# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/23/20

# “Acquainted With Grief”



He is…a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. —[Isaiah 53:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+53%3A3)

We are not “acquainted with grief” in the same way our Lord was acquainted with it. We endure it and live through it, but we do not become intimate with it. At the beginning of our lives we do not bring ourselves to the point of dealing with the reality of sin. We look at life through the eyes of reason and say that if a person will control his instincts, and educate himself, he can produce a life that will slowly evolve into the life of God. But as we continue on through life, we find the presence of something which we have not yet taken into account, namely, sin— and it upsets all of our thinking and our plans. Sin has made the foundation of our thinking unpredictable, uncontrollable, and irrational.

We have to recognize that sin is a fact of life, not just a shortcoming. Sin is blatant mutiny against God, and either sin or God must die in my life. The New Testament brings us right down to this one issue— if sin rules in me, God’s life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed. There is nothing more fundamental than that. The culmination of sin was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and what was true in the history of God on earth will also be true in your history and in mine— that is, sin will kill the life of God in us. We must mentally bring ourselves to terms with this fact of sin. It is the only explanation why Jesus Christ came to earth, and it is the explanation of the grief and sorrow of life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ can afford to be misunderstood; we cannot. Our weakness lies in always wanting to vindicate ourselves. The Place of Help

# CCEL – 6/23/20

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth.—[JOHN 14:16,17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.16)

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if l depart, I will send him unto you.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.—The Spirit . . . helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.—Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

[John 16:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.7).[Rom. 8:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.16). -[Rom. 8:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.15). -[Rom. 8:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.26).[Rom. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.13). -[Rom. 5:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.5).[I John 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.13).

“Ephraim is a cake not turned.” [Hosea 7:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.7.html" \l "Hos.7.8)

A cake not turned is uncooked on one side; and so Ephraim was, in many respects, untouched by divine grace: though there was some partial obedience, there was very much rebellion left. My soul, I charge thee, see whether this be thy case. Art thou thorough in the things of God? Has grace gone through the very centre of thy being so as to be felt in its divine operations in all thy powers, thy actions, thy words, and thy thoughts? To be sanctified, spirit, soul, and body, should be thine aim and prayer; and although sanctification may not be perfect in thee anywhere in degree, yet it must be universal in its action; there must not be the appearance of holiness in one place and reigning sin in another, else thou, too, wilt be a cake not turned.

A cake not turned is soon burnt on the side nearest the fire, and although no man can have too much religion, there are some who seem burnt black with bigoted zeal for that part of truth which they have received, or are charred to a cinder with a vainglorious Pharisaic ostentation of those religious performances which suit their humour. The assumed appearance of superior sanctity frequently accompanies a total absence of all vital godliness. The saint in public is a devil in private. He deals in flour by day and in soot by night. The cake which is burned on one side, is dough on the other.

If it be so with me, O Lord, turn me! Turn my unsanctified nature to the fire of thy love and let it feel the sacred glow, and let my burnt side cool a little while I learn my own weakness and want of heat when I am removed from thy heavenly flame. Let me not be found a double-minded man, but one entirely under the powerful influence of reigning grace; for well I know if I am left like a cake unturned, and am not on both sides the subject of thy grace, I must be consumed forever amid everlasting burnings.

# Word Live – 6/23/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/23/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/23/20

# The Unfailing Nature of God

**Read:** [**Isaiah 51:1–6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+51%3a1%e2%80%936)

### Everlasting Salvation for Zion

51 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness  
    and who seek the Lord:  
Look to the rock from which you were cut  
    and to the quarry from which you were hewn;  
2look to Abraham, your father,  
    and to Sarah, who gave you birth.  
When I called him he was only one man,  
    and I blessed him and made him many.  
3The Lord will surely comfort Zion  
    and will look with compassion on all her ruins;  
he will make her deserts like Eden,  
    her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.  
Joy and gladness will be found in her,  
    thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

4“Listen to me, my people;  
    hear me, my nation:  
Instruction will go out from me;  
    my justice will become a light to the nations.  
5My righteousness draws near speedily,  
    my salvation is on the way,  
    and my arm will bring justice to the nations.  
The islands will look to me  
    and wait in hope for my arm.  
6Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
    look at the earth beneath;  
the heavens will vanish like smoke,  
    the earth will wear out like a garment  
    and its inhabitants die like flies.  
But my salvation will last forever,  
    my righteousness will never fail.

Entropy is the natural tendency for things to become more and more disorganized. The second law of thermodynamics describes it as matter’s tendency to lose energy and decline into disorder when left to itself. My sock drawer is the perfect example of entropy! My neatly paired socks seem to disintegrate overnight into a jumbled collection of random single socks.

My salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. Isaiah 51:6

Entropy is a property of everything in the universe. Everybody is changing...except God. He doesn’t change; He never fails. This final section of our month’s study contrasts our human weakness with God’s absolutely trustworthy nature. Scripture affirms this again and again: “Every promise [of God] has been fulfilled; not one has failed” (Josh. 23:14). “His compassions never fail” (Lam. 3:22). “No word from God will ever fail” (Luke 1:37). This is why Moses said: “He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he” (Deut. 32:4).

Today’s passage asserts: “My righteousness will never fail” (v. 6). God as the speaker in these verses reminds His people of His attributes, including His constancy. The phrase “the rock from which you were cut” describes His choice of Israel as His special people (v. 1). It’s also a prompt to remember God’s faithfulness throughout their history (v. 2). What could they expect in the future? More of the same, because God is the same.

He comforts, shows compassion, and changes bad to good (v. 3). His truth and justice will be seen (v. 4). His righteousness and salvation will win (vv. 5–6). Verse 6 contrasts creation’s temporality with our eternal, unchanging God. Nature, the most permanent thing we know, will “wear out like a garment” (entropy), but God’s “salvation will last forever.”

**Apply the Word**

God’s unchanging nature is our rock-solid source of hope. Encourage yourself with this truth today by reading Psalm 62:5–8 aloud. No matter what you’re facing, you can rely on the Lord!

### Pray with Us

We invite you to reflect on the powerful words from Isaiah in today’s key verse. May God’s eternal salvation, righteousness, and His unchanging nature be your source of confidence and hope.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/23/20

# Underestimating Ourselves

 **Read:** [**1 Samuel 15:10–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2015.10%E2%80%9318)

10Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: 11“I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.

12Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”

13When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

14But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”

15Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”

16“Enough!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.”

“Tell me,” Saul replied.

17Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. 18And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’

Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.” [1 Samuel 15:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2015.17)

The young man became his team’s captain. The professional sports squad was now led by a mild-mannered kid who barely needed to shave. His first press conference was underwhelming. He kept deferring to the coach and to his teammates, and mumbled clichés about just trying to do his job. The team performed poorly that season, and by the end of it the young captain had been traded. He didn’t grasp that he’d been entrusted with the authority to lead, or maybe he never believed he could.

Due to his failures, Saul was “small in [his] own eyes” ([1 Samuel 15:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%2015.17))—which is a funny thing to say about a guy who’s described as being tall. He was literally head and shoulders above the rest (9:2). And yet that wasn’t how he saw himself. In fact, his actions in the chapter show him trying to win the approval of the people. He hadn’t fully grasped that God—not people—had chosen him and given him a mission.

But Saul’s mistake is a picture of every human being’s failure: we can miss that we were made in God’s image to reflect His rule, and end up misusing our authority—spreading destruction in the world. To undo this, we need to return to God: to let the Father define us by His love, to let Him fill us with the Spirit, and to let Jesus send us out into the world.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What assignment has God given you that you don’t think you have the power to do? Why is it vital to have your identity based in what God says is true?

Dear Father, give me eyes to see myself as You see me, and grant me the grace to faithfully carry out the calling You’ve entrusted to me.

#### Insight

Samuel was the last of the judges to rule over the Israelites. When he became old, the people rejected him and instead asked for a king to rule them so they could be like the nations around them ([1 Samuel 8:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%208.5), [19–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Samuel%208.19%E2%80%9320)). This request displeased Samuel (v. 6) and God, who had wanted the Israelites to be different from those around them. But God granted their request and acknowledged that the Israelites were rejecting Him, not Samuel (vv. 7–9). Samuel anointed Saul as king (ch. 9; 11:12–15); however, God eventually rejected Saul for disobedience (13:13; ch. 15). He was replaced by David, “a man after [God’s] own heart” (13:14).

# God Calling – 6/23/20

# Cling To Me

Cling to Me until the life from Me - the Divine Life, by that very contact, flows into your being and revives your fainting spirit.

Become recharged.  When weary do as I did on earth - Sit by the well.  Rest.

Rest and gain power and strength and the work too will come to you as it came to Me.

