# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/26/21

# Look Again And Consecrate

If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you? — [Matthew 6:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A30)

A simple statement of Jesus is always a puzzle to us if we are not simple. How are we going to be simple with the simplicity of Jesus? By receiving His Spirit, recognizing and relying on Him, obeying Him as He brings the word of God, and life will become amazingly simple. "Consider," says Jesus, "how much more your Father Who clothes the grass of the field will clothe you, if you keep your relationship right with Him." Every time we have gone back in spiritual communion it has been because we have impertinently known better than Jesus Christ. We have allowed the cares of the world to come in, and have forgotten the "much more" of our Heavenly Father.

"Behold the fowls of the air" – their main aim is to obey the principle of life that is in them and God looks after them. Jesus says that if you are rightly related to Him and obey His Spirit that is in you, God will look after your ‘feathers.’

"Consider the lilies of the field" – they grow where they are put. Many of us refuse to grow where we are put, consequently we take root nowhere. Jesus says that if we obey the life God has given us, He will look after all the other things. Has Jesus Christ told us a lie? If we are not experiencing the "much more," it is because we are not obeying the life God has given us, we are taken up with confusing considerations. How much time have we taken up worrying God with questions when we should have been absolutely free to concentrate on His work? Consecration means the continual separating of myself to one particular thing. We cannot consecrate once and for all. Am I continually separating myself to consider God every day of my life?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is perilously possible to make our conceptions of God like molten lead poured into a specially designed mould, and when it is cold and hard we fling it at the heads of the religious people who don’t agree with us.  
Disciples Indeed

# CCEL – 1/26/21

**Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**—[HEB. 13:13,14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.13)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.—As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.—Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

[I Pet. 4:12.13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.12). -[II Cor. 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.7).[I Pet. 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.14).[Acts 5:41](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.5.html" \l "Acts.5.41). -[Heb. 11:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.25).

“Your heavenly Father.” [Matthew 6:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.26)

God’s people are doubly his children, they are his offspring by creation, and they are his sons by adoption in Christ. Hence they are privileged to call him, “Our Father which art in heaven.” Father! Oh, what precious word is that. Here is authority: “If I be a Father, where is mine honour?” If ye be sons, where is your obedience? Here is affection mingled with authority; an authority which does not provoke rebellion; an obedience demanded which is most cheerfully rendered—which would not be withheld even if it might. The obedience which God’s children yield to him must be loving obedience. Do not go about the service of God as slaves to their taskmaster’s toil, but run in the way of his commands because it is your Father's way. Yield your bodies as instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father’s will, and his will should be the will of his child. Father!—Here is a kingly attribute so sweetly veiled in love, that the King’s crown is forgotten in the King’s face, and his sceptre becomes, not a rod of iron, but a silver sceptre of mercy—the sceptre indeed seems to be forgotten in the tender hand of him who wields it. Father!—Here is honour and love. How great is a Father’s love to his children! That which friendship cannot do, and mere benevolence will not attempt, a father’s heart and hand must do for his sons. They are his offspring, he must bless them; they are his children, he must show himself strong in their defence. If an earthly father watches over his children with unceasing love and care, how much more does our heavenly Father? Abba, Father! He who can say this, hath uttered better music than cherubim or seraphim can reach. There is heaven in the depth of that word—Father! There is all I can ask; all my necessities can demand; all my wishes can desire. I have all in all to all eternity when I can say, “Father.”

# Word Live – 1/26/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/26/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/26/21

# Daily Devotional | Priorities in Life

**Read:** [**Matthew 19:16–30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3a16%e2%80%9330)

### **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%9330" \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%9330#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.”

27Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

28Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3a16%e2%80%9330#fen-NIV-23792c)] or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 19:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3a16%e2%80%9330#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%9330#en-NIV-23782) Lev. 19:18
3. [Matthew 19:29](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3a16%e2%80%9330#en-NIV-23792) Some manuscripts do not have or wife.

If you stood face to face with the Savior of the world, what would you ask Him? Perhaps, you would ask a similar question as the young man in today’s text: “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” (v. 16). Jesus’ initial response was what one would expect from a Jewish rabbi. However, Jesus was about to teach him, and also us, a lesson no money on earth could ever buy.

Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life? Matthew 19:16

The young man explained that he kept all the laws that Jesus proposed. But notice that these commandments dealt with one’s work and not with the heart. So when Jesus asked him to give up all his possessions and become His follower, the man could not do it.  The text says, “he went away sad, because he had great wealth” (v. 22). The reality, however, is that his great wealth possessed him. Deep down, his heart and priorities were centered on his wealth, not on loving God.

The disciples were astonished at this exchange because, in early Judaism, wealth was a clear indication of God’s favor. If it was impossible for a rich man to enter heaven, they probably wondered how anyone could (vv. 23–25). Jesus responded by saying that it is only possible through the power of God (v. 26).

When we follow Christ, our priorities change. The things that used to be important, no longer hold our focus. For the rich young man, his possessions got in the way of his heart for God. By all earthly accounts, he was a moral man, but his morality could not save him. What he truly needed, only Jesus could provide.

>> What are your priorities? What do you work toward or sacrifice for?  
Make a list and then examine it in light of today’s passage. Are you depending on your morality or on Jesus for your righteousness?

### **Pray with Us**

Open our eyes to our idols, Lord. We submit our priorities to you and ask that you make yourself the center of our lives and our schedules. Remind us that we live in you and for you.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/26/21

# The Problem Within

 **Read:** [**Matthew 21:1–9**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.1%E2%80%939)

### **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King**

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

4This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5“Say to Daughter Zion,  
    ‘See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
    and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23832a)]

6The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836b)] to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836c)]

“Hosanna[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23836d)] in the highest heaven!”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 21:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-23832) Zech. 9:9
2. [Matthew 21:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15
3. [Matthew 21:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) Psalm 118:25,26
4. [Matthew 21:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21%3A1%E2%80%939&version=NIV#en-NIV-23836) A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven! [Matthew 21:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.9)

A few years ago, a woodpecker began tapping on the siding of our home. We thought the problem was only external. Then one day, my son and I climbed up a ladder into the attic only to have a bird fly past our startled faces. The problem was worse than we’d suspected: it was inside our house.

When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the crowd was hoping He would be the one to fix their external problem—their oppression by the Romans. They went wild, shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” ([Matthew 21:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.9)). This was the moment they’d been waiting for; God’s appointed King had come. If God’s chosen Deliverer was going to begin reforming things, wouldn’t He start with all the wrong out there? But in most gospel accounts, the “triumphal entry” is followed by Jesus driving out exploitative moneychangers . . . from the temple (vv. 12–13). He was cleaning house, and from the inside out.

That’s what happens when we welcome Jesus as King; He comes to set things right—and He starts with us. He makes us confront the evil inside. Jesus on the donkey is like the warriors in the Trojan horse. The horse was welcomed as a symbol of peace, but its ultimate aim was unconditional surrender. Jesus our King requires the same from us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What does it mean for Jesus to be your King? Why is it vital for you to surrender your all to Him?

Dear Jesus, You’re the true King. Forgive me for wanting You to only fix the problems in the world around me and not to confront the sin in my heart. Show me where I’m prone to wander and expose the ways I want to run my own life.

#### **Insight**

It’s not surprising that the Jewish people were expecting a political savior. The Old Testament prophets repeatedly foretold of a military deliverance from oppressive enemies. Importantly, [Matthew 21:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2021.5) quotes the prophecy of [Zechariah 9:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%209.9) and informs us this is a reference to Jesus. Zechariah spoke of a “righteous and victorious” King who would come “lowly and riding on a donkey” (v. 9), just as Jesus did. But where was the victory the people were expecting? The context of the entire chapter of [Zechariah 9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%209) is one of military conquest and deliverance.

