you cross barriers and break down walls and to warmly embrace everyone, regardless of their differences. Let’s strive to leave behind a legacy of acceptance.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you be more intentional with people who are different from you? What steps do you need to take to be more in line with Jesus’ embrace of all people?

Father in heaven, help me to represent You and make adjustments in my thinking and actions today as I strive to love others well.

#### **Insight**

Bible scholars agree that the book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul. Early church historians Eusebius, Origen, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria concur. Saul (whose Roman name was Paul) was born in Tarsus, a center of Greek culture and university city in Cilicia on the Mediterranean Sea. Paul received his early training in the Law in Jerusalem under the distinguished rabbi Gamaliel, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin (see [Acts 5:34–40](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%205.34%E2%80%9340); [22:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2022.3)). Before his conversion, Paul watched as Stephen was stoned to death and then took a leading part in the persecution of believers in Jesus (7:58; 9:1–2). Christ dramatically confronted him on the road to Damascus, and Paul was transformed from a zealous persecutor to a zealous preacher of the gospel. He’s attributed with writing thirteen books of the New Testament.

# God Calling – 1/18/21

# Faith - Works

Pray daily for Faith. It is My Gift.

It is your only requisite for the accomplishment of mighty deeds. Certainly you have to work, you have to pray, but upon Faith alone depends the answer to your prayers - your works.

I give it you in response to your prayer, because it is the necessary weapon for you to possess for the dispersion of evil - the overcoming of all adverse conditions, and the accomplishment of all good in your lives, and then you having Faith, give it back to Me. It is the envelope in which every request to Me should be placed.

And yet "Faith without works is dead." So you need works, too, to feed your Faith in Me. As you seek to do, you feel your helplessness. You then turn to Me. In knowing Me, your faith grows - and that faith is all you need for My Power to work.

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:  but the just shall live by his faith." - Habakkuk 2:4