# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/30/23

# “Yes—But…!”



Lord, I will follow You, but… —[Luke 9:61](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+9%3A61)

Suppose God tells you to do something that is an enormous test of your common sense, totally going against it. What will you do? Will you hold back? If you get into the habit of doing something physically, you will do it every time you are tested until you break the habit through sheer determination. And the same is true spiritually. Again and again you will come right up to what Jesus wants, but every time you will turn back at the true point of testing, until you are determined to abandon yourself to God in total surrender. Yet we tend to say, “Yes, but— suppose I do obey God in this matter, what about…?” Or we say, “Yes, I will obey God if what He asks of me doesn’t go against my common sense, but don’t ask me to take a step in the dark.”

Jesus Christ demands the same unrestrained, adventurous spirit in those who have placed their trust in Him that the natural man exhibits. If a person is ever going to do anything worthwhile, there will be times when he must risk everything by his leap in the dark. In the spiritual realm, Jesus Christ demands that you risk everything you hold on to or believe through common sense, and leap by faith into what He says. Once you obey, you will immediately find that what He says is as solidly consistent as common sense.

By the test of common sense, Jesus Christ’s statements may seem mad, but when you test them by the trial of faith, your findings will fill your spirit with the awesome fact that they are the very words of God. Trust completely in God, and when He brings you to a new opportunity of adventure, offering it to you, see that you take it. We act like pagans in a crisis— only one out of an entire crowd is daring enough to invest his faith in the character of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To those who have had no agony Jesus says, “I have nothing for you; stand on your own feet, square your own shoulders. I have come for the man who knows he has a bigger handful than he can cope with, who knows there are forces he cannot touch; I will do everything for him if he will let Me. Only let a man grant he needs it, and I will do it for him.” The Shadow of an Agony, 1166 R

# CCEL – 5/30/23

Let us labour to enter into that rest.—[HEB. 4:11.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.11)

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction: . . . strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.—Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.—Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: . . . for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—So run, that ye may obtain. And 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.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.—The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

[Matt. 7:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.7.html" \l "Matt.7.13). -[Matt. 11:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.12). -[John 6:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.27). –[II Pet. 1:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.1.html" \l "iiPet.1.10). -[I Cor. 9:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.24).[Heb. 4:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.10). -[Isa. 60:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.60.html" \l "Isa.60.19).

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines.” **[Song of Solomon 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.15)**

A little thorn may cause much suffering. A little cloud may hide the sun. Little foxes spoil the vines; and little sins do mischief to the tender heart. These little sins burrow in the soul, and make it so full of that which is hateful to Christ, that he will hold no comfortable fellowship and communion with us. A great sin cannot destroy a Christian, but a little sin can make him miserable. Jesus will not walk with his people unless they drive out every known sin. He says, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” Some Christians very seldom enjoy their Saviour’s presence. How is this? Surely it must be an affliction for a tender child to be separated from his father. Art thou a child of God, and yet satisfied to go on without seeing thy Father’s face? What! thou the spouse of Christ, and yet content without his company! Surely, thou hast fallen into a sad state, for the chaste spouse of Christ mourns like a dove without her mate, when he has left her. Ask, then, the question, what has driven Christ from thee? He hides his face behind the wall of thy sins. That wall may be built up of little pebbles, as easily as of great stones. The sea is made of drops; the rocks are made of grains: and the sea which divides thee from Christ may be filled with the drops of thy little sins; and the rock which has well nigh wrecked thy barque, may have been made by the daily working of the coral insects of thy little sins. If thou wouldst live with Christ, and walk with Christ, and see Christ, and have fellowship with Christ, take heed of “the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.” Jesus invites you to go with him and take them. He will surely, like Samson, take the foxes at once and easily. Go with him to the hunting.

# Word Live – 5/30/23

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

# Scripture Union – 5/30/23

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

# Today in the Word – 5/30/23

# Whom Do You Trust?

**Read:** [**1 Kings 22:51–53**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+22%3a51%e2%80%9353)

### Ahaziah King of Israel

51Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 52He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, because he followed the ways of his father and mother and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. 53He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.

Where we go for information reveals whom we trust. Children turn to their parents instinctively. Researchers consult the most reputable journals. Scientists use the best instruments. When Ahaziah was in trouble, his choice was to consult Baal. Why did the new king consider Baal to be the best source of information about his future?

Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Psalm 40:4

Today’s passage spans the gap between 1 and 2 Kings with the story of Ahaziah, Ahab’s son. His introductory biography informs us that he was wicked in the ways of his father and mother, and he also behaved like Jeroboam, the king who built the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. First Kings ends there, but Ahaziah’s story does not.

The division here is probably not original. It is quite possible that these two books would have been written on one scroll in ancient times. So, if you keep reading into 2 Kings, you’ll see Ahaziah’s story continue. Here we discover that Ahaziah was seriously injured in a fall. His injury was significant enough that he feared for his life and sought divine counsel.

Like so many before him, the king did not seek God, but instead the counsel of Baal! Even after all that had happened to Ahab, his father, Ahaziah had not learned his lesson. So God, in His mercy, took steps yet again, to show Israel the He is in control and worthy of their undivided worship.

The angel of the Lord, spoke to Elijah and sent him to confront Ahaziah with an insightful question: “Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?” (2 Kings 1:3). The question is penetrating.

**Apply the Word**

Ahab’s decision to consult Baal implied that he thought of God as unreliable, or even worse, not God at all! What do your choices say about your view of God? Do they reveal Him to be totally trustworthy? Or do they suggest that your trust lies elsewhere?

## Pray with Us

The truth is that most of us trust You imperfectly—even in areas where You have shown again and again that You are trustworthy. “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

# Our Daily Bread – 5/30/23

# The God Who Restores

 **Read:** [**Ezekiel 37:4–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2037.4%E2%80%9314)

4Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+37%3A4%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-21403a)] enter you, and you will come to life. 6I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

7So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” 10So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

11Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ 12Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

#### Footnotes

1. [Ezekiel 37:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+37%3A4%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-21403) The Hebrew for this word can also mean wind or spirit (see verses 6-14).

I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. [Ezekiel 37:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2037.5)

On November 4, 1966, a disastrous flood swept through Florence, Italy, submerging Giorgio Vasari’s renowned work of art The Last Supper under a pool of mud, water, and heating oil for more than twelve hours. With its paint softened and its wooden frame significantly damaged, many believed that the piece was beyond repair. However, after a tedious fifty-year conservation effort, experts and volunteers were able to overcome monumental obstacles and restore the valuable painting.

When the Babylonians conquered Israel, the people felt hopeless—surrounded by death and destruction and in need of restoration (see [Lamentations 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%201)). During this period of turmoil, God took the prophet Ezekiel to a valley and gave him a vision where he was surrounded by dry bones. “Can these bones live?” God asked. Ezekiel responded, “Lord, you alone know” ([Ezekiel 37:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2037.3)). God then told him to prophesy over the bones so they might live again. “As I was prophesying,” Ezekiel recounted, “there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together” (v. 7). Through this vision, God revealed to Ezekiel that Israel’s restoration could only come through Him.

When we feel as if things in life have been broken and are beyond repair, God assures us He can rebuild our shattered pieces. He’ll give us new breath and new life.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What’s broken in your life? How might you rely on God to bring restoration?

Dear God, parts of my life seem like they’ll never be restored. I’ve tried to fix them on my own, but my only hope of restoration is found in You.

For further study, read [Wounded in Worship](https://discoverodb.org/articles/wounded-in-worship/).

#### Insight

We don’t know specific details about the valley that Ezekiel describes he was transported to “by the Spirit of the Lord” ([Ezekiel 37:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2037.1)). It could have been a vision of a valley that was the scene of a major tragedy or battle because having so many unburied bones in one place suggests a battle. God tells Ezekiel that this valley of bones symbolizes the nation of Israel as a whole (v. 11). Even the despair and death they were experiencing could be reversed by God’s Spirit breathing new life into them (v. 6) and returning them to their land (v. 12).