Rest till every care-thought has gone, and then let the Tide of Love and Joy flow in.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.  Mark 6:31

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/24/20

# Reconciling Yourself to the Fact of Sin



This is your hour, and the power of darkness. —[Luke 22:53](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+22%3A53)

Not being reconciled to the fact of sin— not recognizing it and refusing to deal with it— produces all the disasters in life. You may talk about the lofty virtues of human nature, but there is something in human nature that will mockingly laugh in the face of every principle you have. If you refuse to agree with the fact that there is wickedness and selfishness, something downright hateful and wrong, in human beings, when it attacks your life, instead of reconciling yourself to it, you will compromise with it and say that it is of no use to battle against it. Have you taken this “hour, and the power of darkness” into account, or do you have a view of yourself which includes no recognition of sin whatsoever? In your human relationships and friendships, have you reconciled yourself to the fact of sin? If not, just around the next corner you will find yourself trapped and you will compromise with it. But if you will reconcile yourself to the fact of sin, you will realize the danger immediately and say, “Yes, I see what this sin would mean.” The recognition of sin does not destroy the basis of friendship— it simply establishes a mutual respect for the fact that the basis of sinful life is disastrous. Always beware of any assessment of life which does not recognize the fact that there is sin.

Jesus Christ never trusted human nature, yet He was never cynical nor suspicious, because He had absolute trust in what He could do for human nature. The pure man or woman is the one who is shielded from harm, not the innocent person. The so-called innocent man or woman is never safe. Men and women have no business trying to be innocent; God demands that they be pure and virtuous. Innocence is the characteristic of a child. Any person is deserving of blame if he is unwilling to reconcile himself to the fact of sin.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Defenders of the faith are inclined to be bitter until they learn to walk in the light of the Lord. When you have learned to walk in the light of the Lord, bitterness and contention are impossible. Biblical Psychology, 199 R

# CCEL – 6/24/20

The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them to search out a resting place for them.—[NUM. 10:33.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.10.html" \l "Num.10.33)

My times are in thy hand.—He shall choose our inheritance for us.—Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness; . . . make thy way straight before my face.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shalt bring it to pass.—In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.—Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.—Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.—Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

[Psa. 31:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.15). -[Psa. 47:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.47.html" \l "Ps.47.4). -[Psa. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.5.html" \l "Ps.5.8).[Psa. 37:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.5). -[Prov. 3:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.6). -[Isa. 30:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.21).[Psa. 23:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.23.html" \l "Ps.23.1). -[Psa. 103:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.13). -[Matt. 6:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.32). -[I Pet. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7).

“A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” [Luke 11:27, 28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.11.html" \l "Luke.11.27)

It is fondly imagined by some that it must have involved very special privileges to have been the mother of our Lord, because they supposed that she had the benefit of looking into his very heart in a way in which we cannot hope to do. There may be an appearance of plausibility in the supposition, but not much. We do not know that Mary knew more than others; what she did know she did well to lay up in her heart; but she does not appear from anything we read in the Evangelists to have been a better-instructed believer than any other of Christ’s disciples. All that she knew we also may discover. Do you wonder that we should say so? Here is a text to prove it: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.”

Remember the Master’s words—“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” So blessedly does this Divine Revealer of secrets tell us his heart, that he keepeth back nothing which is profitable to us; his own assurance is, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” Doth he not this day manifest himself unto us as he doth not unto the world? It is even so; and therefore we will not ignorantly cry out, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee,” but we will intelligently bless God that, having heard the Word and kept it, we have first of all as true a communion with the Saviour as the Virgin had, and in the second place as true an acquaintance with the secrets of his heart as she can be supposed to have obtained. Happy soul to be thus privileged!

# Word Live – 6/24/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/24/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/24/20

# When Life Fails Us

**Read:** [**Habakkuk 3:16–19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+3%3a16%e2%80%9319)

16I heard and my heart pounded,  
    my lips quivered at the sound;  
decay crept into my bones,  
    and my legs trembled.  
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity  
    to come on the nation invading us.  
17Though the fig tree does not bud  
    and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
    and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
    and no cattle in the stalls,  
18yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
    I will be joyful in God my Savior.

19The Sovereign Lord is my strength;  
    he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
    he enables me to tread on the heights.

For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

“I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there’s gum in my hair and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard and by mistake, I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running and I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.” So begins the classic children’s book by Judith Viorst, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. We’ve all experienced days, weeks, maybe even years when everything goes wrong. But the unchanging nature of God means we can rejoice and worship even during those times. When everything crumbles, even then (especially then!) we can say: “I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength” (vv. 18–19).

Though the fig tree does not bud . . . I will rejoice in the Lord. Habakkuk 3:16–19

What could go wrong is vividly described (vv. 16–17). Babylon will conquer Judah as part of God’s judgment (Hab. 1:5–11). But God has guaranteed that their turn will come. Because he trusts in the Lord, Habakkuk can “wait patiently” for that day. Even if the fig tree doesn’t bud, the olive crop fails, and the fields are barren, God is faithful. Even if there are no sheep or cattle in the pens, he will rely on the Lord.