As with many messianic prophecies, this one has only been fulfilled in part, and even that fulfillment wasn’t what the people were expecting. They never thought the Messiah would go to the cross as part of God’s plan. Jesus will fulfill the rest of the messianic prophecies when He returns for us, as He has promised to do.

# God Calling – 1/26/21

# Keep Calm

"Keep your Spirit-Life calm and unruffled."

Keep your Spirit-Life calm and unruffled. Nothing else matters. Leave all to Me. This is your great task, to get calm in My Presence, not to let one ruffled feeling stay for one moment. Years of blessing may be checked in one moment by that.

No matter who frets you or what, yours is the task to stop all else until absolute calm comes. Any block means My Power diverted into other channels.

Pour forth - pour forth - pour forth - I cannot bless a life that does not act as a channel. My Spirit brooks no stagnation, not even in rest. Its Power must flow on. Pass on everything, every blessing. Abide in Me.

See how many you can bless each day. Dwell much in My Presence.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." - Proverbs 4:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/27/21

# Look Again And Think

Take no thought for your life. — [Matthew 6:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A25)

A warning which needs to be reiterated is that the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, will choke all that God puts in. We are never free from the recurring tides of this encroachment. If it does not come on the line of clothes and food, it will come on the line of money or lack of money; of friends or lack of friends; or on the line of difficult circumstances. It is one steady encroachment all the time, and unless we allow the Spirit of God to raise up the standard against it, these things will come in like a flood.

"Take no thought for your life." "Be careful about one thing only," says our Lord – "your relationship to Me." Common sense shouts loud and says – "That is absurd, I must consider how I am going to live, I must consider what I am going to eat and drink." Jesus says you must not. Beware of allowing the thought that this statement is made by One Who does not understand our particular circumstances. Jesus Christ knows our circumstances better than we do, and He says we must not think about these things so as to make them the one concern of our life. Whenever there is competition, be sure that you put your relationship to God first.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How much evil has begun to threaten you to-day? What kind of mean little imps have been looking in and saying – Now what are you going to do next month – this summer? "Be anxious for nothing," Jesus says. Look again and think. Keep your mind on the "much more" of your heavenly Father.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of bartering the Word of God for a more suitable conception of your own.  Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 1/27/21

**Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.**—[I JOHN 3:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.5)

God, . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.—The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

[Heb. 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.13). -[II Cor. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html#iiCor.5.21).[I Pet. 1:17-20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.17). -[II Cor. 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14).

“And of his fulness have all we received.” [John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16)

These words tell us that there is a fulness in Christ. There is a fulness of essential Deity, for “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead.” There is a fulness of perfect manhood, for in him, bodily, that Godhead was revealed. There is a fulness of atoning efficacy in his blood, for “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” There is a fulness of justifying righteousness in his life, for “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” There is a fulness of divine prevalence in his plea, for “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” There is a fulness of victory in his death, for through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. There is a fulness of efficacy in his resurrection from the dead, for by it “we are begotten again unto a lively hope.” There is a fulness of triumph in his ascension, for “when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.” There is a fulness of blessings of every sort and shape; a fulness of grace to pardon, of grace to regenerate, of grace to sanctify, of grace to preserve, and of grace to perfect. There is a fulness at all times; a fulness of comfort in affliction; a fulness of guidance in prosperity. A fulness of every divine attribute, of wisdom, of power, of love; a fulness which it were impossible to survey, much less to explore. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Oh, what a fulness must this be of which all receive! Fulness, indeed, must there be when the stream is always flowing, and yet the well springs up as free, as rich, as full as ever. Come, believer, and get all thy need supplied; ask largely, and thou shalt receive largely, for this “fulness” is inexhaustible, and is treasured up where all the needy may reach it, even in Jesus, Immanuel—God with us.

# Word Live – 1/27/21

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# Scripture Union – 1/27/21

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# Today in the Word – 1/27/21

# A Future Family

**Read:** [**Titus 2:1–15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+2%3a1%e2%80%9315)

### **Doing Good for the Sake of the Gospel**

2 You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. 2Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

3Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. 4Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

6Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. 7In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

9Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

11For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

15These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

The island dwellers of Crete,  otherwise known as Cretans, were notorious for lying, corruption, violence, and sexual sin. Located in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, Crete’s harbors were strategically placed to service cities all over the region. For these reasons, Paul saw the island of Crete as fertile soil for the gospel of Jesus, launching the message of Christ to the corners of the known world. To accomplish this, he sent his travel companion and trusted mentee, Titus, to the island. Titus would show them a better way of living: how to restore order to a number of house churches that were being deceived by the local leaders and how the family could be the first frontier for evangelism.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. Titus 2:11

In our text today, Paul instructs Titus on how the Cretan Christian family ought to live with one another. He touches on every demographic: older men (v. 2), older women (v. 3), younger women (vv. 4–5), younger men (vv. 6–8), and even workers and servants in the household (vv. 9–10). In a culture that paid homage to idols, dishonesty, and regarded Caesar as the deity, having a family live above reproach was key. Paul believed that the gospel’s supremacy must prove its redemptive power in the public square while all eyes were on the Christian family unit.

Like those on the island of Crete, many people today live on islands of sin and brokenness longing for a more hopeful future. If God can transform the lives of the Cretans to be a light for the Mediterranean world, the gospel message has the power to transform people today to be a light for our world. And, when evangelism starts with the family, it can have an impact that will last for generations.

>> Just like the Cretan Christian families, the world is watching you. How can your family be more evangelistic? Start with looking at the way you treat one another. Compare your family life to what is taught here by the apostle Paul.

### **Pray with Us**

Family is one of your most gracious gifts, but it can also be a source of immense pain. Reveal to us the ways our families fail to honor you and heal us so that we can help others discover the fullness of your design for family.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/27/21

# Free at Last

 **Read:** [**John 8:31–36**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.31%E2%80%9336)

### **Dispute Over Whose Children Jesus’ Opponents Are**

31To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

33They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”

34Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. [John 8:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.36)

Twenty long years passed before British journalist John McCarthy—a five-year hostage during Lebanon’s grueling civil war—met the man who negotiated his release. When McCarthy finally met U.N. envoy Giandomenico Picco, McCarthy simply said, “Thank you for my freedom!” His heartfelt words carried great weight because Picco had risked his own life during dangerous negotiations to secure freedom for McCarthy and others.

We as believers can relate to such hard-won freedom. Jesus gave up His life—enduring death on a Roman cross—to secure spiritual freedom for all people, including each of us. Now as His children, we know “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free,” the apostle Paul boldly declared ([Galatians 5:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.1)).

The gospel of John also teaches of freedom in Christ, noting, “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” ([John 8:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.36)).

But free in what ways? In Jesus, we experience freedom not only from sin and its hold on us but also from guilt, shame, worry, Satan’s lies, superstitions, false teaching, and eternal death. No longer hostages, we have freedom to show love to enemies, walk in kindness, live with hope, and love our neighbors. As we follow the Holy Spirit’s leading, we can forgive as we’ve been forgiven.

For all of this, let’s thank God today. Then let’s love so others will know the power of His freedom too.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What spiritual chains still hold you hostage? As you release those chains to God, what words can you use to thank Him for setting you free?

Dear liberating God, thank You for my freedom—for setting me free from spiritual death and releasing me to love.