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

# God Calling – 5/30/23

# The Devil's Death Knell

Our Lord, we praise Thee.

Praise is the devil's death knell.  Resignation, acceptance of My Will, obedience to it, have not the power to vanquish evil that praise has.

The joyful heart is my best weapon against all evil.  Oh! pray and praise.

You are learning your lesson.  You are being led out into a large place.  Go with songs of rejoicing.  Rejoice evermore.  Happy indeed if each day has its thrill of joy.

Talk to Me more during the day.  Look up into My Face - a look of Love, a feeling of security, a thrill of Joy at the sense of the nearness of My Presence - these are your best prayers.

Let these smooth the day's work, then fear will vanish, and fear is the grim figure that turns aside success.

Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me. Psalm 50:23

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/31/23

# Put God First



Jesus did not commit Himself to them…for He knew what was in man. —[John 2:24-25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+2%3A24-25)

**Put Trust in God First.** Our Lord never put His trust in any person. Yet He was never suspicious, never bitter, and never lost hope for anyone, because He put His trust in God first. He trusted absolutely in what God’s grace could do for others. If I put my trust in human beings first, the end result will be my despair and hopelessness toward everyone. I will become bitter because I have insisted that people be what no person can ever be— absolutely perfect and right. Never trust anything in yourself or in anyone else, except the grace of God.

**Put God’s Will First.** “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God” ([Hebrews 10:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+10:9)).

A person’s obedience is to what he sees to be a need— our Lord’s obedience was to the will of His Father. The rallying cry today is, “We must get to work! The heathen are dying without God. We must go and tell them about Him.” But we must first make sure that God’s “needs” and His will in us personally are being met. Jesus said, “…tarry…until you are endued with power from on high” ([Luke 24:49](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24:49)). The purpose of our Christian training is to get us into the right relationship to the “needs” of God and His will. Once God’s “needs” in us have been met, He will open the way for us to accomplish His will, meeting His “needs” elsewhere.

**Put God’s Son First.** “Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me” ([Matthew 18:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:5)).

God came as a baby, giving and entrusting Himself to me. He expects my personal life to be a “Bethlehem.” Am I allowing my natural life to be slowly transformed by the indwelling life of the Son of God? God’s ultimate purpose is that His Son might be exhibited in me.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The sympathy which is reverent with what it cannot understand is worth its weight in gold.  Baffled to Fight Better, 69 L

# CCEL – 5/31/23

Thy name shall be called Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.—[GEN. 32:28.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.32.html#Gen.32.28)

By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him.—Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.—If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.—Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Lord, increase our faith.

[Hos. 12:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.12.html" \l "Hos.12.3). -[Rom. 4:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.20).[Mark 11:22-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.11.html" \l "Mark.11.22). -[Mark 9:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.9.html" \l "Mark.9.23). -[Luke 1:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.1.html" \l "Luke.1.45). -[Luke 17:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.5).

“The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron.” **[2 Samuel 15:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.15.html" \l "iiSam.15.23)**

David passed that gloomy brook when flying with his mourning company from his traitor son. The man after God’s own heart was not exempt from trouble, nay, his life was full of it. He was both the Lord’s Anointed, and the Lord’s Afflicted. Why then should we expect to escape? At sorrow’s gates the noblest of our race have waited with ashes on their heads; wherefore then should we complain as though some strange thing had happened unto us?

The King of kings himself was not favoured with a more cheerful or royal road. He passed over the filthy ditch of Kidron, through which the filth of Jerusalem flowed. God had one Son without sin, but not a single child without the rod. It is a great joy to believe that Jesus has been tempted in all points like as we are. What is our Kidron this morning? Is it a faithless friend, a sad bereavement, a slanderous reproach, a dark foreboding? The King has passed over all these. Is it bodily pain, poverty, persecution, or contempt? Over each of these Kidrons the King has gone before us. “In all our afflictions he was afflicted.” The idea of strangeness in our trials must be banished at once and forever, for he who is the Head of all saints, knows by experience the grief which we think so peculiar. All the citizens of Zion must be free of the Honourable Company of Mourners, of which the Prince Immanuel is Head and Captain.

Notwithstanding the abasement of David, he yet returned in triumph to his city, and David’s Lord arose victorious from the grave; let us then be of good courage, for we also shall win the day. We shall yet with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation, though now for a season we have to pass by the noxious streams of sin and sorrow. Courage, soldiers of the Cross, the King himself triumphed after going over Kidron, and so shall you.

# Word Live – 5/31/23

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

# Scripture Union – 5/31/23

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

# Today in the Word – 5/31/23

# Our Forever King

### Read: David’s Charge to Solomon

2 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

2“I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, act like a man, 3and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go 4and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’

As we conclude our study of 1 Kings, you may wonder if anyone in a power position is ever worthy of the title. This book records a history filled with defeat and disappointment. There are bright spots indeed, but overall, this was a dark time in Israel’s history.

Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. 2 Samuel 7:16

The kingdom Saul founded and David expanded, declined under the leadership of David’s descendants and their rivals. Even the few righteous among them were not strong enough to turn the nation back to faithful worship. Where does that leave us? We must remember the promise God made to David: “Your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). God’s commitment to an eternal throne for a descendant of David is established here as we watch Him work through the reigns of human and fallible leaders in 1 Kings.

Recall when David challenged his son Solomon with these words: “If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.” (1 Kings 2:4). Against this backdrop of wickedness, compromise, and faithlessness, we see the steadfast commitment of God to His people and His promise. Even at the height of their sinfulness, God never abandoned them but worked to bring Israel back to Himself.

When the people gave into false worship, God gave them leaders who would fail them so they would long for His righteous leadership and for a leader committed to righteousness. The prophet Jeremiah, who followed this period, recalled this promise and it encouraged him at a time when Jerusalem was about to be completely destroyed. “For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel” (Jer. 33:17).

**Apply the Word**

As believers, we know that Jesus, the Son of David, is the final fulfillment of God’s perfect plan. We don’t put our trust in earthly kings, but in the righteous Leader who laid down His life so we will enjoy fellowship in the kingdom of God forever.

## Pray with Us

As Your creation and Your children, we commit ourselves to Your love. We are covered in the blood of Jesus, one with Christ, credited with His righteousness. All we have and all we hope is in You.

### BY Dr. Steven H. Sanchez

# Our Daily Bread – 5/31/23

# Sorrow and Joy

**Read:** [**Ezra 3:8–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%203.8%E2%80%9313)

8In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the Lord. 9Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezra+3%3A8%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12107a)]) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers—all Levites—joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.

10When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel. 11With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord:

“He is good;  
    his love toward Israel endures forever.”

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. 12But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. 13No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

#### Footnotes

1. [Ezra 3:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezra+3%3A8%E2%80%9313&version=NIV#en-NIV-12107) Hebrew Yehudah, a variant of Hodaviah

No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping. [Ezra 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%203.13)

Angela’s family reeled with sorrow as they experienced three bereavements in just four weeks. After the one involving the sudden death of their nephew, Angela and her two sisters gathered around the kitchen table for three days, only leaving to buy an urn, get takeout, and attend the funeral. As they wept over his death, they also rejoiced over the ultrasound photos of the new life growing within their youngest sister.

In time, Angela found comfort and hope from the Old Testament book of Ezra. It describes God’s people returning to Jerusalem after the Babylonians destroyed the temple and deported them from their beloved city (see [Ezra 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%201)). As Ezra watched the temple being rebuilt, he heard joyful praises to God (3:10–11). But he also listened to the weeping of those who remembered life before exile (v. 12).

One verse especially consoled Angela: “No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise” (v. 13). She realized that even if she was drenched in deep sorrow, joy could still appear.

We too might grieve the death of a loved one or mourn a different loss. If so, we can express our cries of pain along with our moments of rejoicing to God, knowing that He hears us and gathers us in His arms.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Why do you think you can experience both joy and sorrow at the same time? How can you cultivate joy today?

