# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/19/21

# Vision And Darkness

# Vision and Darkness

An horror of great darkness fell upon him. — [Genesis 15:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+15%3A12)

Whenever God gives a vision to a saint, He puts him, as it were, in the shadow of His hand, and the saint’s duty is to be still and listen. There is a darkness which comes from excess of light, and then is the time to listen. Genesis 16 is an illustration of listening to good advice when it is dark instead of waiting for God to send the light. When God gives a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will make you in accordance with the vision He has given if you will wait His time. Never try and help God fulfil His word. Abraham went through thirteen years of silence, but in those years all self-sufficiency was destroyed; there was no possibility left of relying on common-sense ways. Those years of silence were a time of discipline, not of displeasure. Never pump up joy and confidence, but stay upon God (cf. Isaiah 50:10,11).

Have I any confidence in the flesh? Or have I got beyond all confidence in myself and in men and women of God; in books and prayers and ecstasies; and is my confidence placed now in God Himself, not in His blessings? "I am the Almighty God" – El-Shaddai, the Father-Mother God. The one thing for which we are all being disciplined is to know that God is real. As soon as God becomes real, other people become shadows. Nothing that other saints do or say can ever perturb the one who is built on God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

I have no right to say I believe in God unless I order my life as under His all-seeing Eye. Disciples Indeed, 385 L

# CCEL – 1/19/21

**Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.**—[ACTS 20:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.20.html" \l "Acts.20.19)

Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.—I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man, . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.—When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Our rejoicing is this, . . . that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.—We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

[Matt. 20:26-28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.20.html" \l "Matt.20.26).[Gal. 6:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.3). -[Rom. 12:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.3). -[Luke 17:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.10).[II Cor. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.12). -[II Cor. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.7).

“I sought him, but I found him not.” [Song of Solomon 3:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.3.html" \l "Song.3.1)

Tell me where you lost the company of Christ, and I will tell you the most likely place to find him. Have you lost Christ in the closet by restraining prayer? Then it is there you must seek and find him. Did you lose Christ by sin? You will find Christ in no other way but by the giving up of the sin, and seeking by the Holy Spirit to mortify the member in which the lust doth dwell. Did you lose Christ by neglecting the Scriptures? You must find Christ in the Scriptures. It is a true proverb, “Look for a thing where you dropped it, it is there.” So look for Christ where you lost him, for he has not gone away. But it is hard work to go back for Christ. Bunyan tells us, the pilgrim found the piece of the road back to the Arbour of Ease, where he lost his roll, the hardest he had ever travelled. Twenty miles onward is easier than to go one mile back for the lost evidence.

Take care, then, when you find your Master, to cling close to him. But how is it you have lost him? One would have thought you would never have parted with such a precious friend, whose presence is so sweet, whose words are so comforting, and whose company is so dear to you! How is it that you did not watch him every moment for fear of losing sight of him? Yet, since you have let him go, what a mercy that you are seeking him, even though you mournfully groan, “O that I knew where I might find him!” Go on seeking, for it is dangerous to be without thy Lord. Without Christ you are like a sheep without its shepherd; like a tree without water at its roots; like a sere leaf in the tempest—not bound to the tree of life. With thine whole heart seek him, and he will be found of thee: only give thyself thoroughly up to the search, and verily, thou shalt yet discover him to thy joy and gladness.

# Word Live – 1/19/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/19/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/19/21

# A New Type of Belief

**Read:** [**John 20:24–29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a24%e2%80%9329)

### **Jesus Appears to Thomas**

24Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a24%e2%80%9329#fen-NIV-26892a)]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

26A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 20:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a24%e2%80%9329#en-NIV-26892) Thomas (Aramaic) and Didymus (Greek) both mean twin.

Does doubting feel like part of your DNA? We all have doubts when an infomercial makes promises that seem too good to be true. We may doubt the commitments made by others and even by us. So it should not surprise us that we entertain doubts about God. It has been the enemy’s plan from day one to plant seeds of doubts in our minds about our Creator (see Genesis 3). In today’s Scripture, Thomas was fighting a logical and a supernatural battle. He wondered: How is it possible that a person could die and return to life?

Stop doubting and believe. John 20:27

Thomas wanted hard evidence to believe the claim of Jesus’ resurrection. John tells us Thomas’ struggle with unbelief lasted for days (v. 26). Jesus could have easily appeared to Thomas, but it is interesting that He allows Thomas to wrestle with unbelief. After some time, the resurrected Jesus did appear to Thomas, through a locked door, and implored him to believe (v. 27). Notice that Thomas didn’t even need to put his hands in Jesus’ scars. Seeing the resurrected Jesus was all he needed, and he called Christ “My Lord and my God!” (v. 28).

Jesus recognized that Thomas needed to see before he would believe. But then Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v. 29). Jesus is talking about you and me. Shortly after this encounter with Thomas, Jesus ascended to heaven. The next time we see our Lord and Savior will be at His imminent return, but in the meantime, we have Thomas’s encounter as one of the many reasons to believe in Jesus’ bodily resurrection. I have a feeling many of us can relate to Thomas. We need to see it to believe it. Thankfully, Jesus revealed Himself to doubters. Stop doubting and believe.

**Apply the Word**

Perhaps you believe in Jesus’ resurrection, but still have doubts about God. I encourage you to dive into God’s Word and get involved in a good Bible-based church as you continue on your journey for truth.

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, our salvation is secure in Christ’s faithfulness, and not our own. Yet we often crave assurance that we have placed our faith in the right person. We ask that you would mercifully reassure us when we doubt.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/19/21

# Unbreakable Faith

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 26:3–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2026.3%E2%80%9313)

3You will keep in perfect peace  
    those whose minds are steadfast,  
    because they trust in you.  
4Trust in the Lord forever,  
    for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.  
5He humbles those who dwell on high,  
    he lays the lofty city low;  
he levels it to the ground  
    and casts it down to the dust.  
6Feet trample it down—  
    the feet of the oppressed,  
    the footsteps of the poor.

7The path of the righteous is level;  
    you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth.  
8Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+26%3A3%E2%80%9313&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-18139a" \o "See footnote a)]  
    we wait for you;  
your name and renown  
    are the desire of our hearts.  
9My soul yearns for you in the night;  
    in the morning my spirit longs for you.  
When your judgments come upon the earth,  
    the people of the world learn righteousness.  
10But when grace is shown to the wicked,  
    they do not learn righteousness;  
even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil  
    and do not regard the majesty of the Lord.  
11Lord, your hand is lifted high,  
    but they do not see it.  
Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame;  
    let the fire reserved for your enemies consume them.

12Lord, you establish peace for us;  
    all that we have accomplished you have done for us.  
13Lord our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us,  
    but your name alone do we honor.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Isaiah 26:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+26%3A3%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-18139) Or judgments

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. [Isaiah 26:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2026.3)

After doctors diagnosed their first-born son with autism, Diane Dokko Kim and her husband grieved facing a lifetime of caring for a cognitively disabled child. In her book Unbroken Faith, she admits to struggling with adjusting their dreams and expectations for their beloved son’s future. Yet through this painful process, they learned that God can handle their anger, doubts, and fears. Now, with their son reaching adulthood, Diane uses her experiences to encourage parents of children with special needs. She tells others about God’s unbreakable promises, limitless power, and loving faithfulness. She assures people that He gives us permission to grieve when we experience the death of a dream, an expectation, a way or a season of life.