#### **Insight**

The Jews presumptuously believed that their spiritual heritage as Abraham’s descendants had given them a special standing with God—a misguided sense of privilege, immunity, and false spirituality ([John 8:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.33), [39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.39)). But they had failed in their responsibility and duty as God’s chosen people ([Deuteronomy 10:12–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2010.12%E2%80%9313)). Jesus warned the teachers of the law and the Pharisees that they had “neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” ([Matthew 23:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2023.23)) and “the love of God” ([Luke 11:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2011.42); see [Micah 6:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%206.8)). Their privileged status as Abraham’s descendants blinded them, causing them to dishonestly say that they had “never been slaves of anyone” ([John 8:33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.33)), when throughout their history they had been enslaved by Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Syria, and Rome. They also refused to see that they were slaves to sin (v. 34). They wouldn’t acknowledge that Jesus is who He claims to be—their promised Messiah (7:26–27, 40–43; 8:25).

# God Calling – 1/27/21

# Height of the Storm

"It is a part of My method to wait till the storm is at its full violence."

"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." - John 6:68

I am with you both. Go forward unafraid. Health and strength, peace and happiness and joy - they are all My gifts. Yours for the asking. In the spiritual (as in the material) world there is no empty space, and as self and fears and worries depart out of your lives, it follows that the things of the Spirit, that you crave so, rush in to take their places. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. What a wonderful cycle, because ye are God's.

Be not afraid. Fear not. It is to the drowning man the Rescuer comes. To the brave swimmer who can fare well alone He comes not. And no rush of Joy can be like that of a man towards his Rescuer.

It is a part of My method to wait till the storm is at its full violence. So did I with My disciples on the Lake. I could have bidden the first angry wave be calm, the first gust of wind be still, but what a lesson unlearned? What a sense of tender nearness of refuge and safety would have been lost.

Remember this - My disciples thought that in sleep I had forgotten them. Remember how mistaken they were. Gain strength and confidence and joyful dependence and anticipation from that.

Never fear. Joy is yours, and the radiant joy of the rescued shall be yours.

"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." - Psalm 25:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/28/21

# But It Is Hardly Credible That One Could So Persecute Jesus!

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? — [Acts 26:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A14)

Am I set on my own way for God? We are never free from this snare until we are brought into the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Obstinacy and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit. Whenever we are obstinate and self-willed and set upon our own ambitions, we are hurting Jesus. Every time we stand on our rights and insist that this is what we intend to do, we are persecuting Jesus. Whenever we stand on our dignity we systematically vex and grieve His Spirit; and when the knowledge comes home that it is Jesus Whom we have been persecuting all the time, it is the most crushing revelation there could be.

Is the word of God tremendously keen to me as I hand it on to you, or does my life give the lie to the things I profess to teach? I may teach sanctification and yet exhibit the spirit of Satan, the spirit that persecutes Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is conscious of one thing only – a perfect oneness with the Father, and He says, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." All I do ought to be founded on a perfect oneness with Him, not on a self-willed determination to be godly. This will mean that I can be easily put upon, easily over-reached, easily ignored; but if I submit to it for His sake, I prevent Jesus Christ being persecuted.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The vital relationship which the Christian has to the Bible is not that he worships the letter, but that the Holy Spirit makes the words of the Bible spirit and life to him.  The Psychology of Redemption, 1066 L

# CCEL – 1/28/21

**As thy days, so shall thy strength be.**—[DEUT. 33:25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.25)

When they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.—Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.—He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.—I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

[Matt. 13:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.11). -[Matt. 6:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.34).[Psa. 68:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.68.html" \l "Ps.68.35). -[Isa. 40:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.29).[II Cor. 12:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.12.html" \l "iiCor.12.9). -[Phi. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html#Phil.4.13). -[Judg. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Judg.5.html" \l "Judg.5.21).

“Perfect in Christ Jesus.” [Colossians 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.28)

Do you not feel in your own soul that perfection is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? Every tear which trickles from your eye, weeps “imperfection;” every harsh word which proceeds from your lip, mutters “imperfection.” You have too frequently had a view of your own heart to dream for a moment of any perfection in yourself. But amidst this sad consciousness of imperfection, here is comfort for you—you are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” In God’s sight, you are “complete in him;” even now you are “accepted in the Beloved.” But there is a second perfection, yet to be realized, which is sure to all the seed. Is it not delightful to look forward to the time when every stain of sin shall be removed from the believer, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? The Church of Christ then will be so pure, that not even the eye of Omniscience will see a spot or blemish in her; so holy and so glorious, that Hart did not go beyond the truth when he said—

“With my Saviour’s garments on,

Holy as the Holy One.”

Then shall we know, and taste, and feel the happiness of this vast but short sentence, “Complete in Christ.” Not till then shall we fully comprehend the heights and depths of the salvation of Jesus. Doth not thy heart leap for joy at the thought of it? Black as thou art, thou shalt be white one day; filthy as thou art, thou shalt be clean. Oh, it is a marvellous salvation this! Christ takes a worm and transforms it into an angel; Christ takes a black and deformed thing and makes it clean and matchless in his glory, peerless in his beauty, and fit to be the companion of seraphs. O my soul, stand and admire this blessed truth of perfection in Christ.

# Word Live – 1/28/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/28/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/28/21

# Treasures in Heaven

**Read:** [**Matthew 6:19–24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a19%e2%80%9324)

### **Treasures in Heaven**

19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a19%e2%80%9324" \l "fen-NIV-23305a" \o "See footnote a)] your whole body will be full of light. 23But if your eyes are unhealthy,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a19%e2%80%9324" \l "fen-NIV-23306b" \o "See footnote b)] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 6:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a19%e2%80%9324#en-NIV-23305) The Greek for healthy here implies generous.
2. [Matthew 6:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a19%e2%80%9324#en-NIV-23306) The Greek for unhealthy here implies stingy.

In the 18th century, the well-known preacher John Wesley preached a sermon urging believers to earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can. He preached, “In the hands of God’s children, money is food for the hungry, clothing for the naked and shelter for the stranger. With money, we can care for the widow and the fatherless, defend the oppressed, meet the need of those who are sick or in pain.” Wesley’s words and actions are an illustration of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 6.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

When it comes to money and wealth, Jesus told His hearers to look to the future. At first glance, it might seem that Jesus was arguing in verses 19–20 that the reason they should store up their treasures in heaven was that there were no rodents that might destroy them. That wasn’t the real problem. For Jesus, the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart. He says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (v. 21).

Jesus then used the example of a lamp to illustrate how the eyes are the pathway to the heart. People fix their hearts on where their treasure is and they fix their eyes on what they crave. Just as undiagnosed eye disease can force us to have blurry vision, or even to become blind, unbridled lust for earthly possessions cloud our spiritual walk with the Lord.

Jesus concludes this idea in verse 24 by explaining that no one can serve two masters. It is impossible. During the 1990s it would have been unthinkable for someone to work for both Bill Gates’s Microsoft and Steve Job’s Apple Co. Each one demanded complete loyalty and devotion. So it is the case with both God and money. Which do we serve?

>> How do you honor God with your treasure? How can you store up more treasures in heaven and less here on earth? Finally, who will you choose to serve: God or money?

### **Pray with Us**

Today we examine our hearts. We repent of the materialism and greed that lures us away from you. Lord, forgive us and sanctify our desires. Help us to seek you above all else.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/28/21

# A Mighty Stream

 **Read:** [**Amos 5:21–24**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%205.21%E2%80%9324)

21“I hate, I despise your religious festivals;  
    your assemblies are a stench to me.  
22Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
    I will not accept them.  
Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,  
    I will have no regard for them.  
23Away with the noise of your songs!  
    I will not listen to the music of your harps.  
24But let justice roll on like a river,  
    righteousness like a never-failing stream!