Loving God, in this world we experience pain and suffering. Spark joy in me as I look to You for hope and peace.

#### Insight

The book of Ezra captures the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile. [Ezra 1–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%201%E2%80%936) tells of the first return of fifty thousand led by Zerubbabel (538 bc). They rebuilt the altar (ch. 3), reinstituted the sacrifices, and attempted to rebuild the temple (536 bc). But the temple work stalled for sixteen years because of strong opposition from enemies (chs. 4–5). Under the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was eventually completed in 516 bc. [Ezra 7–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezra%207%E2%80%9310) records the second return of five thousand Jews eighty years later, now led by Ezra himself (458 bc). The third return led by Nehemiah (444 bc) is recorded in the book of Nehemiah.

By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 5/31/23

# Prayer Without Words

Lord, hear us, we pray.

Hear and I answer.  Spend much time in prayer.  Prayer is of many kinds, but of whatever kind, prayer is the linking up of the soul and mind and heart to God.

So that if it is only a glance of faith, a look or word of Love, or confidence, and no supplication is expressed, it yet follows that supply and all necessary are secured.

Because the soul, being linked to God, united to Him, receives in and through Him all things.  And the soul, when in human form, needs too the things belonging to its habitation.

Pray without ceasing.  1 Thessalonians 5:17

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/1/23

# The Staggering Question



He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" —[Ezekiel 37:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ezekiel+37%3A3)

Can a sinner be turned into a saint? Can a twisted life be made right? There is only one appropriate answer— “O Lord God, You know” ([Ezekiel 37:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+37:3)). Never forge ahead with your religious common sense and say, “Oh, yes, with just a little more Bible reading, devotional time, and prayer, I see how it can be done.”

It is much easier to do something than to trust in God; we see the activity and mistake panic for inspiration. That is why we see so few fellow workers with God, yet so many people working for God. We would much rather work for God than believe in Him. Do I really believe that God will do in me what I cannot do? The degree of hopelessness I have for others comes from never realizing that God has done anything for me. Is my own personal experience such a wonderful realization of God’s power and might that I can never have a sense of hopelessness for anyone else I see? Has any spiritual work been accomplished in me at all? The degree of panic activity in my life is equal to the degree of my lack of personal spiritual experience.

“Behold, O My people, I will open your graves…” ([Ezekiel 37:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+37:12)). When God wants to show you what human nature is like separated from Himself, He shows it to you in yourself. If the Spirit of God has ever given you a vision of what you are apart from the grace of God (and He will only do this when His Spirit is at work in you), then you know that in reality there is no criminal half as bad as you yourself could be without His grace. My “grave” has been opened by God and “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” ([Romans 7:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7:18)). God’s Spirit continually reveals to His children what human nature is like apart from His grace.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

To those who have had no agony Jesus says, “I have nothing for you; stand on your own feet, square your own shoulders. I have come for the man who knows he has a bigger handful than he can cope with, who knows there are forces he cannot touch; I will do everything for him if he will let Me. Only let a man grant he needs it, and I will do it for him.” The Shadow of an Agony, 1166 R

# CCEL – 6/1/23

The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering, gentleness.—[GAL. 5:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.—Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.—Charity suffereth long, and is kind.

In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.—Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

[Exo. 34:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.34.html" \l "Exod.34.6).[Eph. 4:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.1). -[Eph. 4:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.32). -[Jas. 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.3.html" \l "Jas.3.17). -[I Cor. 13:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.4).[Gal. 6:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.9). -[Jas. 5:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.5.html" \l "Jas.5.7).

“The evening and the morning were the first day.” **[Genesis 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.1.html" \l "Gen.1.5)**

Was it so even in the beginning? Did light and darkness divide the realm of time in the first day? Then little wonder is it if I have also changes in my circumstances from the sunshine of prosperity to the midnight of adversity. It will not always be the blaze of noon even in my soul concerns, I must expect at seasons to mourn the absence of my former joys, and seek my Beloved in the night. Nor am I alone in this, for all the Lord’s beloved ones have had to sing the mingled song of judgment and of mercy, of trial and deliverance, of mourning and of delight. It is one of the arrangements of Divine providence that day and night shall not cease either in the spiritual or natural creation till we reach the land of which it is written, “there is no night there.” What our heavenly Father ordains is wise and good.

What, then, my soul, is it best for thee to do? Learn first to be content with this divine order, and be willing, with Job, to receive evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. Study next, to make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice. Praise the Lord for the sun of joy when it rises, and for the gloom of evening as it falls. There is beauty both in sunrise and sunset; sing of it, and glorify the Lord. Like the nightingale, pour forth thy notes at all hours. Believe that the night is as useful as the day. The dews of grace fall heavily in the night of sorrow. The stars of promise shine forth gloriously amid the darkness of grief. Continue thy service under all changes. If in the day thy watchword be labour, at night exchange it for watch. Every hour has its duty, do thou continue in thy calling as the Lord’s servant until he shall suddenly appear in his glory. My soul, thine evening of old age and death is drawing near; dread it not, for it is part of the day; and the Lord has said, “I will cover him all the day long.”

# Word Live – 6/1/23

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

# Scripture Union – 6/1/23

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 6/1/23

# Daily Devotional | Unlikely Leaders - a stack of sharp 31 pencils with one blue lead sticking above the rest on a blue background.Lead Like Jesus

**Read:** [**Philippians 2:1–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3a1%e2%80%9311)

### Imitating Christ’s Humility

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29398a)] God,  
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
7rather, he made himself nothing  
    by taking the very nature[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,  
    being made in human likeness.  
8And being found in appearance as a man,  
    he humbled himself  
    by becoming obedient to death—  
        even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
    and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
    to the glory of God the Father.

#### Footnotes

1. [Philippians 2:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#en-NIV-29398) Or in the form of
2. [Philippians 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A1%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#en-NIV-29399) Or the form

What do you look for in a leader? For generations, God’s people hoped for a leader to take them into battle. They wanted a problem-solver, winner-take-all, charismatic leader. Instead, God gave someone they did not expect...His Son Jesus. In direct contrast to the characteristics of popular leaders then (and now), Jesus was known for humility.

He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant. Philippians 2:7

In Philippians 2, Paul focuses on the need for the Philippians to complete his joy by being united. Paul knew that if Christians were to live a worthy life (1:27–30), they had to turn from “selfish ambition or vain conceit” (2:3) and be unified through having the same mind, same love, and being one in spirit and purpose (v. 2). This is a leadership task easier said than done! Ask any coach, CEO, or mother about the challenges of getting everyone on the same page and united with one another. Paul’s solution was learned from Jesus: Lead through humility. We know that humility means considering others above ourselves (v. 4). But humility is easier to define than to do. Paul

Paul points to the ultimate example of humility, the Lord Jesus Himself (vv. 5–11). Many scholars label these verses as the “Hymn of Christ.” Experts believe early Christians sang or recited these words during worship gatherings. The poem touches on Christ’s preexistence, incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension. These verses are rich in theology, but we should not miss Paul’s purpose in penning these words. He wants the Philippians to be united, and the only way they will ever accomplish that is to model their lives after Jesus.

As we examine the lives of unlikely leaders in Scripture, you will find that they all exhibit humility. As we put interests of others before ourselves, we too can be an influential leader for Christ.

**Apply the Word**

You may not realize it, but you are a leader. God wants you to be His representative as you unite the people you work with and live alongside them. Lead like Jesus through humility.

## Pray with Us

Before pursuing any vision, may we come in prayer to You, Lord. It is because of You and for You that we live and work. Grant us wisdom to fulfill our roles— leading or following—in a manner pleasing to You.

### BY Dr. Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 6/1/23

# In God’s Hands

 **Read:** [**1 Thessalonians 5:12–28**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.12%E2%80%9328)

### Final Instructions

12Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

16Rejoice always, 17pray continually, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22reject every kind of evil.