In [Isaiah 26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2026), the prophet declares that God’s people can trust in the Lord forever, “for the Lord . . . is the Rock eternal” (v. 4). He’s able to sustain us with supernatural peace in every situation (v. 12). Focusing on His unchanging character and crying out to Him during troublesome times revitalizes our hope (v. 15).

When we face any loss, disappointment, or difficult circumstance, God invites us to be honest with Him. He can handle our ever-changing emotions and our questions. He remains with us and refreshes our spirits with enduring hope. Even when we feel like our lives are falling apart, God can make our faith unbreakable.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Have you ever struggled with being honest with God when life feels overwhelming? How has God helped you deal with the death of a dream or expectation?

Loving God, please help me believe You can always be trusted with my honest emotions.

#### **Insight**

In calling His people to trust Him instead of trusting in other nations, God proclaimed Himself sovereign over all human history ([Isaiah 24–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2024%E2%80%9327)). God is at work behind the scenes, orchestrating events to the triumphant outcome He planned for the end of time. He’ll judge and punish the wicked and the proud (24:16–23; 25:10–12), but will bless those who humble themselves and trust in Him (25:1–8). [Isaiah 26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2026) is a song of praise celebrating the salvation and blessings God will bestow on those who trust, obey, and honor Him (vv. 7–9).

# God Calling – 1/19/21

# Love Anticipates

Lord, I will seek Thee.

The Anticipatory Love of God is a thing mortals seldom realize - Dismiss the thought of a grudging God.

None ever sought Me in vain. I wait, wait with a hungry longing to be called upon; and I, who have already seen your hearts' needs before you cried upon Me, before perhaps you were conscious of those needs yourself, I am already preparing the answer.

It is like a Mother, who is setting aside suitable gifts for her daughter's wedding, before Love even has come into the daughter's life.

The Anticipatory Love of God is a thing mortals seldom realize. Dwell on this thought. Dismiss from your minds the thought of a grudging God, who had to be petitioned with sighs and tears and much speaking before reluctantly He loosed the desired treasures. Man's thoughts of Me need revolutionizing.

Try and see a Mother preparing birthday or Christmas delights for her child - the while her Mother-heart sings: "Will she not love that? How she will love this!" and anticipates the rapture of her child, her own heart full of the tenderest joy. Where did the Mother learn all this preparation - joy? From Me - a faint echo this of My preparation - joy.

Try to see this as plans unfold of My preparing. It means much to Me to be understood, and the understanding of Me will bring great joy to you.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/20/21

# Are You Fresh For Everything?

# Are You Fresh for Everything?

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. — [John 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+3%3A3)

Sometimes we are fresh for a prayer meeting but not fresh for cleaning boots!

Being born again of the Spirit is an unmistakable work of God, as mysterious as the wind, as surprising as God Himself. We do not know where it begins, it is hidden away in the depths of our personal life. Being born again from above is a perennial, perpetual and eternal beginning; a freshness all the time in thinking and in talking and in living, the continual surprise of the life of God. Staleness is an indication of something out of joint with God – "I must do this thing or it will never be done." That is the first sign of staleness. Are we freshly born this minute or are we stale, raking in our minds for something to do? Freshness does not come from obedience but from the Holy Spirit; obedience keeps us in the light as God is in the light.

Guard jealously your relationship to God. Jesus prayed "that they may be one, even as we are one" – nothing between. Keep all the life perennially open to Jesus Christ, don’t pretend with Him. Are you drawing your life from any other source than God Himself? If you are depending upon anything but Him, you will never know when He is gone.

Being born of the Spirit means much more than we generally take it to mean. It gives us a new vision and keeps us absolutely fresh for everything by the perennial supply of the life of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/20/21

**His name shall be called Wonderful.**—[ISA. 9:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.9.html" \l "Isa.9.6)

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.—Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.—JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.—God . . . hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.—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; and hath put all things under his feet.—He had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself . . . KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.—What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

[John 1:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.14). -[Psa. 138:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.2).[Matt. 1:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.23). -[Matt. 1:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.1.html" \l "Matt.1.21).[John 5:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.23). -[Phi. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.2.html" \l "Phil.2.9). -[Eph. 1:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.21). -[Rev. 19:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.19.html" \l "Rev.19.12),[16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.19.html" \l "Rev.19.16).[Job 37:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.37.html" \l "Job.37.23). -[Prov. 30:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.30.html" \l "Prov.30.4).

“Abel was a keeper of sheep.” [Genesis 4:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.4.html" \l "Gen.4.2)

As a shepherd Abel sanctified his work to the glory of God, and offered a sacrifice of blood upon his altar, and the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering. This early type of our Lord is exceedingly clear and distinct. Like the first streak of light which tinges the east at sunrise, it does not reveal everything, but it clearly manifests the great fact that the sun is coming. As we see Abel, a shepherd and yet a priest, offering a sacrifice of sweet smell unto God, we discern our Lord, who brings before his Father a sacrifice to which Jehovah ever hath respect. Abel was hated by his brother—hated without a cause; and even so was the Saviour: the natural and carnal man hated the accepted man in whom the Spirit of grace was found, and rested not until his blood had been shed. Abel fell, and sprinkled his altar and sacrifice with his own blood, and therein sets forth the Lord Jesus slain by the enmity of man while serving as a priest before the Lord. “The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.” Let us weep over him as we view him slain by the hatred of mankind, staining the horns of his altar with his own blood. Abel’s blood speaketh. “The Lord said unto Cain, ‘The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’” The blood of Jesus hath a mighty tongue, and the import of its prevailing cry is not vengeance but mercy. It is precious beyond all preciousness to stand at the altar of our good Shepherd! to see him bleeding there as the slaughtered priest, and then to hear his blood speaking peace to all his flock, peace in our conscience, peace between Jew and Gentile, peace between man and his offended Maker, peace all down the ages of eternity for blood-washed men. Abel is the first shepherd in order of time, but our hearts shall ever place Jesus first in order of excellence. Thou great Keeper of the sheep, we the people of thy pasture bless thee with our whole hearts when we see thee slain for us.

# Word Live – 1/20/21

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# Scripture Union – 1/20/21

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# Today in the Word – 1/20/21

# A New Mediator

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 2:1–7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3a1%e2%80%937)

### **Instructions on Worship**

2 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 7And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

In today’s world, we have nearly instant communication with anyone, anywhere. Phones that fit in the palm of our hand let us connect with others quickly, easily, and accurately. That wasn’t always the case. If you’ve ever seen depictions of early American small-town life, a local phone operator would manually push and pull cable plugs to connect callers to receivers. The operator was an important mediator, without whom communication would become impossible.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5

How do you and I connect with God? In his letter to Timothy, Paul gives the assurance that believers are given open access to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul begins by encouraging believers to pray for all people (v. 1). Notice that he includes kings and those in authority in this list. Paul gives a reason: so that “we may live peaceful and quiet lives” (v. 2) and because God “wants all people to be saved” (v. 4). The purpose is for the gospel to go forward!