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! [Amos 5:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%205.24)

Among the many exhibits and artifacts exploring the harsh reality of slavery and its aftermath in the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, I was grateful to discover the Contemplative Court. This tranquil room features translucent walls of bronze glass, and water appears to rain down from the ceiling into a pool.

As I sat in that peaceful space, a quote on the wall from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. caught my eye: “We are determined . . . to work and fight until justice rains down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.” These powerful words are drawn from the Old Testament book of Amos.

Amos was a prophet living among a people who were involved in religious activities, such as celebrating festivals and offering sacrifices, but whose hearts were far from God ([Amos 5:21–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%205.21%E2%80%9323)). God rejected their activities because they’d turned away from His commands, including those regarding justice toward the needy and oppressed.

Instead of religious ceremonies devoid of love for God and others, Amos wrote that God longed for His people to demonstrate genuine concern for the welfare of all people—a generous way of living that would be a mighty river bringing life wherever it flowed.

Jesus taught the same truth that loving God is connected with loving our neighbors ([Matthew 22:37–39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2022.37%E2%80%9339)). As we seek to love God, may it come from hearts that also treasure justice.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How might you love God through pursuing justice for others? What are examples of generous living toward the needy or oppressed that encourage you?

Heavenly Father, thank You that Your love is like a mighty stream that brings justice to all. Help me to join You in Your healing work.

#### **Insight**

The pairing of the words justice and righteousness as seen in [Amos 5:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%205.24) is common in Amos (see 5:7; 6:12) as well as other books of the Old Testament. As those who were in a covenant relationship with the One whose rule is based on righteousness and justice ([Psalm 89:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089.14); [Isaiah 9:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%209.7)) and who loves these virtues ([Psalm 33:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2033.5)), the people of God were to reflect the same in their relationships with each other. When they didn’t, God challenged and corrected them. The appearance of these two words together strongly suggests that justice and righteousness are parallel terms and thereby related. One way of viewing the terms is to see justice (acting fairly and judicially) as the fruit of being rooted in righteousness (what is right as it relates to God and man).

# God Calling – 1/28/21

# Low Ambitions

"There is not one want of the soul that I do not supply for the asking, and to you, too, I long to be all."

Fear not. Do not fear to be busy. You are the servant of all. "He that would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all."

Service is the word of My disciples. I served indeed, the humblest, the lowliest. I was at their command. My highest powers were at their service.

Be used. Be used by all, by the lowest, the smallest. How best you can serve? Let that be your daily seeking, not how best can you be served.

Look around you. Do the aims and ambitions that man strives for bring peace, or the world's awards bring heart-rest and happiness? No! indeed, man is at war with man. Those whom the world has most rewarded, with name, fame, honour, wealth, are weary and disappointed.

And yet, to the listening ear, above the jangle of the world's discordant cries, there echoes down the 1900 years My message, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

And the weary and disappointed who listen and turn to Me find indeed that rest. Joy of the Weary I am, Music to the Heart I am, Health to the Sick, Wealth to the Poor, Food to the Hungry, Home to the Wanderer, Rapture to the Jaded, Love to the Lonely.

There is not one want of the soul that I do not supply for the asking, and to you too, I long to be all.

"Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you." - Isaiah 30:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/29/21

# But It Is Hardly Credible That One Could Be So Positively Ignorant!

Who art Thou, Lord? — [Acts 26:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+26%3A15)

"The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand." There is no escape when Our Lord speaks, He always comes with an arrestment of the understanding. Has the voice of God come to you directly? If it has, you cannot mistake the intimate insistence with which it has spoken to you in the language you know best, not through your ears, but through your circumstances.

God has to destroy our determined confidence in our own convictions. "I know this is what I should do" – and suddenly the voice of God speaks in a way that overwhelms us by revealing the depths of our ignorance. We have shown our ignorance of Him in the very way we determined to serve Him. We serve Jesus in a spirit that is not His, we hurt Him by our advocacy for Him, we push His claims in the spirit of the devil. Our words sound all right, but our spirit is that of an enemy. "He rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The spirit of our Lord in an advocate of His is described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Have I been persecuting Jesus by a zealous determination to serve Him in my own way? If I feel I have done my duty and yet have hurt Him in doing it, I may be sure it was not my duty, because it has not fostered the meek and quiet spirit, but the spirit of self-satisfaction. We imagine that whatever is unpleasant is our duty! Is that anything like the spirit of our Lord – "I delight to do Thy will, O My God."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To live a life alone with God does not mean that we live it apart from everyone else. The connection between godly men and women and those associated with them is continually revealed in the Bible, e.g., 1 Timothy 4:10.  Not Knowing Whither, 867 L

# CCEL – 1/29/21

**Thou God seest me.**—[GEN. 16:13.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.16.html" \l "Gen.16.13)

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.—God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.—The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.

Jesus . . . knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.—Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.

[Psa. 139:1-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.1),[6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.6).[Prov. 15:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.15.html" \l "Prov.15.3). -[Prov. 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.5.html" \l "Prov.5.21). -[Luke 16:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.16.html" \l "Luke.16.15). -[II Chr. 16:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiChr.16.html" \l "iiChr.16.9).[John 2:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.2.html" \l "John.2.24).[John 21:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.21.html" \l "John.21.17).

“The things which are not seen.” [2 Corinthians 4:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html#iiCor.4.18)

In our Christian pilgrimage it is well, for the most part, to be looking forward. Forward lies the crown, and onward is the goal. Whether it be for hope, for joy, for consolation, or for the inspiring of our love, the future must, after all, be the grand object of the eye of faith. Looking into the future we see sin cast out, the body of sin and death destroyed, the soul made perfect, and fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Looking further yet, the believer’s enlightened eye can see death’s river passed, the gloomy stream forded, and the hills of light attained on which standeth the celestial city; he seeth himself enter within the pearly gates, hailed as more than conqueror, crowned by the hand of Christ, embraced in the arms of Jesus, glorified with him, and made to sit together with him on his throne, even as he has overcome and has sat down with the Father on his throne. The thought of this future may well relieve the darkness of the past and the gloom of the present. The joys of heaven will surely compensate for the sorrows of earth. Hush, hush, my doubts! death is but a narrow stream, and thou shalt soon have forded it. Time, how short—eternity, how long! Death, how brief—immortality, how endless! Methinks I even now eat of Eshcol’s clusters, and sip of the well which is within the gate. The road is so, so short! I shall soon be there.

“When the world my heart is rending

With its heaviest storm of care,

My glad thoughts to heaven ascending,

Find a refuge from despair.

Faith’s bright vision shall sustain me

Till life’s pilgrimage is past;

Fears may vex and troubles pain me,

I shall reach my home at last.”

# Word Live – 1/29/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/29/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/29/21

# Begin with the End

**Read:** [**Matthew 25:14–30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3a14%e2%80%9330)

### **The Parable of the Bags of Gold**

14“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3a14%e2%80%9330" \l "fen-NIV-24024a" \o "See footnote a)] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

21“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

23“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

24“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

26“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28“‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 25:15](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3a14%e2%80%9330#en-NIV-24024) Greek five talents … two talents … one talent; also throughout this parable; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wage.