23May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

25Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26Greet all God’s people with a holy kiss. 27I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. [1 Thessalonians 5:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.24)

Turning eighteen ushered in a new era in my daughter’s life: legally an adult, she now had the right to vote in future elections and would soon embark on life after graduating from high school. This shift had instilled in me a sense of urgency—I would have precious little time with her under my roof to impart to her the wisdom she’d need to face the world on her own: how to manage finances, stay alert to world issues, and make sound decisions.

My sense of duty to equip my daughter to handle her life was understandable. After all, I loved her and desired for her to flourish. But I realized that while I had an important role, it wasn’t solely—or even primarily—my job. In Paul’s words to the Thessalonians—a group of people he considered his children in the faith because he’d taught them about Jesus—he urged them to help one another ([1 Thessalonians 5:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Thess%205.14%E2%80%9315)), but ultimately he trusted their growth to God. He acknowledged that God would “sanctify [them] through and through” (v. 23).

Paul trusted God to do what he couldn’t: prepare them—“spirit, soul and body”—for the eventual return of Jesus (v. 23). Though his letters to the Thessalonians contained instructions, his trust in God for their well-being and preparedness teaches us that growth in the lives of those we care for is ultimately in His hands ([1 Corinthians 3:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.6)).

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How have you observed God helping you to grow in Him? Whose growth do you need to entrust to Him?

Father, thank You for being the initiator and finisher of my spiritual growth. Please help me to trust You for that good work.

For further study, read [Heart, Soul, and Mind: Raising Kids to Know and Love God](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0821).

#### Insight

The church at Thessalonica was one that benefited from Paul’s personal ministry. Thessalonica was a major city made up primarily of local Greeks and transplanted Romans. There was also a substantial enough Jewish population to necessitate and support a synagogue there ([Acts 17:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2017.1)). As was often his practice, Paul began his gospel ministry in the synagogue—proclaiming Jesus as the promised Messiah (vv. 3–4). Those who responded in faith formed the nucleus of the new church family, apparently meeting in the home of a local man named Jason (vv. 5, 7). Opposition from some of the local Jewish population forced the apostle to leave Thessalonica and make his way from there to Berea and ultimately to Athens.

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

# God Calling – 6/1/23

# Companionship

The way of the soul's transformation is the Way of Divine Companionship.

Not so much the asking Me to make you this or that but the living with Me, thinking of Me, talking to Me - thus you grow like Me.

Love Me.  Rest in Me.

Joy in Me.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.  Song of Solomon 6:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/2/23

# Are You Obsessed by Something?



Who is the man that fears the Lord? —[Psalm 25:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Psalm+25%3A12)

Are you obsessed by something? You will probably say, “No, by nothing,” but all of us are obsessed by something— usually by ourselves, or, if we are Christians, by our own experience of the Christian life. But the psalmist says that we are to be obsessed by God. The abiding awareness of the Christian life is to be God Himself, not just thoughts about Him. The total being of our life inside and out is to be absolutely obsessed by the presence of God. A child’s awareness is so absorbed in his mother that although he is not consciously thinking of her, when a problem arises, the abiding relationship is that with the mother. In that same way, we are to “live and move and have our being” in God ([Acts 17:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17:28)), looking at everything in relation to Him, because our abiding awareness of Him continually pushes itself to the forefront of our lives.

If we are obsessed by God, nothing else can get into our lives— not concerns, nor tribulation, nor worries. And now we understand why our Lord so emphasized the sin of worrying. How can we dare to be so absolutely unbelieving when God totally surrounds us? To be obsessed by God is to have an effective barricade against all the assaults of the enemy.

“He himself shall dwell in prosperity…” ([Psalm 25:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+25:13)). God will cause us to “dwell in prosperity,” keeping us at ease, even in the midst of tribulation, misunderstanding, and slander, if our “life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). We rob ourselves of the miraculous, revealed truth of this abiding companionship with God. “God is our refuge…” ([Psalm 46:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+46:1)). Nothing can break through His shelter of protection.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Civilization is based on principles which imply that the passing moment is permanent. The only permanent thing is God, and if I put anything else as permanent, I become atheistic. I must build only on God (John 14:6). The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 L

# CCEL – 6/2/23

Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.—[EXO. 12:11.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.12.html" \l "Exod.12.11)

Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest.—Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.—There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.—Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.—This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.

[Mic. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.2.html" \l "Mic.2.10). -[Heb. 13:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.14). -[Heb. 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.9).[Luke 12:35-37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.12.html" \l "Luke.12.35). -[I Pet. 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.13). -[Phi. 3:13-15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.13).

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” **[Galatians 5:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.17)**

In every believer’s heart there is a constant struggle between the old nature and the new. The old nature is very active, and loses no opportunity of plying all the weapons of its deadly armoury against newborn grace; while on the other hand, the new nature is ever on the watch to resist and destroy its enemy. Grace within us will employ prayer, and faith, and hope, and love, to cast out the evil; it takes unto it the “whole armour of God,” and wrestles earnestly. These two opposing natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The battle of “Christian” with “Apollyon” lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the river Jordan. The enemy is so securely entrenched within us that he can never be driven out while we are in this body: but although we are closely beset, and often in sore conflict, we have an Almighty helper, even Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who is ever with us, and who assures us that we shall eventually come off more than conquerors through Him. With such assistance the new-born nature is more than a match for its foes. Are you fighting with the adversary today? Are Satan, the world, and the flesh, all against you? Be not discouraged nor dismayed. Fight on! For God Himself is with you; Jehovah Nissi is your banner, and Jehovah Rophi is the healer of your wounds. Fear not, you shall overcome, for who can defeat Omnipotence? Fight on, “looking unto Jesus;” and though long and stern be the conflict, sweet will be the victory, and glorious the promised reward. “From strength to strength go on; Wrestle, and fight, and pray, Tread all the powers of darkness down, And win the well-fought day.”

# Word Live – 6/2/23

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

# Scripture Union – 6/2/23

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 6/2/23

# Drought and Doubt

**Read:** [**Genesis 6:5–22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3a5%e2%80%9322)

5The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” 8But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

### Noah and the Flood

9This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

11Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14So make yourself an ark of cypress[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-152a)] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-153b)] 16Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-154c)] high all around.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-154d)] Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. 19You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.”

22Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

#### Footnotes

1. [Genesis 6:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#en-NIV-152) The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
2. [Genesis 6:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#en-NIV-153) That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high
3. [Genesis 6:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#en-NIV-154) That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters
4. [Genesis 6:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A5%E2%80%9322+&version=NIV#en-NIV-154) The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

Ask any farmer, and they will tell you the word they fear the most is drought. Without rain, their crops and livelihood are in peril. Farmers plant their crops with hope that rain will come soon. But a couple of seasons of drought, sprinkled with a period of doubt, is a combination even the most optimistic farmer never wants to face. When rain does come it is viewed as a blessing, restoring life to the withered land.

I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

In Genesis 6, we learn that humanity had reached an all-time low. Wickedness and evil were running wild. “The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time” (v. 5). He resolved to cross everything out and start over (v. 7).

Scripture tells us that as God looked at the darkness of the world, He saw a flickering light of hope. One man found favor in His eyes: Noah (v. 8). Many biblical scholars assert that before the Flood, there had been decades of no rain except the occasional mist, fog, or morning dew. Because humans had never experienced rain, God’s command to build an ark would have seemed ludicrous. But Noah was righteous, “blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God” (v. 9). He did everything as God commanded (v. 22).

Have you walked through times when the road before you seemed impossible? How would God work during those seasons of drought and doubt? God needs leaders who will follow Him even when everyone else turns away.

**Apply the Word**

If you have ever trusted God during difficult times, you may be precisely the type of leader God wants to use. Even if you are in a difficult season, God can still use you for His purposes. Leadership takes patience, waiting on others, and waiting on God.

## Pray with Us

Lord, build in us a knowledge of what is right and good. Help us resist groupthink or compromising because we want to follow the majority. May we love truth more than others’ good opinion.