Second, Paul reminds us that Jesus acts as the mediator between individuals and God. Our requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings go directly to Him. Paul details Jesus’ work of mediation through the selfless and sacrificial act of giving of His own life as a “ransom for all people” (v. 6). A price was paid so we may be released from the bondage of sin, paid through the death of our mediator, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 4 calls Jesus our “great high priest who has ascended into heaven,” giving us full access to God (v. 14). “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (v. 16)

**Apply the Word**

In some faith traditions, people do not speak directly to God, they depend on the intercession of a mediator—someone holier than themselves who addresses God on their behalf. Today, celebrate the fact that Jesus is your mediator, and you can speak to God any time you’d like.

### **Pray with Us**

What a privilege to be able to take our sorrows, fears, doubts, and pleasures before you in prayer, Lord. Thank you for the unlimited access we have to you through your Son!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/20/21

# God’s Footprints

 **Read:** [**Psalm 104:24–35**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104.24%E2%80%9335)

24How many are your works, Lord!  
    In wisdom you made them all;  
    the earth is full of your creatures.  
25There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
    teeming with creatures beyond number—  
    living things both large and small.  
26There the ships go to and fro,  
    and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

27All creatures look to you  
    to give them their food at the proper time.  
28When you give it to them,  
    they gather it up;  
when you open your hand,  
    they are satisfied with good things.  
29When you hide your face,  
    they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,  
    they die and return to the dust.  
30When you send your Spirit,  
    they are created,  
    and you renew the face of the ground.

31May the glory of the Lord endure forever;  
    may the Lord rejoice in his works—  
32he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,  
    who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

33I will sing to the Lord all my life;  
    I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.  
34May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
    as I rejoice in the Lord.  
35But may sinners vanish from the earth  
    and the wicked be no more.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

Praise the Lord.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A24%E2%80%9335&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-15607a" \o "See footnote a)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 104:35](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+104%3A24%E2%80%9335&version=NIV#en-NIV-15607) Hebrew Hallelu Yah; in the Septuagint this line stands at the beginning of Psalm 105.

How many are your works, Lord! [Psalm 104:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104.24)

“I know where God lives,” our four-year-old grandson told my wife, Cari. “Where is that?” she asked, her curiosity piqued. “He lives in the woods beside your house,” he answered.

When Cari told me about their conversation, she wondered what prompted his thinking. “I know,” I responded. “When we went for a walk in the woods during his last visit, I told him that even though we can’t see God, we can see the things He’s done.” “Do you see the footprints I’m making?” I had asked my grandson as we stepped through a sandy place by a river. “The animals and the trees and the river are like God’s footprints. We know that He’s been here because we can see the things He’s made.”

The writer of [Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) also pointed to the evidence for God in creation, exclaiming “How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (v. 24). The Hebrew word for wisdom found here is often used in the Bible to describe skillful craftsmanship. God’s handiwork in nature proclaims His presence and makes us want to praise Him.

[Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) begins and ends with the words: “Praise the Lord” (vv. 1, 35). From a baby’s hand to an eagle’s eye, our Creator’s artistry all around us speaks of His consummate skill. May we take it all in with wonder today—and praise Him for it!

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you see God’s handiwork in creation? How might you point someone to it—and to Him—today?

I praise You for all You’ve made, God! Help me to live in wonder at Your wisdom and goodness today.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) displays some striking similarities to the Egyptian Akhenaten’s great Hymn to the Sun (fourteenth century bc), including depictions of creatures of night and day, provision for beasts and birds, descriptions of the sea and its ships, and the dependence of all creatures on their Creator. But [Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) is structured by the sequence of creation found in [Genesis 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201): light is produced on day one ([Psalm 104:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104.2)), the “vault” or “firmament” on day two (vv. 2–4), land and water are separated on day three (vv. 5–9), and so on. The psalm’s connection to [Genesis 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%201) highlights the Creator’s role in creation. While the Egyptian hymn calls for worship of the sun, [Psalm 104](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20104) calls for worship of the sun’s Maker. It seems the psalmist deliberately alludes to the Egyptian hymn in order to critique it and to make this very point: true worship is offered to the Creator, not the creation.

# God Calling – 1/20/21

# At One With God

To dwell in thought on the material, when once you live in Me - is to call it into being.

One with Me. I and My Father are one. One with the Lord of the whole Universe!

Could human aspiration reach higher? Could man's demands transcend this? One with Me.

If you realize your high privilege, you have only to think and immediately the object of your thought is called into being. Indeed, well may I have said, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

To dwell in thought on the material, when once you live in Me - is to call it into being. So you must be careful only to think of and desire that which will help, not hinder, your spiritual growth. The same law operates too on the spiritual plane.

Think Love, and Love surrounds you, and all about whom you think. Think thoughts of ill-will and ill surrounds you, and those about whom you think. Think health - health comes. The physical reflects the mental and spiritual.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." - Proverbs 23:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/21/21

# Recall What God Remembers

# Recall What God Remembers

I remember . . . the kindness of thy youth. — [Jeremiah 2:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+2%3A2)

Am I as spontaneously kind to God as I used to be, or am I only expecting God to be kind to me? Am I full of the little things that cheer His heart over me, or am I whimpering because things are going hardly with me? There is no joy in the soul that has forgotten what God prizes. It is a great thing to think that Jesus Christ has need of me – "Give Me to drink." How much kindness have I shown Him this past week? Have I been kind to His reputation in my life?

God is saying to His people – You are not in love with Me now, but I remember the time when you were – "I remember . . . the love of thine espousals." Am I as full of the extravagance of love to Jesus Christ as I was in the beginning, when I went out of my way to prove my devotion to Him? Does He find me recalling the time when I did not care for anything but Himself? Am I there now, or have I become wise over loving Him? Am I so in love with Him that I take no account of where I go? or am I watching for the respect due to me; weighing how much service I ought to give?

If, as I recall what God remembers about me, I find He is not what He used to be to me, let it produce shame and humiliation, because that shame will bring the godly sorrow that works repentance.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We have no right to judge where we should be put, or to have preconceived notions as to what God is fitting us for. God engineers everything; wherever He puts us, our one great aim is to pour out a whole-hearted devotion to Him in that particular work. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” My Utmost for His Highest, April 23, 773 L

# CCEL – 1/21/21

**Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.**—[JOHN 15:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.2)

He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

We glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

[Mal. 3:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.2).[Rom. 5:3-5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3). -[Heb. 12:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.7),[11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.11).

“And so all Israel shall be saved.” [Romans 11:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.26)

When Moses sang at the Red Sea, it was his joy to know that all Israel were safe. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God’s Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place again, but not till then. Part of that song was, “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed.” In the last time, when the elect shall sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb, it shall be the boast of Jesus, “Of all whom thou hast given me, I have lost none.” In heaven there shall not be a vacant throne.

“For all the chosen race

Shall meet around the throne,

Shall bless the conduct of his grace,

And make his glories known.”

As many as God hath chosen, as many as Christ hath redeemed, as many as the Spirit hath called, as many as believe in Jesus, shall safely cross the dividing sea. We are not all safely landed yet:

“Part of the host have crossed the flood,

And part are crossing now.”