When you’re enduring a long trip, it can help to keep your final destination in mind. Just the thought of a relaxing view or a delicious meal can help you endure the journey. As Jesus taught His disciples about the end times, He told them a parable. Three servants were entrusted to care for their master’s wealth while he was away. The word entrusted does not mean they should simply hold it and keep it safe. Rather, they were to manage their master’s wealth. They should help nurture it so it could grow.

You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.Matthew 25:23

Jesus said that as soon as the master departed, two of the servants went right to work and invested their master’s wealth. Knowing he would be returning, they began with that end in mind. After he returned, they showed their master how they had multiplied his wealth. He was pleased and responded, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (vv. 21, 23). However, the remaining servant did nothing with his master’s wealth. He accused the master of being a cut-throat man and wanted to do nothing except keeping the treasure safe. Failing to utilize the opportunity given him, he earned a rebuke and was cast out of the inner circle.

As you look at the year ahead, you will be given many opportunities. The question is, what are you going to do with what God gives you? How will you leverage each opportunity for His glory? At some point, Jesus will return. He will come back to settle accounts and to see what we did with all the opportunities we were given. Will you be ready?

>> It helps to begin with our end destination in mind—our heavenly future! Ask yourself, how will living with eternity in mind change what I choose to spend time on today? How will it affect my life? What opportunities should I spend the most time on?

### **Pray with Us**

Eternity is not an abstraction: it is a reality that will endure when our present life is no more. Father, let the promise of eternity with you guide our every decision.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/29/21

# Out of Breath

 **Read:** [**Deuteronomy 5:12–15**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205.12%E2%80%9315)

12“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. 15Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. [Deuteronomy 5:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205.13%E2%80%9314)

There’s a home-improvement store near me that has a big green button in one of its departments. If no assistant is present, you push the button, which starts a timer. If you’re not served within a minute, you get a discount on your purchase.

We like being the customer in this scenario who enjoys the speedy service. But the demand for fast service often takes a toll when we’re the one expected to deliver it. So many of us today feel rushed doing our jobs, working long hours, checking email multiple times a day, and feeling pressured to meet tighter and tighter deadlines. The customer service tactics of the home-improvement store have seeped into all our lives, creating a culture of rush.

When God told the Israelites to keep a Sabbath, He added an important reason: “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt” ([Deuteronomy 5:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205.15)). There they’d been forced to work ceaselessly under Pharaoh’s excessive time constraints ([Exodus 5:6–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%205.6%E2%80%939)). Now freed, they were to give themselves a whole day each week to ensure they and those who served them could rest ([Deuteronomy 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205.14)). Under God’s rule, there were to be no flush-faced, out-of-breath people.

How often do you work to the point of exhaustion or get impatient with people who keep you waiting? Let’s give ourselves and each other a break. A culture of rush is Pharaoh’s doing, not God’s.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you resist the urge to overwork? How will you be patient this week with people who keep you waiting?

God of the Sabbath, thank You for commanding me to rest so I can be whole.

#### **Insight**

When Moses taught God’s commandments in [Deuteronomy 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205), it was a “reissue” of the Ten Commandments first delivered in [Exodus 20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2020). In fact, Deuteronomy means “second law” because it was the second time Moses taught the law to the people. But when we compare the Ten Commandments in [Exodus 20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2020) and [Deuteronomy 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205), we notice some subtle differences. For instance, the commandment to keep the Sabbath in [Deuteronomy 5:12–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%205.12%E2%80%9315) is grounded on God’s act of redemption when He rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (v. 15). But the commandment in [Exodus 20:8–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2020.8%E2%80%9311) is grounded on God’s rest on the seventh day from His work of creation (v. 11). Putting both passages together, we see that God’s intention in creation and redemption is our blessed rest. This culminates in Jesus’ words, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” ([Matthew 11:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2011.28)).

# God Calling – 1/29/21

# I Clear the Path

"Never fear, whatever may happen. You are both being led."

"Wait on the Lord." - Psalm 27:14

I am thy shield. Have no fear. You must know that "All is well." I will never let anyone do to you both, other than My Will for you.

I can see the future. I can read men's hearts. I know better than you what you need. Trust me absolutely. You are not at the mercy of Fate, or buffeted about by others. You are being led in a very definite way, and others, who do not serve your purpose, are being moved out of your Path by Me.

Never fear, whatever may happen. You are both being led. Do not try to plan. I have planned. You are the builder, not the Architect.

Go very quietly, very gently. All is for the very best for you.

Trust me for all. Your very extremity will ensure My activity for you. And having your foundation on the Rock - Christ, Faith in Him, and "being rooted and grounded in Him," and having belief in My Divinity as your Corner Stone, it is yours to build, knowing all is well.

Literally, you have to depend on Me for everything - everything. It was out of the depths that David cried unto Me, and I heard his voice. All is well.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." - Psalm 37:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/30/21

# The Dilemma Of Obedience

 And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. — [1 Samuel 3:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Samuel+3%3A15)

God never speaks to us in startling ways, but in ways that are easy to misunderstand, and we say, "I wonder if that is God’s voice?" Isaiah said that the Lord spake to him "with a strong hand," that is, by the pressure of circumstances. Nothing touches our lives but it is God Himself speaking. Do we discern His hand or only mere occurrence?

Get into the habit of saying, "Speak, Lord," and life will become a romance. Every time circumstances press, say, "Speak, Lord"; make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline, it is meant to get me to the place of saying, "Speak, Lord." Recall the time when God did speak to you. Have you forgotten what He said? Was it Luke 11:13, or was it 1 Thess. 5:23? As we listen, our ear gets acute, and, like Jesus, we shall hear God all the time.

Shall I tell my "Eli" what God has shown to me? That is where the dilemma of obedience comes in. We disobey God by becoming amateur providences – I must shield "Eli," the best people we know. God did not tell Samuel to tell Eli; he had to decide that for himself. God’s call to you may hurt your "Eli;" but if you try to prevent the suffering in another life, it will prove an obstruction between your soul and God. It is at your own peril that you prevent the cutting off of the right hand or the plucking out of the eye.

Never ask the advice of another about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will nearly always side with Satan. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a public manifestation of believers in Jesus.  Facing Reality, 34 R

# CCEL – 1/30/21

**Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.**—[HEB. 12:1,2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.1)

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.—Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.—Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.—Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

[Luke 9:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.9.html" \l "Luke.9.23). -[Luke 14:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.14.html" \l "Luke.14.33). -[Rom. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.12).[I Cor. 9:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.25),[27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.27). -[Phi. 3:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.13). -[Hos. 6:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.6.html" \l "Hos.6.3).

“When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself.” [2 Samuel 5:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.5.html" \l "iiSam.5.24)

The members of Christ’s Church should be very prayerful, always seeking the unction of the Holy One to rest upon their hearts, that the kingdom of Christ may come, and that his “will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven;” but there are times when God seems especially to favour Zion, such seasons ought to be to them like “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” We ought then to be doubly prayerful, doubly earnest, wrestling more at the throne than we have been wont to do. Action should then be prompt and vigorous. The tide is flowing—now let us pull manfully for the shore. O for Pentecostal outpourings and Pentecostal labours. Christian, in yourself there are times “when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” You have a peculiar power in prayer; the Spirit of God gives you joy and gladness; the Scripture is open to you; the promises are applied; you walk in the light of God’s countenance; you have peculiar freedom and liberty in devotion, and more closeness of communion with Christ than was your wont. Now, at such joyous periods when you hear the “sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” is the time to bestir yourself; now is the time to get rid of any evil habit, while God the Spirit helpeth your infirmities. Spread your sail; but remember what you sometimes sing—

“I can only spread the sail;

Thou! Thou! must breathe the auspicious gale.”