### BY Dr. Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 6/2/23

# Uniting Nations

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 2:1–5**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.1%E2%80%935)

### The Mountain of the Lord

2 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2In the last days

the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established  
    as the highest of the mountains;  
it will be exalted above the hills,  
    and all nations will stream to it.

3Many peoples will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
    to the temple of the God of Jacob.  
He will teach us his ways,  
    so that we may walk in his paths.”  
The law will go out from Zion,  
    the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
4He will judge between the nations  
    and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
    and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
    nor will they train for war anymore.

5Come, descendants of Jacob,  
    let us walk in the light of the Lord.

He will judge between the nations. [Isaiah 2:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.4)

The longest international border in the world is shared by the United States and Canada, covering an incredible 5,525 miles of land and water. Workers regularly cut down ten feet of trees on both sides of the boundary to make the border line unmistakable. This lengthy ribbon of cleared land, called “the Slash,” is dotted by more than eight thousand stone markers so visitors always know where the dividing line falls.

The physical deforestation of “the Slash” represents a separation of government and cultures. As believers in Jesus, we look forward to a time when God will reverse that and unite all nations across the world under His rule. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a future where His temple will be firmly established and exalted ([Isaiah 2:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.2)). People from all nations will gather to learn God’s ways and “walk in his paths” (v. 3). No longer will we rely on human efforts that fail to maintain peace. As our true King, God will judge between nations and settle all disputes (v. 4).

Can you imagine a world without division and conflict? That’s what God promises to bring! Regardless of the disunity around us, we can “walk in the light of the Lord” (v. 5) and choose to give Him our allegiance now. We know that God rules over all, and He will someday unite His people under one banner.

By:  [Karen Pimpo](https://odb.org/author/karenpimpo/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What disunity in the world is heavy on your heart today? How does looking forward to God’s eternal kingdom give you strength?

Dear God, I acknowledge Your sovereignty over every power in the world today! You reign above it all.

#### Insight

The prophet Isaiah is well known for writing about two themes: the nature and work of the coming Messiah and prophetic writing that both warns the reader and offers encouragement through hope-filled visions of the days to come.

Today’s reading, [Isaiah 2:1–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.1%E2%80%935), falls under prophetic writing. Verse 2 begins with the phrase “in the last days,” or when God’s plan of salvation is about to reach its final fulfillment. Isaiah sets everything he’s about to discuss in a future context. In verses 3–5, three distinct ideas emerge: the supremacy of the mountain of the Lord (v. 3)—the Jerusalem temple—here a symbol for the power and presence of God; the desire of the nations to flock to that mountain to learn from God Himself (v. 3); and God’s relationship to the nations and their disputes (v. 4). Isaiah’s writing challenges the people to join in God’s work and be a part of what’s coming.

By: [**J.R. Hudberg**](https://odb.org/author/jrhudberg/)

# God Calling – 6/2/23

# My Image

My Lord and my God, we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee.  Make us like Thee.

You are willing to drink of the cup that I drink of - the wine of sorrow and disappointment.

You are Mine and will grow both of you more and more like Me, your Master.

True it is today as it was in the days of Moses that no man can see My face and live.

The self, the original Man, shrivels up and dies, and upon the soul becomes stamped My image.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed  to the image of his Son.  Romans 8:29

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/3/23

# “The Secret of the Lord”



The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him… —[Psalm 25:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Psalm+25%3A14)

What is the sign of a friend? Is it that he tells you his secret sorrows? No, it is that he tells you his secret joys. Many people will confide their secret sorrows to you, but the final mark of intimacy is when they share their secret joys with you. Have we ever let God tell us any of His joys? Or are we continually telling God our secrets, leaving Him no time to talk to us? At the beginning of our Christian life we are full of requests to God. But then we find that God wants to get us into an intimate relationship with Himself— to get us in touch with His purposes. Are we so intimately united to Jesus Christ’s idea of prayer— “Your will be done” ([Matthew 6:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:10))— that we catch the secrets of God? What makes God so dear to us is not so much His big blessings to us, but the tiny things, because they show His amazing intimacy with us— He knows every detail of each of our individual lives.

“Him shall He teach in the way He chooses” ([Psalm 25:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+25:12)). At first, we want the awareness of being guided by God. But then as we grow spiritually, we live so fully aware of God that we do not even need to ask what His will is, because the thought of choosing another way will never occur to us. If we are saved and sanctified, God guides us by our everyday choices. And if we are about to choose what He does not want, He will give us a sense of doubt or restraint, which we must heed. Whenever there is doubt, stop at once. Never try to reason it out, saying, “I wonder why I shouldn’t do this?” God instructs us in what we choose; that is, He actually guides our common sense. And when we yield to His teachings and guidance, we no longer hinder His Spirit by continually asking, “Now, Lord, what is Your will?”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 6/3/23

Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.—[MATT. 25:13.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.25.html" \l "Matt.25.13)

Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

[Luke 21:34-36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.21.html" \l "Luke.21.34).[I Thes. 5:2-6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.2).

“These were potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.” **[1 Chronicles 4:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.4.html" \l "iChr.4.23)**

Potters were not the very highest grade of workers, but “the king” needed potters, and therefore they were in royal service, although the material upon which they worked was nothing but clay. We, too, may be engaged in the most menial part of the Lord’s work, but it is a great privilege to do anything for “the king”; and therefore we will abide in our calling, hoping that, “although we have lien among the pots, yet shall we be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” The text tells us of those who dwelt among plants and hedges, having rough, rustic, hedging and ditching work to do. They may have desired to live in the city, amid its life, society, and refinement, but they kept their appointed places, for they also were doing the king’s work. The place of our habitation is fixed, and we are not to remove from it out of whim and caprice, but seek to serve the Lord in it, by being a blessing to those among whom we reside. T hese potters and gardeners had royal company, for they dwelt “with the king” and although among hedges and plants, they dwelt with the king there. No lawful place, or gracious occupation, however mean, can debar us from communion with our divine Lord. In visiting hovels, swarming lodging-houses, workhouses, or jails, we may go with the king. In all works of faith we may count upon Jesus’ fellowship. It is when we are in his work that we may reckon upon his smile. Ye unknown workers who are occupied for your Lord amid the dirt and wretchedness of the lowest of the low, be of good cheer, for jewels have been found upon dunghills ere now, earthen pots have been filled with heavenly treasure, and ill weeds have been transformed into precious flowers. Dwell ye with the King for his work, and when he writes his chronicles your name shall be recorded.

# Word Live – 6/3/23

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

# Scripture Union – 6/3/23

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 6/3/23

# An Unlikely Journey

**Read:** [**Genesis 12:1–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3a1%e2%80%939)

### The Call of Abram

12 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

2“I will make you into a great nation,  
    and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
    and you will be a blessing.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-301a)]  
3I will bless those who bless you,  
    and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
    will be blessed through you.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-302b)]

4So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. 5He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

6Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-306c)] I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

8From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

9Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

#### Footnotes

1. [Genesis 12:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#en-NIV-301) Or be seen as blessed
2. [Genesis 12:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#en-NIV-302) Or earth / will use your name in blessings (see 48:20)
3. [Genesis 12:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1%E2%80%939+&version=NIV#en-NIV-306) Or seed

Do you ever yearn for adventure? For some this might mean a winding road trip and camping out under the stars. For others it means trying exotic foods or exploring a new city. Most of us find it exciting to go where we’ve never gone before. In Genesis 12, God told another one of His unlikely leaders to venture into the unknown. Even better, God promised that the entire world would be blessed one day through him and his journey.

All peoples on earth will be blessed through you. Genesis 12:3

In Genesis 12, we read how God began a new relationship with humanity. The troubled days of Noah were over, and God wanted to restore the relationship, He once had with His creation before sin entered the world. The Lord chose Abram and took him on an unexpected journey that would demonstrate to the world that He is God.