The vanguard of the army has already reached the shore. We are marching through the depths; we are at this day following hard after our Leader into the heart of the sea. Let us be of good cheer: the rear-guard shall soon be where the vanguard already is; the last of the chosen ones shall soon have crossed the sea, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure. But oh! if one were absent—oh! if one of his chosen family should be cast away—it would make daily breadan everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed, and cut the strings of the harps of paradise, so that music could never be extorted from them.

# Word Live – 1/21/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/21/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/21/21

# You Matter to Jesus

**Read:** [**John 8:1–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+8%3a1%e2%80%9311)

1but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

11“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Imagine the scene: a woman is being forcibly dragged into the temple courts, shoved in front of this man who many were calling the Great Teacher. Jesus gazed at her, knowing she had been accused of adultery and also knowing everything else about her. Her life mattered. Jesus was also aware that the teachers of the law and the Pharisees were trying to trap Him.

Go now and leave your life of sin. John 8:11

We can be sure that the woman felt shame and embarrassment for being caught in adultery and dragged in front of Jesus. What she thought she was doing in secret had now been exposed to the whole community. Her family would disown her and the religious leaders would turn their backs on her. Probably like most of her life, she was simply being used. This time, she was a pawn in the Pharisees’ chess game with Jesus (v. 6). If He called for her stoning, He would be defying the Roman government. And if He let her go, He would be disobeying the Mosaic law.

However, unlike the Pharisees, Jesus saw her for who she truly was: someone who mattered. His response to the crowd was simple, yet convicting: “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (v. 7). One by one, the crowd disappeared. According to the law, a person could be sentenced to death only with two or more witnesses, but now there were none. Jesus could now release her and still obey the Mosaic law. She was now free and walked away knowing her life mattered to Jesus.

**Apply the Word**

What about you? Do you feel shame at the thought of airing your private acts before a holy God? Regardless of the missteps and sin in your life, you matter to God. Just as Jesus declared to the woman, “Go now and leave your life of sin” (v. 11), He is reaching in the same way to us.

### **Pray with Us**

Sometimes we run from you, Father, because we are ashamed. We forget that Christ died for our sins, both past and future. You love us even though you know the wrong we will do before we do it! Teach us to run to you when we sin.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/21/21

# Small Fish

 **Read:** [**Matthew 19:16–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2019.16%E2%80%9326)

### **The Rich and the Kingdom of God**

16Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

17“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

18“Which ones?” he inquired.

Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19honor your father and mother,’[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-23782a" \o "See footnote a)] and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23782b)]”

20“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

21Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

25When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

26Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 19:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-23782) Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20
2. [Matthew 19:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A16%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-23782) Lev. 19:18

Come, follow me. [Matthew 19:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2019.21)

Over several years, a British couple living in West Africa developed a strong friendship with a man in their town and many times shared the love of Jesus and the story of salvation with him. Their friend, however, was reluctant to relinquish the lifetime of allegiance he had to another religion, even though he came to recognize that faith in Christ was “the greater truth.” His concern was partly financial, since he was a leader in his faith and depended on the compensation he received. He also feared losing his reputation among the people in his community.

With sadness, he explained, “I’m like a man fishing with my hands in a stream. I have caught a small fish in one, but a bigger fish is swimming by. To catch the bigger fish, I have to let go of the smaller one!”

The rich young ruler Matthew wrote about in [Matthew 19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2019) had a similar problem. When he approached Jesus, he asked, “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” (v. 16). He seemed sincere, but he didn’t want to fully surrender his life to Jesus. He was rich, not only in money, but also in his pride of being a rule-follower. Although he desired eternal life, he loved something else more and rejected Christ’s words.

When we humbly surrender our life to Jesus and accept His free gift of salvation, He invites us, “Come, follow me” (v. 21).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What one thing does Jesus require of us to receive salvation and the promise of eternal life with Him? What’s keeping you from fully surrendering to Him?

Dear Father, thank You for offering Your Son as payment for my sin. Help me to surrender wholly to You.

#### **Insight**

There are several interpretations of Jesus’ words in [Matthew 19:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2019.24): “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” One view suggests “the eye of the needle” refers to a gate opening that could only be entered by a camel that had been relieved of its cargo. Another hypothesis is that the word for “camel” was mistranslated and should be translated “rope.” But these unlikely explanations rob this statement of its true meaning. The point is that apart from God’s grace, it’s not just difficult but impossible to be saved.

# God Calling – 1/21/21

# A Crowded Day

Be glad all the time.

Believe that I am with you and controlling all. When My Word has gone forth, all are powerless against it.

Be calm. Never fear. You have much to learn. Go on until you can take the most crowded day with a song. "Sing unto the Lord." The finest accompaniment to a Song of Praise to Me is a very crowded day. Let Love be the motif running through all.

Be glad all the time. Rejoice exceedingly. Joy in Me. Rest in Me. Never be afraid. Pray more. Do not get worried. I am thy Helper. "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms." You cannot get below that. Rest in them, as a tired child rests.

"Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." - Hebrews 13:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/22/21

# What Am I Looking At?

# Am I Looking To God?

Look unto Me, and be ye saved. — [Isaiah 45:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+45%3A22)

Do we expect God to come to us with His blessings and save us? He says – Look unto Me, and be saved. The great difficulty spiritually is to concentrate on God, and it is His blessings that make it difficult. Troubles nearly always make us look to God; His blessings are apt to make us look elsewhere. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is, in effect – Narrow all your interests until the attitude of mind and heart and body is concentration on Jesus Christ. "Look unto Me."

Many of us have a mental conception of what a Christian should be, and the lives of the saints become a hindrance to our concentration on God. There is no salvation in this way, it is not simple enough. "Look unto Me" and – not "you will be saved," but "you are saved." The very thing we look for, we shall find if we will concentrate on Him. We get preoccupied and sulky with God, while all the time He is saying – "Look up and be saved." The difficulties and trials – the casting about in our minds as to what we shall do this summer, or to-morrow, all vanish when we look to God.

Rouse yourself up and look to God. Build your hope on Him. No matter if there are a hundred and one things that press, resolutely exclude them all and look to Him. "Look unto Me," and salvation is, the moment you look.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/22/21

**This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.**—[PSA. 48:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.48.html" \l "Ps.48.14)

O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.—The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.—Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.—Our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.—The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

[Isa. 25:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.1). -[Psa. 16:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.5).[Psa. 23:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.23.html" \l "Ps.23.3). -[Psa. 73:23-26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.23). -[Psa. 33:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.33.html" \l "Ps.33.21). -[Psa. 138:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.8).

“Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?” [Ezekiel 15:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.15.html" \l "Ezek.15.2)

These words are for the humbling of God’s people; they are called God’s vine, but what are they by nature more than others? They, by God’s goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil; the Lord hath trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to his glory; but what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? O believer, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no ground for it. Whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to what thou wast. Consider what thou wouldst have been but for divine grace. Look upon thyself as thou art now. Doth not thy conscience reproach thee? Do not thy thousand wanderings stand before thee, and tell thee that thou art unworthy to be called his son? And if he hath made thee anything, art thou not taught thereby that it is grace which hath made thee to differ? Great believer, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. O thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for error if grace had not laid hold upon thee. Therefore, be not proud, though thou hast a large estate—a wide domain of grace, thou hadst not once a single thing to call thine own except thy sin and misery. Oh! strange infatuation, that thou, who hast borrowed everything, shouldst think of exalting thyself; a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of thy Saviour, one who hath a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on thee, O silly heart!