The word “yet” in verse 18 indicates a contrast, and the prophet’s response overflows with faith (vv. 18–19). Despite these images of hardship and disaster, he will rejoice in the Lord. God is all-powerful and sovereign. There’s no way He will fail. His promises are as good as kept. Failure and success are not about us or circumstances. We stand on a mountaintop with feet like a deer, that is, with God we’re secure and victorious!

**Apply the Word**

Try writing a personal paraphrase of verses 17–19 from today’s reading. Fig trees not budding might become your basement flooding, for example. Make the situations and pictures personal, so that the joy in God also becomes personal!

### Pray with Us

In your life, what may be the fig tree that doesn’t bear fruit? No matter what trials you’re going through, be encouraged. God is faithful and He will take you through. Thank Him in prayer today!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/24/20

# Debt Eraser

 **Read:** [**Revelation 1:4–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%201.4%E2%80%937)

### Greetings and Doxology

4John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30702a)] before his throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-30705b" \o "See footnote b)]  
    and “every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him”;  
    and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30705c)]  
So shall it be! Amen.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Revelation 1:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-30702) That is, the sevenfold Spirit
2. [Revelation 1:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-30705) Daniel 7:13
3. [Revelation 1:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A4%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-30705) Zech. 12:10

[Jesus Christ] loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. [Revelation 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%201.5)

Stunned is just one word that describes the response of the crowd at the 2019 graduation ceremony at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. The commencement speaker announced that he and his family would be donating millions of dollars to erase the student debt of the entire graduating class. One student—with $100,000 in loans—was among the overwhelmed graduates who expressed their joys with tears and shouts.

Most of us have experienced indebtedness in some form—having to pay for homes, vehicles, education, medical expenses, or other things. But we’ve also known the amazing relief of a bill being stamped “PAID”!

After declaring Jesus as “the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth,” John worshipfully acknowledged His debt-erasing work: “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” ([Revelation 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%201.5)). This statement is simple but its meaning is profound. Better than the surprise announcement the Morehouse graduating class heard is the good news that the death of Jesus (the shedding of His blood on the cross) frees us from the penalty that our sinful attitudes, desires, and deeds deserve. Because that debt has been satisfied, those who believe in Jesus are forgiven and become a part of God’s kingdom family (v. 6). This good news is the best news of all!

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

#### Reflect & Pray

If you haven’t received forgiveness through faith in Christ, what’s keeping you from accepting His free gift? When was the last time you worshiped and thanked God for the forgiveness and new life He’s provided?

Jesus, thank You for Your death that erased my debt; I’m eternally grateful!

#### Insight

John’s description of a pierced Son “coming with the clouds” ([Revelation 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%201.7)) combines two ancient prophecies to exalt the resurrected Christ as the God “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (v. 8). The first echoes the prophet Daniel who foresaw that in the last days a humanlike Son would return in the clouds and be given everlasting rule of all people and nations ([Daniel 7:13–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%207.13%E2%80%9314)). The second prophecy is found in the words of the prophet Zechariah who envisioned a day when the people of Jerusalem would look on “the one they have pierced, and . . . grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” ([Zechariah 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%2012.10)). John expands Zechariah’s vision beyond Israel saying that when the pierced Son is revealed in clouds of glory “all peoples on earth ‘will mourn because of him’ ” ([Revelation 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%201.7)).

# God Calling – 6/24/20

# When Guidance Tarries

As I prompt you - act.  When you have no clear guidance, then go forward quietly along the path of duty I have set before you.

No fear, no panic, quietly doing your daily duty.

This attitude of faith will receive its reward, as surely as the acting upon My direct Guidance.

Rejoice in the sense of security that is yours.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.  Psalm 73:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/25/20

# Receiving Yourself in the Fires of Sorrow



…what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour"? But for this purpose I came to this hour. "Father, glorify Your name." —[John 12:27-28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+12%3A27-28)

As a saint of God, my attitude toward sorrow and difficulty should not be to ask that they be prevented, but to ask that God protect me so that I may remain what He created me to be, in spite of all my fires of sorrow. Our Lord received Himself, accepting His position and realizing His purpose, in the midst of the fire of sorrow. He was saved not from the hour, but out of the hour.

We say that there ought to be no sorrow, but there is sorrow, and we have to accept and receive ourselves in its fires. If we try to evade sorrow, refusing to deal with it, we are foolish. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts in life, and there is no use in saying it should not be. Sin, sorrow, and suffering are, and it is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them.