Yahweh commanded Abram to leave Harran, his people, and his extended family (v. 1). Leaving the known and entering the unknown would have been terrifying. Abram had no smart device to help him navigate the terrain. He couldn’t Google the best ways to stay out of danger on the trip. All he had (and all he needed) was a promise from the Lord Almighty.

God promised to make Abram’s offspring into a great nation with a great name (v. 2). Abram was not venturing into the unknown to fulfill his craving to explore. Instead, he was obeying what the Lord commanded him to do. God promised that not only would Abram and his family be blessed (v. 2), but the entire world would be blessed through him (v. 3). Did you catch that? The promise God made to Abram was not just to him and his family, but to everyone, including you and me.

**Apply the Word**

What adventure might God be calling you to take? You can trust God that when He places a task on your heart, He will provide everything you need to accomplish it. God wants to use leaders like you to bless others.

## Pray with Us

Today we ask You to provide for us the things we need to obey You. Give us spiritual gifts of love, discernment, and perseverance to honor You. Provide the resources we need to do our work well, so that our work reflects You.

### BY Dr. Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 6/3/23

# Within God’s Reach

 **Read:** [**Psalm 139:1–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.1%E2%80%9312)

#### For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

1You have searched me, Lord,  
    and you know me.  
2You know when I sit and when I rise;  
    you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
3You discern my going out and my lying down;  
    you are familiar with all my ways.  
4Before a word is on my tongue  
    you, Lord, know it completely.  
5You hem me in behind and before,  
    and you lay your hand upon me.  
6Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
    too lofty for me to attain.

7Where can I go from your Spirit?  
    Where can I flee from your presence?  
8If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
    if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
9If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
    if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
10even there your hand will guide me,  
    your right hand will hold me fast.  
11If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me  
    and the light become night around me,”  
12even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
    the night will shine like the day,  
    for darkness is as light to you.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? [Psalm 139:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.7)

After an officer searched me, I stepped into the county jail, signed the visitor’s log, and sat in the crowded lobby. I prayed silently, watching adults fidgeting and sighing while young children complained about the wait. Over an hour later, an armed guard called a list of names including mine. He led my group into a room and motioned us to our assigned chairs. When my stepson sat in the chair on the other side of the thick glass window and picked up the telephone receiver, the depth of my helplessness overwhelmed me. But as I wept, God assured me that my stepson was still within His reach.

In [Psalm 139](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139), David says to God, “You know me. . . ; you are familiar with all my ways” (vv. 1–3). His proclamation of an all-knowing God leads to a celebration of His intimate care and protection (v. 5). Overwhelmed by the vastness of God’s knowledge and the depth of His personal touch, David asks two rhetorical questions: “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” (v. 7).

When we or our loved ones are stuck in situations that leave us feeling hopeless and helpless, God’s hand remains strong and steady. Even when we believe we’ve strayed too far for His loving redemption, we’re always within His reach.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How has knowing the vastness of God’s extensive reach affected your faith? How has He comforted you during a time when you felt hopeless and helpless?

Loving Father, help me to remember that You’re always willing and able to reach me and my loved ones.

Learn more about  [trusting God in times of suffering](https://odbu.org/topic/ca211-01-lecture/?utm_source=2023+06+03+ODB+Article&utm_medium=Digital+link&utm_campaign=2023+06+03+ODB+Article+-+10+Reasons&utm_id=2023+06+03+ODB+Article+-+10+Reasons).

#### Insight

God knows His people personally and intimately. This truth is evident in David’s words in [Psalm 139](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139). He says God created our “inmost being” (v. 13) and “all the days ordained for [us] were written in [His] book before one of them came to be” (v. 16). The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah affirmed this truth ([Isaiah 49:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2049.5); [Jeremiah 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%201.5)). Later, Jesus declared, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me” ([John 10:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.14)). In fact, He’s numbered the hairs on our heads ([Matthew 10:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.30))! The apostle Paul wrote, we “are God’s temple and . . . God’s Spirit dwells in [us]” ([1 Corinthians 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%203.16)). And he added, “Whoever loves God is known by God” (8:3). The best news is that He loved us first ([1 John 4:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%204.19)).

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

# God Calling – 6/3/23

# Eject Sin With Love

Our Lord, we love and praise Thee. Thou art our Joy and our exceeding great reward.

Remember that Love is the power which transforms the world.  Love not only of Me, Love not only of the few dear to you, but Love of all - of the publicans, the sinners, the harlots - Love.

It is the only weapon with which sin can be driven out.  Drive sin out with Love.

Drive fear and depression and despair and a sense of failure out with Praise.

Praise is the acknowledgement of that which I have sent you.  Few men would send a further gift of payment until they had received the acknowledgement of the previous one.  So praise, acknowledging, as it does, that My gift and blessing leaves the way open for Me to shower yet more on the thankful heart.

Learn as a child learns to say "Thank you" as a courtesy, with perhaps no real sense of gratitude at all.  Do this until at last a thrill of joy, of thankful awe, will accompany the spoken word.

Do not expect for yourselves feeling that you know others have or have had.  Just go on along the arid way of obedience, and persistence will be rewarded as you come to the Spring, the glad Spring of Water.

Oh, joy in Me, and, as far as in you lies, shed Joy on all around.

Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.  Romans 12:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/4/23

# The Never-forsaking God



He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." —[Hebrews 13:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+13%3A5)

What line of thinking do my thoughts take? Do I turn to what God says or to my own fears? Am I simply repeating what God says, or am I learning to truly hear Him and then to respond after I have heard what He says? “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’ ” ([Hebrews 13:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+13:5-6)).

“I will never leave you…”— not for any reason; not my sin, selfishness, stubbornness, nor waywardness. Have I really let God say to me that He will never leave me? If I have not truly heard this assurance of God, then let me listen again.

“I will never…forsake you.” Sometimes it is not the difficulty of life but the drudgery of it that makes me think God will forsake me. When there is no major difficulty to overcome, no vision from God, nothing wonderful or beautiful— just the everyday activities of life— do I hear God’s assurance even in these?

We have the idea that God is going to do some exceptional thing— that He is preparing and equipping us for some extraordinary work in the future. But as we grow in His grace we find that God is glorifying Himself here and now, at this very moment. If we have God’s assurance behind us, the most amazing strength becomes ours, and we learn to sing, glorifying Him even in the ordinary days and ways of life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God does not further our spiritual life in spite of our circumstances, but in and by our circumstances.  Not Knowing Whither, 900 L

# CCEL – 6/4/23

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, and in this place will I give peace.—[HAG. 2:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hag.2.html" \l "Hag.2.9)

The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries.—The glory of the Lord. . . filled the Lord's house.

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. He spake of the temple of his body.—That which was made glorious had no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth.—The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.—God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—The Prince of Peace.—He is our peace.—The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[I Chr. 22:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.22.html" \l "iChr.22.5). -[II Chr. 7:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiChr.7.html" \l "iiChr.7.2).[John 2:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.2.html" \l "John.2.19),[21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.2.html" \l "John.2.21). -[II Cor. 3:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.3.html" \l "iiCor.3.10). -[John 1:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.14). -[Heb. 1:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.1.html" \l "Heb.1.1).[Luke 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.2.html" \l "Luke.2.14). -[Isa. 9:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.9.html" \l "Isa.9.6). -[Eph. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.14). -[Phi. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.7).