# Word Live – 1/22/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/22/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/22/21

# A Healing Touch

**Read:** [**Mark 5:21–43**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%3a21%e2%80%9343)

### **Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman**

21When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” 24So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” 29Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

31“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

32But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

35While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

36Overhearing[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%3a21%e2%80%9343#fen-NIV-24401a)] what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

37He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” 40But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). 42Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Mark 5:36](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+5%3a21%e2%80%9343#en-NIV-24401) Or Ignoring

When someone is skilled at caring for the needs of the sick or dying, we say they have the “healing touch.” But no one has ever shown the power to heal like Jesus. In his Gospel, Mark records Jesus’ power over many areas of life. First, in Mark 4:35-41, Jesus demonstrated His power over nature when He calmed the “furious squall” that arose on the water (v. 37). Then, in Mark 5:1–20, Jesus restored a demon-possessed man to health, displaying His power over the darkness. In today’s passage, Jesus exhibits authority over sickness and death.

Don’t be afraid; just believe. Mark 5:36

The two stories within Mark 5:21–43 are meant to be compared and contrasted. At the same time, Jairus’s daughter was born, a woman began hemorrhaging and could find no answer to her pain. According to the custom, this woman would have been considered unclean. She was a social outcast, unable to worship at the temple courts (vv. 25–26). Jairus’s daughter, by contrast, grew up happy and healthy, seeing her father come and go regularly to the synagogue as one of the leaders (v. 22). Even though they came from different social standings, both Jairus and the woman showed a similar faith in Jesus. They both believed He had the healing touch.

It probably took courage for both individuals to reach out to Jesus for help. No doubt, a bit of timidity was running through their veins. However, they realized that nothing and no one else would be able to help them in their desperate time of need. Through their courageous act of reaching out, their faith in Jesus healed them (vv. 34, 36). Mark makes it clear that these narratives prove that the only one who has authority over nature, the powers of darkness, sickness, and death itself is God Himself.

**Apply the Word**

Are you struggling with a discouraging health issue? Do you have a loved one in need of healing? Don’t be afraid to reach out to the One with the healing touch. He will always hear you and receive you.

### **Pray with Us**

We know you alone have the power to heal, and today we ask for physical healing. Whether we receive this now or at the Second Coming, we trust your wisdom, Lord. Thank you for your mercies that are new each day!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/22/21

# Running to Tell

 **Read:** [**Matthew 28:1–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.1%E2%80%9310)

### **Jesus Has Risen**

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

8So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

So the women . . . ran to tell his disciples. [Matthew 28:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.8)

The modern-day marathon is based on the story of a Greek messenger, Pheidippides. According to legend, in 490 bc he ran approximately twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) from Marathon to Athens to announce the Greeks’ victory against their formidable foe, the invading Persians. Today, people run marathons for the personal satisfaction of an athletic achievement, but Pheidippides had a greater purpose behind his effort: each of his steps was run for the sheer joy of delivering good news to his kinsmen!

Some five hundred years later, two women also ran to deliver good news—the most pivotal news in all of history. When Mary and Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb where Jesus had been placed after His crucifixion, they found it empty. An angel told them that Jesus had “risen from the dead” and to “go quickly and tell his disciples” ([Matthew 28:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.7)). The women, “afraid yet filled with joy,” ran to tell the disciples what they’d discovered (v. 8).

May we have the same joyful exuberance at the resurrection of Jesus, and may it invigorate us to share the good news with others. We may not even need to “run” farther than next door to find someone who needs to know about our Savior. He won the battle against death so we might live victoriously with Him forever!

By:  [Kirsten Holmberg](https://odb.org/author/kirstenholmberg/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who shared the good news of Christ’s resurrection with you? How will you share it with others today?

God, I rejoice because of Your victory over death. Thank You for allowing me the privilege of sharing this good news with those You’ve put in my life.

To learn more about the resurrection of Jesus, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/CA206.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/CA206.)

#### **Insight**

While today we typically use the word angel as a catch-all term for any heavenly messenger, the Bible makes distinctions between various heavenly beings. For example, cherubim are winged beastlike creatures that guard the boundaries between the earthly and heavenly realm, most notably after Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%203.24)). On the other hand, angels—literally, messengers—aren’t described in the Bible as having wings and can sometimes take the form of a human being ([Hebrews 13:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2013.2)). They not only function as messengers (for example, Gabriel in [Luke 1:26–38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%201.26%E2%80%9338)) but perform missions on God’s behalf toward His plan of redemption for all of creation ([Matthew 28:2–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.2%E2%80%937)).

# God Calling – 1/22/21

# Gray Days

You must say 'Thank You' on the grayest days.

Be not afraid. I am your God, your Deliverer. From all evil, I will deliver you. Trust Me. Fear not.

Never forget your "Thank you." Do you not see it is a lesson? You MUST say "Thank You" on the grayest days. You MUST do it. All cannot be light unless you do. There is gray-day practice. It is absolutely necessary.

My death upon the Cross was not only necessary to save a world, it was necessary if only to train My disciples. It was all a part of their training: My entering Jerusalem in triumph; My washing the disciples' feet; My sorrow-time in Gethsemane; My being despised, judged, crucified, buried. Every step was necessary to their development - and so with you.

If a gray day is not one of thankfulness, the lesson has to be repeated until it is. Not to everyone is it so. But only to those who ask to serve Me well, and to do much for Me. A great work requires a great and careful training.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." - Isaiah 41:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/23/21

# Transformed By Beholding

# Transformed by Beholding

We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. — [2 Corinthians 3:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+3%3A18)

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord’s own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else – work, clothes, food, everything on earth – go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian’s life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/23/21

**Hope maketh not ashamed.**—[ROM. 5:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.5)

I am the Lord: . . . they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.—Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord **JEHOVAH** is everlasting strength.—My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.—I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed.

God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.

[Isa. 49:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.49.html" \l "Isa.49.23). -[Jer. 17:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.17.html" \l "Jer.17.7). -[Isa. 26:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3). -[Psa. 62:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.62.html" \l "Ps.62.5). -[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12).[Heb. 6:17-20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html" \l "Heb.6.17).

“I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” [Psalm 89:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.89.html" \l "Ps.89.19)

Why was Christ chosen out of the people? Speak, my heart, for heart-thoughts are best. Was it not that he might be able to be our brother, in the blest tie of kindred blood? Oh, what relationship there is between Christ and the believer! The believer can say, “I have a Brother in heaven; I may be poor, but I have a Brother who is rich, and is a King, and will he suffer me to want while he is on his throne? Oh, no! He loves me; he is my Brother.” Believer, wear this blessed thought, like a necklace of diamonds, around the neck of thy memory; put it, as a golden ring, on the finger of recollection, and use it as the King’s own seal, stamping the petitions of thy faith with confidence of success. He is a brother born for adversity, treat him as such.

Christ was also chosen out of the people that he might know our wants and sympathize with us. “He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” In all our sorrows we have his sympathy. Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty—he knows them all, for he has felt all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort thee. However difficult and painful thy road, it is marked by the footsteps of thy Saviour; and even when thou reachest the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, thou wilt find his footprints there. In all places whithersoever we go, he has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry, has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel.