Only be sure you have the sail up. Do not miss the gale for want of preparation for it. Seek help of God, that you may be more earnest in duty when made more strong in faith; that you may be more constant in prayer when you have more liberty at the throne; that you may be more holy in your conversation whilst you live more closely with Christ.

# Word Live – 1/30/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/30/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/30/21

# Our Forever Home

**Read:** [**Revelation 21:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3a1%e2%80%935)

### **A New Heaven and a New Earth**

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3a1%e2%80%935" \l "fen-NIV-31055a" \o "See footnote a)] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3a1%e2%80%935" \l "fen-NIV-31058b" \o "See footnote b)] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Revelation 21:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3a1%e2%80%935#en-NIV-31055) Isaiah 65:17
2. [Revelation 21:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3a1%e2%80%935#en-NIV-31058) Isaiah 25:8

This past summer, my family moved from Texas to Indiana. We finally settled in after several long months of renovations. But even after we painted each room, filled the closets with our clothes, and hung décor on the walls, our new house didn’t feel like home until we were able to invite a few family and friends over for meals and holidays. Doing life together made all the months and hassle of renovations worthwhile.

I am making everything new. Revelation 21:5

One day, all believers will reunite to live in the New Jerusalem. It will be unlike anything we have ever experienced (v. 2). This is the place Jesus has prepared for His followers, and its beauty will be unmatched (John 14:3). However, what will make our eternal future feel most like home is living in the presence of God (Rev. 21:3). What an amazing reunion that will be as we come face to face with our Savior. At last, we will be free from the emotional pain caused by sin and the curse (v. 4).

From His throne, God declares, “I am making everything new” (v. 5). This emphasizes that God is the One doing all the renovations. His declaration of making everything new is a reminder that throughout history, we have lived such wretched lives that renewal is necessary. It is easy to believe we are less sinful than we actually are. We fail to realize that we are completely fallen and deserve nothing but the consequences of sin. A redeemed person is thankful for forgiveness. As we live in our forever home with Him, we will be quick to give glory and praise to the One who makes all things new.

>> Close your eyes for a moment and envision your future and eternal Home. What do you think it will be like to be present with your Creator? You have been chosen and redeemed by God. Out of all the people He could live with forever, He chose you!

### **Pray with Us**

Praise to you, Lord, for you renew all things! Praise to you for your mercies! You have freed us from sin, given us your Holy Spirit, and promised us an eternal home in your presence.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/30/21

# Wearing Our Courage

 **Read:** [**2 Kings 1:9–15**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%201.9%E2%80%9315)

9Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’”

10Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

11At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’”

12“If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

13So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! 14See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!”

15The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven. [2 Kings 1:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%201.10)

Andrew lives in a country that’s closed to the gospel. When I asked how he keeps his faith a secret, he said he doesn’t. He wears a button that advertises his church, and whenever he’s arrested he tells the police that “they need Jesus too.” Andrew has courage because he knows who’s on his side.

Elijah refused to be intimidated, even when the king of Israel sent fifty soldiers to arrest him ([2 Kings 1:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%201.9)). The prophet knew God was with him, and he called down fire that consumed the platoon. The king sent more soldiers, and Elijah did it again (v. 12). The king sent more, but the third platoon had heard about the others. The captain begged Elijah to spare his soldiers’ lives. They were more afraid of him than he’d ever been of them, so the angel of the Lord told Elijah it was safe to go with them (vv. 13–15).

Jesus doesn’t want us to call down fire on our enemies. When the disciples asked if they could call down fire on a Samaritan village, Jesus rebuked them ([Luke 9:51–55](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%209.51%E2%80%9355)). We’re living in a different time. But Jesus does want us to have Elijah’s boldness—to be ready to tell everyone about the Savior who died for them. It may seem like one person taking on fifty, but it’s actually One on fifty. Jesus provides what we need to courageously love and reach out to others.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does Jesus provide what you need to be courageous? What does God want you to know and do?

Holy Spirit, thank You for living in me. Fill me with courage as I tell others about Jesus.

#### **Insight**

The prophet Elijah, whose name means “my God is Yahweh,” served during wicked King Ahab’s reign (around 875–850 bc) over the Northern Kingdom of Israel ([1 Kings 16:29–33](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%2016.29%E2%80%9333)). Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon, influenced her husband to adopt a vile form of Baal worship, which included ritual prostitution. Baal was the Canaanite god of rain and fertility. During Elijah’s first three and a half years as a prophet, he served as God’s spokesman in an effort to bring the Israelites back to the one true God. His struggle culminated in a contest between him and 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (18:16–40).

# God Calling – 1/30/21

# The Soul At War

"I will never give you a load greater than you can bear."

No evil can befall you, if I am with you. "Ill that He blesses is our good." Every time of being laid aside is a time of retreat into the quiet place with Me. Never fear but in that place you shall find restoration and power and joy and healing.

Plan both of your retreat days now and then - days when you live apart with Me, and arise rested and refreshed - physically, mentally, and spiritually, to carry on the work I have given to you. I will never give you a load greater than you can bear.

Love, Joy, Peace, welcome these. Let no personal feelings, no thoughts of self banish these. Singly, they are miracle-producing in a life, but together, they can command all that is needed on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes.

It is in these wonder-realm attributes all success lies. You have to see your inner lives are all they should be, and then the work is accomplished. Not in rushing and striving on the material plane, but on the battlefield of the Soul are these things won.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." - 1 Corinthians 10:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 1/31/21

# Do You See Your Calling?

 Separated unto the Gospel. — [Romans 1:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+1%3A1)

Our calling is not primarily to be holy men and women, but to be proclaimers of the Gospel of God. The one thing that is all important is that the Gospel of God should be realized as the abiding Reality. Reality is not human goodness, nor holiness, nor heaven, nor hell; but Redemption; and the need to perceive this is the most vital need of the Christian worker to-day. As workers we have to get used to the revelation that Redemption is the only Reality. Personal holiness is an effect, not a cause, and if we place our faith in human goodness, in the effect of Redemption, we shall go under when the test comes.

Paul did not say he separated himself, but – "when it pleased God who separated me. . ." Paul had not a hypersensitive interest in his own character. As long as our eyes are upon our own personal whiteness we shall never get near the reality of Redemption. Workers break down because their desire is for their own whiteness, and not for God. "Don’t ask me to come into contact with the rugged reality of Redemption on behalf of the filth of human life as it is; what I want is anything God can do for me to make me more desirable in my own eyes." To talk in that way is a sign that the reality of the Gospel of God has not begun to touch me; there is no reckless abandon to God. God cannot deliver me while my interest is merely in my own character. Paul is unconscious of himself, he is recklessly abandoned, separated by God for one purpose – to proclaim the Gospel of God (see [Romans 9:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+9:3)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 1/31/21

**If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; . . . those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.**—[NUM. 33:55.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.33.html" \l "Num.33.55)

Fight the good fight of faith.—The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.—I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.—We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

[I Tim. 6:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html" \l "iTim.6.12). -[II Cor. 10:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.10.html" \l "iiCor.10.4).[Rom. 8:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.12).[Gal. 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.17). -[Rom. 7:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.23). -[Rom. 8:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.37).