“The kindness and love of God our Saviour.” **[Titus 3:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.4)**

How sweet it is to behold the Saviour communing with his own beloved people! There can be nothing more delightful than, by the Divine Spirit, to be led into this fertile field of delight. Let the mind for an instant consider the history of the Redeemer’s love, and a thousand enchanting acts of affection will suggest themselves, all of which have had for their design the weaving of the heart into Christ, and the intertwisting of the thoughts and emotions of the renewed soul with the mind of Jesus. When we meditate upon this amazing love, and behold the all-glorious Kinsman of the Church endowing her with all his ancient wealth, our souls may well faint for joy. Who is he that can endure such a weight of love? That partial sense of it which the Holy Spirit is sometimes pleased to afford, is more than the soul can contain; how transporting must be a complete view of it! When the soul shall have understanding to discern all the Saviour’s gifts, wisdom wherewith to estimate them, and time in which to meditate upon them, such as the world to come will afford us, we shall then commune with Jesus in a nearer manner than at present. But who can imagine the sweetness of such fellowship? It must be one of the things which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for them that love him. Oh, to burst open the door of our Joseph’s granaries, and see the plenty which he hath stored up for us! This will overwhelm us with love. By faith we see, as in a glass darkly, the reflected image of his unbounded treasures, but when we shall actually see the heavenly things themselves, with our own eyes, how deep will be the stream of fellowship in which our soul shall bathe itself! Till then our loudest sonnets shall be reserved for our loving benefactor, Jesus Christ our Lord, whose love to us is wonderful, passing the love of women.

# Word Live – 6/4/23

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

# Scripture Union – 6/4/23

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 6/4/23

# Interceding for Others

**Read:** [**Genesis 18:20–33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3a20%e2%80%9333)

20Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous 21that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.”

22The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3A20%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-447a)] 23Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3A20%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-449b)] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

26The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

27Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?”

“If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”

29Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?”

He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.”

30Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

31Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?”

He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”

32Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?”

He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.”

33When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

#### Footnotes

1. [Genesis 18:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3A20%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#en-NIV-447) Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition but the Lord remained standing before Abraham
2. [Genesis 18:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3A20%E2%80%9333+&version=NIV#en-NIV-449) Or forgive; also in verse 26

For nearly ten years, lawyer Randy Schoenberg represented Austrian Maria Altmann in her quest to recover her family’s paintings that had been stolen by the Nazis during World War II. The exquisite paintings, valued at more than $325 million, were discovered in museums where they had been displayed for decades. Schoenberg persisted on Altmann’s behalf, appealing to many judges, including the U.S. Supreme Court, before winning her case.

Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life— is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:34

In Genesis 18, we find Abraham in a bargaining conversation with the Lord. Sodom and Gomorrah were the “Sin Cities” of the day. The mercy cries of the oppressed and powerless had reached the ears of the Lord (vv. 20– 21). God was on the verge of pouring out another round of destruction. But before God punished Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham courageously pled their case (v. 22).

Even though the Scriptures do not explicitly mention Lot, Abraham’s nephew and his family was most likely on his mind, since they were still in Sodom. The premise of Abraham’s argument to the Lord was: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” (v. 23). Beginning with 50 and working his way down to ten, Abraham witnessed the Lord’s mercy and goodness in one hypothetical measurement at a time. Using the skills of an experienced arbitrator, he interceded for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham’s intervention before God on behalf of the righteous may remind you of the way Jesus has intervened for us! Centuries later, Jesus would stand before the Father to intercede for our deliverance from death and destruction (Rom. 8:34).

**Apply the Word**

For whom can you intercede today? As a godly leader, you may be asked to stand up for the rights of another. And certainly, we can intercede for them through prayer. Using Abraham as a model, pray for those you know who are lost and need the Savior.

## Pray with Us

Father, do not let injustice within Christian circles dissuade others from seeking You! Strengthen us to speak against wrongdoing and stand for righteousness, outside of the church, as well as within it.

### BY Dr. Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 6/4/23

# Courage to Stand for Jesus

 **Read:** [**John 13:36–38**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.36%E2%80%9338)

36Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

37Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

38Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

**Read:** [**John**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.36%E2%80%9338) [**21:18–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2021.18%E2%80%9319)

18Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. [Matthew 10:38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2010.38)

In ad 155, the early church father Polycarp was threatened with death by fire for his faith in Christ. He replied, “For eighty and six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. And how can I now blaspheme my king who saved me?” Polycarp’s response can be an inspiration for us when we face extreme trial because of our faith in Jesus, our King.

Just hours before Jesus’ death, Peter boldly pledged his allegiance to Christ: “I will lay down my life for you” ([John 13:37](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.37)). Jesus, who knew Peter better than Peter knew himself, replied, “Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!” (v. 38). However, after Jesus’ resurrection, the same one who’d denied Him began to serve Him courageously and would eventually glorify Him through his own death (see 21:16–19).

Are you a Polycarp or a Peter? Most of us, if we’re honest, are more of a Peter with a “courage outage”—a failure to speak or act honorably as a believer in Jesus. Such occasions—whether in a classroom, boardroom, or breakroom—needn’t indelibly define us. When those failures occur, we must prayerfully dust ourselves off and turn to Jesus, the One who died for us and lives for us. He’ll help us to be faithful to Him and courageously live for Him daily in difficult places.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

When do you need extra doses of courage to stand for Jesus? What do you find helpful in your witness for Him?

Heavenly Father, forgive me when I shrink back in fear and betray You by my words or actions. I need Your strength to live boldly as a believer in Jesus.

#### Insight

Peter’s words to Jesus in [John 13:37](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2013.37) show his misunderstanding of who his teacher really was. He sincerely intended to lay his life down for his king—but not if that king went willingly to his death. Peter was prepared to fight Roman oppressors, and he did. Or at least tried to.

In [John 18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2018)—not long after Jesus had told Peter that he’d deny Him—they stood together in a garden surrounded by Roman soldiers. As if to prove his willingness to die for Jesus, Peter leapt into action, swinging a sword and attacking one of the men.

The disciples—and many believers in Jesus in the years since—didn’t understand His mission. He came not to gain power, dominance, and control but to set all those things aside. As John would write years later in the last book of the Bible, our King isn’t a conquering lion, but a slain lamb ([Revelation 5:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%205.5%E2%80%936)).

By: [**Jed Ostoich**](https://odb.org/author/jedostoich/)

# God Calling – 6/4/23

# Divine Patience

Lord, make us like Thee.  Mold us into Thy likeness.

Molding, My children, means cutting and chiseling.  It means sacrifice of the personal to conform to type.  It is not only My work but yours.

The swift recognition of the selfish in your desires and motives, actions, words and thoughts, and the instant appeal to Me for help to eradicate that.

It is a work that requires cooperation - Mine and yours.  It is a work that brings much sense of failure and discouragement too, at times, because, as the work proceeds, you see more and more clearly all that yet remains to be done.

Shortcomings you had hardly recognized or at least for which you had had no sense of sorrow, now cause you trouble and dismay.

Courage.  That is in itself a sign of progress.

Patience, not only with others, but each of you, with herself

As you see the slow progress upward made by you, in spite of your longing and struggle, you will gain a divine patience with others whose imperfections trouble you.

So on and up.  Forward.  Patience - Perseverance - Struggle.  Remember that I am beside you, your Captain and your Helper.  So tender, so patient, so strong.

Yes, we cooperate and as I share your troubles, failures, difficulties, heartaches, so as My friends, you share My patience, and My strength - beloved.

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.  Jeremiah 18:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/5/23

# God’s Assurance



He Himself has said….So we may boldly say… —[Hebrews 13:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+13%3A5-6)

My assurance is to be built upon God’s assurance to me. God says, “I will never leave you,” so that then I “may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear’ ” ([Hebrews 13:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+13:5-6)). In other words, I will not be obsessed with apprehension. This does not mean that I will not be tempted to fear, but I will remember God’s words of assurance. I will be full of courage, like a child who strives to reach the standard his father has set for him. The faith of many people begins to falter when apprehensions enter their thinking, and they forget the meaning of God’s assurance— they forget to take a deep spiritual breath. The only way to remove the fear from our lives is to listen to God’s assurance to us.