“His way was much rougher and darker than mine

Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

Take courage! Royal feet have left a blood-red track upon the road, and consecrated the thorny path forever.

# Word Live – 1/23/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/23/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/23/21

# A Renewed Mind

**Read:** [**Romans 12:1–3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3a1%e2%80%933)

### **A Living Sacrifice**

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### **Humble Service in the Body of Christ**

3For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

When you say you love God, what do you mean? For many of us, we express our love for the Lord through our emotions. We may feel especially loving toward God when we sing or pray. We also show our love for God through our actions, obeying His commands. But what does it mean to love God with your mind? Scripture is clear that our transformation through Christ means allowing our minds to be made new.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2

In today’s text, Paul begins by referencing what he had been discussing in chapters 1–11 when he states, “in view of God’s mercy” (v. 1). Paul is saying that in light of all that God has done, Christians in Rome should respond by offering their physical bodies as a living sacrifice to God (v. 1) and by renewing their minds (v. 2). Unlike animal sacrifices that had traditionally been presented to God on a daily basis, Paul says a Christian’s life is to be presented to God. When we offer our lives to serve one another because of what Christ has done for us, we are actually worshiping God.

Paul also knew that we can be easily deceived into the worldly patterns of service, expecting something in return. He urges his friends not to be conformed to the ways of the world, but rather to be transformed by a new way of thinking (v. 2). Instead of thinking “I will do, so I can get,” Paul wants them to live a service-filled life with an attitude of “I will do, because of what God has done through Christ Jesus.” When we are able to change our way of thinking and live this type of service-filled life, we are worshiping with all our heart, soul, and mind.

**Apply the Word**

Spend some time today thinking about how you express your love to God. Can you identify ways you love Him with your heart, soul, and mind? Worship Him with your renewed mind today.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, sometimes we live as if some areas of life are spiritual and others purely secular. We desire to submit every aspect of our lives to you, worshiping you with our bodies, souls, and minds, and everything we do.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/23/21

# The Deepest Places

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**Psalm 6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%206) **[**[**a**](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-13987a)**]**

#### **For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to sheminith.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+6&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-13987b" \o "See footnote b)] A psalm of David.**

1Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger  
    or discipline me in your wrath.  
2Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am faint;  
    heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony.  
3My soul is in deep anguish.  
    How long, Lord, how long?

4Turn, Lord, and deliver me;  
    save me because of your unfailing love.  
5Among the dead no one proclaims your name.  
    Who praises you from the grave?

6I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long I flood my bed with weeping  
    and drench my couch with tears.  
7My eyes grow weak with sorrow;  
    they fail because of all my foes.

8Away from me, all you who do evil,  
    for the Lord has heard my weeping.  
9The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;  
    the Lord accepts my prayer.  
10All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish;  
    they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 6:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+6&version=NIV#en-NIV-13987) In Hebrew texts 6:1-10 is numbered 6:2-11.
2. [Psalm 6:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+6&version=NIV#en-NIV-13987) Title: Probably a musical term

I am worn out from my groaning. [Psalm 6:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%206.6)

Victor Hugo (1802–1885), a poet and novelist during the social and political upheavals of nineteenth-century France, is perhaps best known for his classic Les Miserables. Over a century later, a musical adaptation of his novel has become one of our generation’s most popular productions. This shouldn’t surprise us. As Hugo once said, “Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.”

The psalmists would have agreed. Their songs and prayers provide us with honest reflections on life and its inevitable pain. They touch us in places we find difficult to access. For example, in [Psalm 6:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%206.6) David cries out, “I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears.”

The fact that such raw honesty is included in the inspired songs of the Scriptures gives us great encouragement. It invites us to bring our fears to God, who welcomes us into His presence for comfort and help. He embraces us in our heartfelt honesty.

Music can give us the ability to express our feelings when words are hard to come by, but whether that expression is sung, prayed, or silently cried, our God reaches into the deepest places in our hearts and gives us His peace.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How would you characterize your prayer life? How does it make you feel to realize that God Himself allows you to come into His presence just as you are?

Thank You, loving God, for welcoming me with all my pain, fear, struggle, and disappointment. Thank You that You don’t want “correct” or “sanitized” prayers, but my honest heart instead.

#### **Insight**

Some hear David’s words in [Psalm 6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%206) echoed in Jesus’ words of anguish in [John 12:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.27) as He anticipated His death on the cross. Both gave reason to believe in the mercies and love of God. Both David and Jesus were surrounded by enemies that came from within their own nation. But whereas David’s personal failures contributed to much of his opposition, Jesus attracted enemies by exposing the hypocrisy of religious leaders. David prays that God would rescue him from death ([Psalm 6:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%206.4%E2%80%935)), but Jesus’ purpose was to rescue His enemies rather than to be saved from them ([John 12:23–26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2012.23%E2%80%9326)). He endured suffering far greater than David feared. By overcoming the grave, Jesus gave those who hated Him a reason to discover the mercies and everlasting love of God.

# God Calling – 1/23/21

# How Power Comes

Learn to shut yourself away in My Presence.

Lord, Thou art our Refuge. Our God, in Thee do we trust. O Master, come and talk with us.

All power is given unto Me. It is Mine to give, Mine to withhold, but even I have to acknowledge that I cannot withhold it from the soul that dwells near Me, because it is then not a gift, but passes insensibly from Me to My disciples.

It is breathed in by the soul who lives in My Presence.

Learn to shut yourself away in My Presence - and then, without speaking, you have those things you desire of Me, Strength - Power - Joy - Riches.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." - Psalm 91:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/24/21

# God’s Overpowering Purpose

# God’s Overpowering Purpose

I have appeared unto thee for this purpose. — [Acts 26:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A16)

The vision Paul had on the road to Damascus was no passing emotion, but a vision that had very clear and emphatic directions for him, and he says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Our Lord said, in effect, to Paul – Your whole life is to be overmastered by Me; you are to have no end, no aim, and no purpose but Mine. "I have chosen him."

When we are born again we all have visions, if we are spiritual at all, of what Jesus wants us to be, and the great thing is to learn not to be disobedient to the vision, not to say that it cannot be attained. It is not sufficient to know that God has redeemed the world, and to know that the Holy Spirit can make all that Jesus did effectual in me; I must have the basis of a personal relationship to Him. Paul was not given a message or a doctrine to proclaim, he was brought into a vivid, personal, overmastering relationship to Jesus Christ. Verse 16 is immensely commanding – "to make thee a minister and a witness." There is nothing there apart from the personal relationship. Paul was devoted to a Person not to a cause. He was absolutely Jesus Christ’s, he saw nothing else, he lived for nothing else. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ is always unyielding to my claim to my right to myself. The one essential element in all our Lord’s teaching about discipleship is abandon, no calculation, no trace of self-interest.  
Disciples Indeed

# CCEL – 1/24/21

**The Lord is at hand.**—[PHI. 4:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.5)

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.—Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

[I Thes. 4:16-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.16). -[Rev. 22:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.22.html" \l "Rev.22.20).[II Pet. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.14).[I Thes. 5:22-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.22).[Jas. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.5.html" \l "Jas.5.8).

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.” [Psalm 91:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.3)

God delivers his people from the snare of the fowler in two senses. From, and out of. First, he delivers them from the snare—does not let them enter it; and secondly, if they should be caught therein, he delivers them out of it. The first promise is the most precious to some; the second is the best to others.