“The Lord our Righteousness.” [Jeremiah 23:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.6)

It will always give a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease, and peace, to think of the perfect righteousness of Christ. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! I do not think they ought to be. I do not think they would if they could always see their perfection in Christ. There are some who are always talking about corruption, and the depravity of the heart, and the innate evil of the soul. This is quite true, but why not go a little further, and remember that we are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” It is no wonder that those who are dwelling upon their own corruption should wear such downcast looks; but surely if we call to mind that “Christ is made unto us righteousness,” we shall be of good cheer. What though distresses afflict me, though Satan assault me, though there may be many things to be experienced before I get to heaven, those are done for me in the covenant of divine grace; there is nothing wanting in my Lord, Christ hath done it all. On the cross he said, “It is finished!” and if it be finished, then am I complete in him, and can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, “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.” You will not find on this side heaven a holier people than those who receive into their hearts the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness. When the believer says, “I live on Christ alone; I rest on him solely for salvation; and I believe that, however unworthy, I am still saved in Jesus;” then there rises up as a motive of gratitude this thought—“Shall I not live to Christ? Shall I not love him and serve him, seeing that I am saved by his merits?” “The love of Christ constraineth us,” “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them.” If saved by imputed righteousness, we shall greatly value imparted righteousness.

# Word Live – 1/31/21

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

# Scripture Union – 1/31/21

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

# Today in the Word – 1/31/21

# Daily Devotional | The "New-er" You

**Read:** [**2 Corinthians 6:1–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3a1%e2%80%9313)

6 As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. 2For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,  
    and in the day of salvation I helped you.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3a1%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-28901a)]

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

### Paul’s Hardships

3We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. 12We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [2 Corinthians 6:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3a1%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-28901) Isaiah 49:8

As we conclude our study, we hope you are encouraged to make a new start in Christ this year. As believers, we are given a new way to live and a new message to share. In Christ, we are given a new identity and a new future. Most importantly, we are transformed into a “new-er” version of ourselves. Paul concludes this message on newness, with a particular exhortation for those struggling with their new identity in Christ.

Now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2

In verse one, Paul contends that grace is in vain when Christians do not live in harmony with one another. He stresses that “now is the time” because of the redeeming and reconciliatory work  Christ did on the cross. Paul made it a point to live his life with integrity so the gospel message would not be discredited. Nevertheless, people opposed him and were offended by his message (v. 3). But that never stopped him, nor should it deter Christians today.

Paul lists a variety of difficulties he encountered while being an ambassador of the gospel (vv. 4–10). The Corinthians could have been encouraged or disheartened when reading Paul’s long list of hardships. But, Paul wanted them to know upfront what he had endured for the gospel. He asks them to “open wide” their hearts as he has done (vv. 11–13). Sadly, they struggled to show their deep love for Paul because they loved the world and themselves too much. He wanted them to be honest with themselves just as he was honest with them. Similarly, God wants us to be honest with our “new-er” selves daily to make sure we abandon the cravings of this world and live for Him alone.

>> What can you do this year, to make sure you are daily committing yourself to the Lord’s will for your life? Open your heart to follow God’s leading. And then, note a few takeaways from this month’s study  
that will impact you in the year ahead.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, you have hidden us in Christ. Our salvation is not a one-time event, but an ongoing, eternal relationship with you. Let us live each day of 2021 knowing that we are joined to you, seeking your kingdom for your glory.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 1/31/21

# A Future with Forgiveness

 **Read:** [**Romans 12:9–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.9%E2%80%9321)

### **Love in Action**

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28262a" \o "See footnote a)] Do not be conceited.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28265b" \o "See footnote b)] says the Lord. 20On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
    if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28266c)]

21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 12:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28262) Or willing to do menial work
2. [Romans 12:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28265) Deut. 32:35
3. [Romans 12:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9%E2%80%9321&version=NIV#en-NIV-28266) Prov. 25:21,22

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. [Romans 12:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.21)

In 1994, when South Africa made the transition from government by apartheid (imposed racial segregation) to a democracy, it faced the difficult question of how to address the crimes committed under apartheid. The country’s leaders couldn’t ignore the past, but merely imposing harsh punishments on the guilty risked deepening the country’s wounds. As Desmond Tutu, the first black Anglican Archbishop of South Africa, explained in his book No Future Without Forgiveness, “We could very well have had justice, retributive justice, and had a South Africa lying in ashes.”

Through establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the new democracy chose the difficult path of pursuing truth, justice, and mercy. Those guilty of crimes were offered a path to restoration—if they were willing to confess their crimes and seek to make restitution. Only by courageously facing the truth could the country begin to find healing.

In a way, South Africa’s dilemma mirrors the struggle we all face. We’re called to pursue both justice and mercy ([Micah 6:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%206.8)), but mercy is often misunderstood to be a lack of accountability, while pursuing justice can become distorted into pursuing revenge.

Our only path forward is a love that not only “hates what is evil” ([Romans 12:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.9)) but also longs for the transformation and good of our “neighbor” (13:10). Through the power of Christ’s Spirit, we can learn what it means to have a future of overcoming evil with good (12:21).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you witnessed times when the goal of mercy and grace seemed distorted to enable injustice? When have you seen both justice and mercy working in harmony?

Loving God, when the pain and injustice around me breaks my heart, help me to still believe in Your love and power to transform and heal. Help me to point with my life to Your justice, mercy, and love.

#### **Insight**

A distinctive of Paul’s letters is that they contain both biblical doctrine (teaching beliefs) and instruction on practical living. Having explained what the gospel is in [Romans 1–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201%E2%80%9311), in chapters 12–16, Paul applies it to the everyday relationships of the believer in Jesus, including our relationship with God (12:1–2), other believers (vv. 3–21), governing authorities (13:1–7), the community (vv. 8–14), the spiritually weak (14:1–15:3), and co-workers (ch. 16). Paul’s overarching emphasis in these five chapters is the importance of Christlike love in the life of the believer (12:9–10; 13:8–10; 14:15), for “love is the fulfillment of the law” (13:10). Today’s passage, [Romans 12:9–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.9%E2%80%9321), may seem like a collection of unrelated sayings, but Paul is still talking about this love that reflects Jesus. Love for enemies (vv. 14–21) is the litmus test and demonstration of such a radical love ([Matthew 5:43–48](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.43%E2%80%9348)).

To learn more about the role forgiveness plays in a believer’s life, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/SF107.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/SF107.)

# God Calling – 1/31/21

# "No detail is forgotten in My Plans, already perfect."

All sacrifice and all suffering is redemptive: to teach the individual or to be used to raise and help others.

Nothing is by chance.

Divine Mind, and its wonder working, is beyond your finite mind to understand.

No detail is forgotten in My Plans, already perfect.

O let me hear Thee speaking In accents clear and still, Above the storms of passion, The murmurs of self-will.

O speak to reassure me, To hasten, or control; O speak, and make me listen, Thou guardian of my soul!

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." - Jeremiah 29:11

# My Utmost for His Highest – 2/1/21

# The Call Of God

 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. — [1 Corinthians 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+1%3A17)

Paul states here that the call of God is to preach the gospel; but remember what Paul means by "the gospel," viz., the reality of Redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are apt to make sanctification the end-all of our preaching. Paul alludes to personal experience by way of illustration, never as the end of the matter. We are nowhere commissioned to preach salvation or sanctification; we are commissioned to lift up Jesus Christ (John 12:32). It is a travesty to say that Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to make me a saint. Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to redeem the whole world, and place it unimpaired and rehabilitated before the throne of God. The fact that Redemption can be experienced by us is an illustration of the power of the reality of Redemption, but that is not the end of Redemption. If God were human, how sick to the heart and weary He would be of the constant requests we make for our salvation, for our sanctification. We tax His energies from morning till night for things for ourselves – some thing for me to be delivered from! When we touch the bedrock of the reality of the Gospel of God, we shall never bother God any further with little personal plaints.