What are you fearing? Whatever it may be, you are not a coward about it— you are determined to face it, yet you still have a feeling of fear. When it seems that there is nothing and no one to help you, say to yourself, “But ‘The Lord is my helper’ this very moment, even in my present circumstance.” Are you learning to listen to God before you speak, or are you saying things and then trying to make God’s Word fit what you have said? Take hold of the Father’s assurance, and then say with strong courage, “I will not fear.” It does not matter what evil or wrong may be in our way, because “He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you….’ ”

Human frailty is another thing that gets between God’s words of assurance and our own words and thoughts. When we realize how feeble we are in facing difficulties, the difficulties become like giants, we become like grasshoppers, and God seems to be nonexistent. But remember God’s assurance to us— “I will never…forsake you.” Have we learned to sing after hearing God’s keynote? Are we continually filled with enough courage to say, “The Lord is my helper,” or are we yielding to fear?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We should always choose our books as God chooses our friends, just a bit beyond us, so that we have to do our level best to keep up with them. Shade of His Hand, 1216 L

# CCEL – 6/5/23

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.—[LUKE 17:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.10)

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.—What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?—By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.—For of him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.—All things come of thee and of thine own have we given thee.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

[Rom. 3:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.27). -[I Cor. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.4.html" \l "iCor.4.7). -[Eph. 2:8-10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.8).[I Cor. 15:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.10). -[Rom. 11:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.36). -[I Chr. 29:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.29.html" \l "iChr.29.14).[Psa. 143:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.143.html" \l "Ps.143.2).

“The Lord shut him in.” **[Genesis 7:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.7.html" \l "Gen.7.16)**

Noah was shut in away from all the world by the hand of divine love. The door of electing purpose interposes between us and the world which lieth in the wicked one. We are not of the world even as our Lord Jesus was not of the world. Into the sin, the gaiety, the pursuits of the multitude we cannot enter; we cannot play in the streets of Vanity Fair with the children of darkness, for our heavenly Father has shut us in. Noah was shut in with his God. “Come thou into the ark,” was the Lord’s invitation, by which he clearly showed that he himself intended to dwell in the ark with his servant and his family. Thus all the chosen dwell in God and God in them. Happy people to be enclosed in the same circle which contains God in the Trinity of his persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. Let us never be inattentive to that gracious call, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, and hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be over past.” Noah was so shut in that no evil could reach him. Floods did but lift him heavenward, and winds did but waft him on his way. Outside of the ark all was ruin, but inside all was rest and peace. Without Christ we perish, but in Christ Jesus there is perfect safety. Noah was so shut in that he could not even desire to come out, and those who are in Christ Jesus are in him forever. They shall go no more out forever, for eternal faithfulness has shut them in, and infernal malice cannot drag them out. The Prince of the house of David shutteth and no man openeth; and when once in the last days as Master of the house he shall rise up and shut the door, it will be in vain for mere professors to knock, and cry Lord, Lord open unto us, for that same door which shuts in the wise virgins will shut out the foolish forever. Lord, shut me in by thy grace.

# Word Live – 6/5/23

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

# Scripture Union – 6/5/23

# <https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/>

# Today in the Word – 6/5/23

# Right Words at the Right Time

**Read:** [**Exodus 4:10–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+4%3a10%e2%80%9317)

10Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

11The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

13But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”

14Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. 15You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”

A well-known comedian observed that the number-one fear for most Americans is speaking in public, while the second fear is death, which means that at a funeral, people would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy. There is some truth to this humor. Having the right words at the right time can be challenging. We fear offending others or embarrassing ourselves. We aren’t the only ones to be timid with our tongues.

Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say. Exodus 4:12

You may picture Moses as a courageous, Charlton Heston-type leader with a booming voice, leading the Israelites out of the oppressive stronghold of Pharaoh. But Exodus 4 gives us a different perspective. Moses was someone we wouldn’t initially expect to be a leader. Our text falls in the middle of his conversation with God. Moses was giving excuse after excuse, trying to get out of God’s command to go before Pharaoh. His final protest to the Lord points to his speech impediment, which he claimed would hinder God’s message (v. 10). The Lord gave Moses a quick theologically based biology lesson and concluded by saying, “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (v. 12).

This excuse set aside, Moses finally revealed why he didn’t want to go: he was terrified (v. 13). The main issue wasn’t his lack of ability but his lack of faith and unwillingness to try. God was angry not with Moses’ questions but with his resistance. However, the Lord did not give up on this unlikely leader. Instead, He offered help through Moses’ brother, Aaron (vv. 14–16). Yahweh taught Moses that being a leader could be intimidating, especially when you have to speak in front of others, but God would give His people the right words at the right time.

**Apply the Word**

Do you fear leading others because you fear to speak in public? The next time you have an important conversation, presentation, speech, or sermon, remember that while you are fearful, God will help you speak and teach you what to say.

## Pray with Us

God, our weaknesses remind us that we depend on You. It is Your work through the Holy Spirit that changes hearts. In our weakness, we lean on You, trusting You to correct and guide us.

### BY Dr. Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 6/5/23

# Seasons

**Read:** [**Ecclesiastes 3:1–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%203.1%E2%80%9314)

### A Time for Everything

3 There is a time for everything,  
    and a season for every activity under the heavens:

2    a time to be born and a time to die,  
    a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
3    a time to kill and a time to heal,  
    a time to tear down and a time to build,  
4    a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
    a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
5    a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
    a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
6    a time to search and a time to give up,  
    a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
7    a time to tear and a time to mend,  
    a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
8    a time to love and a time to hate,  
    a time for war and a time for peace.

9What do workers gain from their toil? 10I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. 11He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+3%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-17371a)] no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. 12I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. 13That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. 14I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

#### Footnotes

1. [Ecclesiastes 3:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+3%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-17371) Or also placed ignorance in the human heart, so that

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens. [Ecclesiastes 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%203.1)

I recently came across a helpful word: wintering. Just as winter is a time of slowing down in much of the natural world, author Katherine May uses this word to describe our need to rest and recuperate during life’s “cold” seasons. I found the analogy helpful after losing my father to cancer, which sapped me of energy for months. Resentful of this forced slowing down, I fought against my winter, praying summer’s life would return. But I had much to learn.

Ecclesiastes famously says there’s “a season for every activity under the heavens”—a time to plant and to harvest, to weep and to laugh, to mourn and to dance (3:1–4). I had read these words for years but only started to understand them in my wintering season. For though we have little control over them, each season is finite and will pass when its work is done. And while we can’t always fathom what it is, God is doing something significant in us through them (v. 11). My time of mourning wasn’t over. When it was, dancing would return. Just as plants and animals don’t fight winter, I needed to rest and let it do its renewing work.

“Lord,” a friend prayed, “would You do Your good work in Sheridan during this difficult season.” It was a better prayer than mine. For in God’s hands, seasons are purposeful things. Let’s submit to His renewing work in each one.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

When have you wanted a season to end before its time? What do you think God wants to do in you this season?

Father God, thank You for using every season for Your glory and my good.

For further study, read [When God Says No: Broken Dreams to New Beginnings](https://discoveryseries.org/courses/when-god-says-no/).

#### Insight

While some dispute Solomon’s authorship of Ecclesiastes, there’s good internal evidence to support it. In [Ecclesiastes 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%201.1) we read, “The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem.” Solomon was the only son of David to reign as king in Jerusalem, though the author identifies himself as “the Teacher” or “the Preacher.” Whereas Solomon’s sayings in the book of Proverbs offer wisdom for life in a broken world, Ecclesiastes focuses more on the difficulty of living in such a world.

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

# God Calling – 6/5/23

# That Tender Voice

Very quietly I speak.  Listen to My Voice.  Never heed the voices of the world - only the tender Divine Voice.

Listen and you will never be disappointed.  Listen, and anxious thoughts and tired nerves will become rested.  The Voice Divine - not so much in strength as in tenderness.  Not so much in power as in restfulness.

But the tenderness and the restfulness will heal your scars and make you strong, and then it must be your task to let all your power be My Power.  Man's little power is as clay beside the granite rock of My Power.

You are My great care.  Never feel at the mercy of the world.  My angels guard you day and night and nothing can harm you.  You would indeed thank Me if you knew the darts of fret and evil they turn from you.

Thank Me indeed for dangers unknown - unseen- but averted.

And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.  1 Kings 19:11, 12