“He shall deliver thee from the snare.” How? Trouble is often the means whereby God delivers us. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction, and he in mercy sends the rod. We say, “Lord, why is this?” not knowing that our trouble has been the means of delivering us from far greater evil. Many have been thus saved from ruin by their sorrows and their crosses; these have frightened the birds from the net. At other times, God keeps his people from the snare of the fowler by giving them great spiritual strength, so that when they are tempted to do evil they say, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” But what a blessed thing it is that if the believer shall, in an evil hour, come into the net, yet God will bring him out of it! O backslider, be cast down, but do not despair. Wanderer though thou hast been, hear what thy Redeemer saith—“Return, O backsliding children; I will have mercy upon you.” But you say you cannot return, for you are a captive. Then listen to the promise—“Surely he shall deliver thee out of the snare of the fowler.” Thou shalt yet be brought out of all evil into which thou hast fallen, and though thou shalt never cease to repent of thy ways, yet he that hath loved thee will not cast thee away; he will receive thee, and give thee joy and gladness, that the bones which he has broken may rejoice. No bird of paradise shall die in the fowler’s net.

# Word Live – 1/24/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/24/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/24/21

# A New Future

**Read:** [**Romans 8:18–25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a18%e2%80%9325)

### **Present Suffering and Future Glory**

18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21that[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a18%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-28138a)] the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

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

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 8:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3a18%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-28138) Or subjected it in hope. 21For

What do you believe your future holds? No matter what you may or may not expect, you can be assured that in Christ you have been given a new future! We have seen how Christ gives us a new way to live, a new message to share, and a new identity. Now, we will learn about our new future. In today’s text, Paul acknowledged the sufferings of the Christians under the Roman rule of Emperor Nero. Tensions were rising, and persecution was imminent. Paul includes himself in verse 18 when he talks about “our present sufferings.”

Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

Regardless of the trials and hardships, they were experiencing, Paul directed them to a future in Christ. He reminded them that at the Second Coming of Christ, believers will see the fullness of God’s glory. Verses 19–21 is Paul’s commentary on Genesis 3. As Jesus returns, the curse will be lifted and creation will be liberated and free. But this doesn’t diminish the pain and suffering people experience in the meantime.

Not only do people “groan”  for the Second Coming of Christ, but all of creation does as well (v. 22). The tragedies of nature and natural disasters remind us that our future is one when all of creation will be redeemed. Paul compares this misery to a woman giving birth. Immense pain will be followed by an overabundance of ecstasy and joy.

Perhaps the most challenging part of our new future is the fact that we have to wait for it patiently (v. 25). Waiting is never easy. Whether it is for a job callback, the end of COVID-19, or the birth of a child, waiting is difficult. But as we wait for things on this earth, we are reminded that ultimately we are waiting expectantly for Christ’s return.

**Apply the Word**

What do you look forward to the most in your future with Christ? Is it the absence of consequences of the curse? Perhaps it is just being  
with Jesus? Waiting isn’t easy, but it’s worth it.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, we would be dishonest if we pretended that our present suffering doesn't matter. Yet today's pain can't compare with the future joy you have promised us. We look forward to spending eternity with you!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/24/21

# Surrendering All

 **Read:** [**Mark 10:26–31**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2010.26%E2%80%9331)

26The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

28Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” [Mark 10:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2010.28)

Two men remembered for serving others for Jesus left careers in the arts to commit themselves to where they believed God had called them. James O. Fraser (1886–1938) decided not to pursue being a concert pianist in England to serve the Lisu people in China, while the American Judson Van DeVenter (1855–1939) chose to become an evangelist instead of pursuing a career in art. He later wrote the hymn “I Surrender All.”

While having a vocation in the arts is the perfect calling for many, these men believed God called them to relinquish one career for another. Perhaps they found inspiration from Jesus counseling the rich, young ruler to give up his possessions to follow Him ([Mark 10:17–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2010.17%E2%80%9325)). Witnessing the exchange, Peter exclaimed, “We have left everything to follow you!” (v. 28). Jesus assured him that God would give those who follow Him “a hundred times as much in this present age” and eternal life (v. 30). But He would give according to His wisdom: “Many who are first will be last, and the last first” (v. 31).

No matter where God has placed us, we’re called to daily surrender our lives to Christ, obeying His gentle call to follow Him and serve Him with our talents and resources—whether in the home, office, community, or far from home. As we do, He’ll inspire us to love others, putting their needs above our own.

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

Sign in to track your progress!

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who comes to mind when you think of someone who’s sacrificed for Jesus? How is God calling you to surrender?

Jesus, help me to surrender my all for You today as I serve You and those around me for Your honor.

#### **Insight**

The Jews believed that material wealth was a merited reward from God for one’s obedience to the Torah ([Deuteronomy 28:1–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2028.1%E2%80%936)). In [Mark 10:17–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2010.17%E2%80%9322), a rich man claimed he’d faithfully kept the law since his youth, so he assumed he deserved eternal life. When challenged to give up his wealth to follow Jesus, he wouldn’t because he loved his money more. In contrast, the disciples had left their families and professions to follow Christ ([Matthew 4:18–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%204.18%E2%80%9322); [9:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%209.9)). Peter boasted, “We have left everything to follow you!” ([Mark 10:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%2010.28)). Jesus said the reward gained from following Him would far outweigh any loss, but He also warned they too must face persecution (v. 30). To follow Jesus is to serve, and that will include suffering (8:34–36; [John 15:20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.20)). The disciples weren’t to look down on others just because they sacrificed more or followed Jesus first: “Many who are first will be last, and the last first” (10:31).

# God Calling – 1/24/21

# Your Great Reward

"I am your God. Your Great Reward. Yours to look up and say, 'All is Well.'"

You pray for Faith, and you are told to do so. But I make provision in the House of My Abiding for those who turn towards Me and yet have weak knees and hearts that faint. Be not afraid. I am your God. Your Great Reward. Yours to look up and say, "All is well."

I am your Guide. Do not want to see the road ahead. Go just one step at a time. I rarely grant the long vista to My disciples, especially in personal affairs, for one step at a time is the best way to cultivate Faith.

You are in uncharted waters. But the Lord of all Seas is with you, the Controller of all Storms is with you. Sing with Joy. You follow the Lord of Limitations, as well as the God in whose service is perfect freedom.

He, the God of the Universe, confined Himself within the narrow limits of a Baby-form and, in growing Boyhood, and young Manhood, submitted to your human limitations, and you have to learn that your vision and power, boundless as far as spiritual things are concerned, must in temporal affairs submit to limitations, too.

But I am with you. It was when the disciples gave up effort after a night of fruitless fishing, that I came, and the nets broke with the overabundance of supply.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." - John 15:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/25/21

# Leave Room For God

# Leave Room for God

But when it pleased God. . . — [Galatians 1:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+1%3A15)

As workers for God we have to learn to make room for God – to give God "elbow room." We calculate and estimate, and say that this and that will happen, and we forget to make room for God to come in as He chooses. Would we be surprised if God came into our meeting or into our preaching in a way we had never looked for Him to come? Do not look for God to come in any particular way, but look for Him. That is the way to make room for Him. Expect Him to come, but do not expect Him only in a certain way. However much we may know God, the great lesson to learn is that at any minute He may break in. We are apt to over look this element of surprise, yet God never works in any other way. All of a sudden God meets the life – "When it was the good pleasure of God. . ."