The one passion of Paul’s life was to proclaim the Gospel of God. He welcomed heart-breaks, disillusionments, tribulation, for one reason only, because these things kept him in unmoved devotion to the Gospel of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The vital relationship which the Christian has to the Bible is not that he worships the letter, but that the Holy Spirit makes the words of the Bible spirit and life to him.  The Psychology of Redemption, 1066 L

# CCEL – 2/1/21

**Whom having not seen, ye love.**—[I PET. 1:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.8)

We walk by faith, not by sight.—We love him, because he first loved us.—And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—In whom ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.—God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

[II Cor. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.7). -[I John 4:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.19). -[I John 4:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.16). -[Eph. l:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.13). -[Col. 1:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.27).[I John 4:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.20).[John 20:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.20.html" \l "John.20.29). -[Psa. 2:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.2.html" \l "Ps.2.12).

“They shall sing in the ways of the Lord.” [Psalm 138:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.5)

The time when Christians begin to sing in the ways of the Lord is when they first lose their burden at the foot of the Cross. Not even the songs of the angels seem so sweet as the first song of rapture which gushes from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God. You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says when poor Pilgrim lost his burden at the Cross, he gave three great leaps, and went on his way singing—

“Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be

The Man that there was put to shame for me!”

Believer, do you recollect the day when your fetters fell off? Do you remember the place when Jesus met you, and said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thy sins; they shall not be mentioned against thee any more forever.” Oh! what a sweet season is that when Jesus takes away the pain of sin. When the Lord first pardoned my sin, I was so joyous that I could scarce refrain from dancing. I thought on my road home from the house where I had been set at liberty, that I must tell the stones in the street the story of my deliverance. So full was my soul of joy, that I wanted to tell every snow-flake that was falling from heaven of the wondrous love of Jesus, who had blotted out the sins of one of the chief of rebels. But it is not only at the commencement of the Christian life that believers have reason for song; as long as they live they discover cause to sing in the ways of the Lord, and their experience of his constant lovingkindness leads them to say, “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” See to it, brother, that thou magnifiest the Lord this day.

“Long as we tread this desert land, New mercies shall new songs demand.”

# Word Live – 2/1/21

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

# Scripture Union –2/1/21

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

# Today in the Word – 2/1/21

# The Heart of the Gospel

 **Read:** [**Romans 1:1–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— 2the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-27934a)] was a descendant of David, 4and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-27935b)] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-27936c)] faith for his name’s sake. 6And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

7To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Paul’s Longing to Visit Rome**

8First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. 13I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-27944d)] that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317" \l "fen-NIV-27948e" \o "See footnote e)] just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#fen-NIV-27948f)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Romans 1:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27934) Or who according to the flesh
2. [Romans 1:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27935) Or was declared with power to be the Son of God
3. [Romans 1:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27936) Or that is
4. [Romans 1:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27944) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 7:1, 4; 8:12, 29; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14, 30; 16:14, 17.
5. [Romans 1:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27948) Or is from faith to faith
6. [Romans 1:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3a1%e2%80%9317#en-NIV-27948) Hab. 2:4

When I was a boy, I tried to earn extra money selling newspapers door to door. I was not a success. My sales pitch went something like this: “You wouldn’t want to buy this paper, would you?” Some of us share the gospel the same way.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

Today we begin a study of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Martin Luther called this book “the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel.” Paul had two primary goals in writing. One was to introduce Phoebe and urge the church to aid her in her service to Christ (Rom. 16:1–2). The apostle’s larger purpose was to clarify his gospel in light of recent criticism from some who opposed him. He begins with greetings, a summary of his credentials, and a declaration of his confidence in the gospel. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because it reveals a righteousness “that is by faith from first to last” (v. 17).

Paul will have much more to say both about the nature of the gospel and its implications for us. But here at the very beginning, we learn its fundamental truth. Righteousness comes from God as a gift to everyone who believes that Jesus Christ died and rose for them (v. 4). It is an unearned gift. We did nothing to receive it. This gift is offered to all, Jew and Gentile alike. Those who embrace the gospel message begin a new life that is lived by faith “from first to last.” Just as we never outlive our need for faith, we will never grow out of our need for the gospel.

>> We may be nervous about sharing the gospel because we underestimate it. As we begin this study, ask God to grant you an understanding of the full message and power of the gospel. This study will help you understand its implications for your life!

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, some of us have heard the gospel so often that we have lost our wonder at your grace. Renew our perspective so we may find joy and confidence in the power of the gospel.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 2/1/21

# A House on a Rock

 **Read:** [**Matthew 7:24–29**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24%E2%80%9329)

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

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

28When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

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

As many as 34,000 homes in one US state are at risk of collapsing due to faulty foundations. Without realizing it, a concrete company pulled stone from a quarry laced with a mineral that, over time, causes concrete to crack and disintegrate. The foundations of nearly six hundred homes have already crumbled, and that number will likely skyrocket over time.

Jesus used the image of building a home atop a faulty foundation to explain the far riskier danger of building our lives on unsteady ground. He explained how some of us construct our life on sturdy rock, ensuring that we hold solid when we face fierce storms. Others of us, however, erect our lives on sand; and when the tempests rage, our lives tumble “with a great crash” ([Matthew 7:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.27)). The one distinction between building on an unshakable foundation and a crumbling one is whether or not we put Christ’s words “into practice” (v. 26). The question isn’t whether or not we hear His words, but whether we practice them as He enables us.

There’s much wisdom offered to us in this world—plus lots of advice and help—and much of it is good and beneficial. If we base our life on any foundation other than humble obedience to God’s truth, however, we invite trouble. In His strength, doing what God says is the only way to have a house, a life, built on rock.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Whose wisdom, insights, or opinions do you listen to the most? How can you better build your life’s foundation by putting Jesus’ words into practice?

God, so much of what I experience feels unsteady and temporary, a life built on sand. I want to live a solid life. Help me to obey You.

To learn more about the life and teachings of Jesus, see [ChristianUniversity.org/NT218.](https://ChristianUniversity.org/NT218.)

#### **Insight**

In [Matthew 7:24–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24%E2%80%9329) we find the closing words of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount—the first of five major public addresses recorded in Matthew’s gospel. This sermon launched Christ’s public ministry, and from the very beginning it would have had profound echoes for His Jewish listeners. The sermon opens with a series of “beatitudes” that all begin with the phrase “blessed are” (5:1–11). His Jewish listeners would have easily connected that idea with the opening stanza of [Psalm 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201.1), which begins with the words, “Blessed is the one.” What does it mean to be “blessed”? Scholars Raymond Brown and Kenneth Bailey explain that blessed (Greek makarios; Hebrew `asIr) doesn’t mean to be “part of a wish” or to “invoke a blessing.” Rather, these words “recognize an existing state of happiness or good fortune. . . . [They] affirm a present reality or point out a state of spirituality that is already present.”

# God Calling – 2/1/21

# Another Start

Take courage. Do not fear. Start a new life tomorrow. Put the old mistakes away, and start anew. I give you a fresh start. Be not burdened. Be not anxious. If My forgiveness were for the righteous only, and those who had not sinned, where would be its need?

Remember as I said, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much."

Why do you fret and worry so? I wait to give you all that is lovely, but your lives are soiled with worry and fret. You would crush My treasures. I can only bless glad, thankful hearts.

You must be glad and joyful.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,  
 and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Philippians 3:13