Keep your life so constant in its contact with God that His surprising power may break out on the right hand and on the left. Always be in a state of expectancy, and see that you leave room for God to come in as He likes.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Much of the misery in our Christian life comes not because the devil tackles us, but because we have never understood the simple laws of our make-up. We have to treat the body as the servant of Jesus Christ: when the body says “Sit,” and He says “Go,” go! When the body says “Eat,” and He says “Fast,” fast! When the body says “Yawn,” and He says “Pray,” pray! Biblical Ethics, 107 R

# CCEL – 1/25/21

**The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.**—[ROM. 3:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.22)

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.—Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

[II Cor. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21). -[Gal. 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.3.html" \l "Gal.3.13). -[I Cor. 1:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.30). -[Tit. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.5).[Phi. 3:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.8).

“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.” [Isaiah 63:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.7)

And canst thou not do this? Are there no mercies which thou hast experienced? What, though thou art gloomy now, canst thou forget that blessed hour when Jesus met thee, and said, “Come unto me”? Canst thou not remember that rapturous moment when he snapped thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said, “I came to break thy bonds and set thee free”? Or if the love of thine espousals be forgotten, there must surely be some precious milestone along the road of life not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read a happy memorial of his mercy towards thee? What, didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou art suffering now, and did he not restore thee? Wert thou never poor before, and did he not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did he not deliver thee? Arise, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and plait them into an ark, wherein thine infant—faith—may float safely on the stream. Forget not what thy God has done for thee; turn over the book of thy remembrance, and consider the days of old. Canst thou not remember the hill Mizar? Did the Lord never meet with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never climbed the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been helped in time of need? Nay, I know thou hast. Go back, then, a little way to the choice mercies of yesterday, and though all may be dark now, light up the lamps of the past, they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt trust in the Lord till the day break and the shadows flee away. “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses, for they have been ever of old.”

# Word Live – 1/25/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/25/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/25/21

# A New Mission

**Read:** [**Matthew 28:16–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3a16%e2%80%9320)

### **The Great Commission**

16Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Living for Jesus is like running a marathon. It is not a quick sprint to the finish line. Rather, it takes sacrifice, perseverance, and energy. This was also true for the first disciples of Jesus. They had no idea what their earthly future would hold, they just knew they had to keep going.

You will be my witnesses. Acts 1:8

The Great Commission may be familiar to you, but one of the most interesting comments Matthew makes is that when the eleven disciples gathered to see Jesus, they worshiped Him, “but some doubted” (v. 17). Although we don’t know who, the word “some” connotes it was more than just one. This was not disbelief in the resurrection, for the resurrected Christ was now undeniable. Rather the word doubt here is more likely their general state of uncertainty and hesitation.

Jesus used these last moments to communicate their new mission (vv. 18–20). In the original language, the beginning of Jesus’ command in verse 19 is best understood as “Go! And make disciples!” The language denotes urgency for them to leave this place, to go beyond Galilee. In Acts, Jesus challenged His disciples to be witnesses, literally “martyrs,” for Him throughout Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Wherever the Lord would lead, they were to be in the business of making disciples.

Jesus knew their future would not be easy. The Master Shepherd knew they were fallible, after all, sheep can sometimes be stubborn, run astray, and even bite back. But the disciples could rest assured, that no matter the challenges they might face, the Lord would be with them always (Matt. 28:20). The Great Commission is our mission, too. And wherever the Lord leads you during this new year, He will be with you every step of the way.

**Apply the Word**

Are you experiencing doubt about the year ahead? Ask God to direct your feet to go and share the message of Jesus. As you go, make disciples by pouring into people’s lives.

### **Pray with Us**

Please strengthen our feeble hearts and quell our fears. Give us courage to live out our faith openly, to proclaim the gospel, and to win others to Christ.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/25/21

# Ripple Effect

 **Read:** [**Ezra 8:15–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%208.15%E2%80%9321)

### **The Return to Jerusalem**

15I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there. 16So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of learning, 17and I ordered them to go to Iddo, the leader in Kasiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his fellow Levites, the temple servants in Kasiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us for the house of our God. 18Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah’s sons and brothers, 18 in all; 19and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 in all. 20They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.

21There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me. [Ezra 7:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%207.28)

The little Bible college in northern Ghana didn’t look impressive—just a tin-roofed cinder-block building and a handful of students. Yet Bob Hayes poured his life into those students. He gave them leadership roles and encouraged them to preach and teach, despite their occasional reluctance. Bob passed away years ago, but dozens of thriving churches, schools, and two additional Bible institutes have sprung up across Ghana—all started by graduates of that humble school.

During the reign of King Artaxerxes (465–424 bc), Ezra the scribe assembled a band of Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem. But Ezra found no Levites among them ([Ezra 8:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%208.15)). He needed Levites to serve as priests. So he commissioned leaders to “bring attendants to us for the house of our God” (v. 17). They did so (vv. 18–20), and Ezra led them all in fasting and prayer (v. 21).

Ezra’s name means “helper,” a characteristic that resides at the heart of good leadership. Under Ezra’s prayerful guidance, he and his protégés would lead a spiritual awakening in Jerusalem (see chapters 9–10). All they had needed was a little encouragement and wise direction.

That’s how God’s church works too. As good mentors encourage and build us up, we learn to do the same for others. Such an influence will reach far beyond our lifetime. Work done faithfully for God stretches into eternity.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who is your primary spiritual mentor? (If you don’t have one, who might you ask to mentor you?) Why is mentoring in Christ something vital for you to receive and extend to others?

Father, show me someone I can mentor.

#### **Insight**

King Artaxerxes decreed that any exiled Israelites who wanted to return to their homeland could do so. Included in the king’s proclamation were priests and Levites ([Ezra 7:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%207.13)). So Ezra began leading a group back to Jerusalem. While traveling, however, he discovered that no Levites were part of the group (8:15). Why did Ezra need Levites? Because Artaxerxes had given Ezra permission to “appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God” (7:25). And Ezra was to teach those who didn’t know the laws. This required that Levites be part of the group that returned. They served as officers and judges ([1 Chronicles 26:29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2026.29)) and were the ones who taught the law ([2 Chronicles 35:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2035.3)). After Ezra sent for Levites to join them, God’s “gracious hand” brought them home to Jerusalem ([Ezra 8:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%208.18), [31–32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%208.31%E2%80%9332)).

# God Calling – 1/25/21

# The Way of Happiness

"Complete surrender of every moment to God is the foundation of happiness."

Complete surrender of every moment to God is the foundation of happiness, the superstructure is the joy of Communion with Him. And that is, for each, the place, the mansion, I went to prepare for you.

My followers have misunderstood that, and looked too often upon that promise as referring only to an After-Life, and too often - far too often - upon this life as a something to be struggled through in order to get the reward and the joy of the next.

Seek to carry out all I say, and such understanding, insight, vision, and joy will be yours as shall pass indeed all understanding. The plans of God are very wonderful - beyond your highest hopes.

Cling to thoughts of protection, safety, guidance.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." - Romans 12:1