Sorrow removes a great deal of a person’s shallowness, but it does not always make that person better. Suffering either gives me to myself or it destroys me. You cannot find or receive yourself through success, because you lose your head over pride. And you cannot receive yourself through the monotony of your daily life, because you give in to complaining. The only way to find yourself is in the fires of sorrow. Why it should be this way is immaterial. The fact is that it is true in the Scriptures and in human experience. You can always recognize who has been through the fires of sorrow and received himself, and you know that you can go to him in your moment of trouble and find that he has plenty of time for you. But if a person has not been through the fires of sorrow, he is apt to be contemptuous, having no respect or time for you, only turning you away. If you will receive yourself in the fires of sorrow, God will make you nourishment for other people.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 6/25/20

When he shall appear, we shall be like him; we shall see him as he is.—[I JOHN 3:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.2)

As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.—Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, that he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Now we see through a glass. darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.—Christ . . . shall change our vile body . . . that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

[John 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.12). –[II Pet. 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.1.html" \l "iiPet.1.4).[Isa. 64:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.4).[I Cor. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.13.html" \l "iCor.13.12). -[Phi. 3:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.20). -[Psa. 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.17.html" \l "Ps.17.15).

“Get thee up into the high mountain.” **[Isaiah 40:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.9)**

Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little: the mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, “I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation.” Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of him. The higher we climb the more we discover of his beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, “I know whom I have believed,” for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of him to whom he had committed his soul. Get thee up, dear friend, into the high mountain.

# Word Live – 6/25/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/25/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/25/20

# Joy When We Fail

**Read:** [**Psalm 73**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73)

#### A psalm of Asaph.

1Surely God is good to Israel,  
    to those who are pure in heart.

2But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;  
    I had nearly lost my foothold.  
3For I envied the arrogant  
    when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4They have no struggles;  
    their bodies are healthy and strong.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73" \l "fen-NIV-15025a" \o "See footnote a)]  
5They are free from common human burdens;  
    they are not plagued by human ills.  
6Therefore pride is their necklace;  
    they clothe themselves with violence.  
7From their callous hearts comes iniquity[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73#fen-NIV-15028b)];  
    their evil imaginations have no limits.  
8They scoff, and speak with malice;  
    with arrogance they threaten oppression.  
9Their mouths lay claim to heaven,  
    and their tongues take possession of the earth.  
10Therefore their people turn to them  
    and drink up waters in abundance.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73" \l "fen-NIV-15031c" \o "See footnote c)]  
11They say, “How would God know?  
    Does the Most High know anything?”

12This is what the wicked are like—  
    always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

13Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure  
    and have washed my hands in innocence.  
14All day long I have been afflicted,  
    and every morning brings new punishments.

15If I had spoken out like that,  
    I would have betrayed your children.  
16When I tried to understand all this,  
    it troubled me deeply  
17till I entered the sanctuary of God;  
    then I understood their final destiny.

18Surely you place them on slippery ground;  
    you cast them down to ruin.  
19How suddenly are they destroyed,  
    completely swept away by terrors!  
20They are like a dream when one awakes;  
    when you arise, Lord,  
    you will despise them as fantasies.

21When my heart was grieved  
    and my spirit embittered,  
22I was senseless and ignorant;  
    I was a brute beast before you.

23Yet I am always with you;  
    you hold me by my right hand.  
24You guide me with your counsel,  
    and afterward you will take me into glory.  
25Whom have I in heaven but you?  
    And earth has nothing I desire besides you.  
26My flesh and my heart may fail,  
    but God is the strength of my heart  
    and my portion forever.

27Those who are far from you will perish;  
    you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.  
28But as for me, it is good to be near God.  
    I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;  
    I will tell of all your deeds.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 73:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73#en-NIV-15025) With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text struggles at their death; / their bodies are healthy
2. [Psalm 73:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73#en-NIV-15028) Syriac (see also Septuagint); Hebrew Their eyes bulge with fat
3. [Psalm 73:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+73#en-NIV-15031) The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

On his album American Prodigal, Christian musician David Crowder sings:

As for me, it is good to be near God.Psalm 73:28

“Troubles of this world, will wither up and die  
That river of tears made by the lonely, someday will be dry  
There’s gonna be, a great rejoicing  
There’s gonna be, a great rejoicing.”

Despite troubles and failure, joy in the Lord is always the right choice!

Asaph began Psalm 73 by announcing his topic: God’s goodness (v. 1). The psalmist, however, confesses that he had lost his grip on this truth. His feet “had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold” (v. 2). How? He had become envious. The wicked looked like they were prospering, and God seemed to be doing nothing (vv. 3–12). Why pursue righteousness if it only brings problems (vv. 13–14)?

Asaph’s faith may have faltered, but he didn’t speak out and lead others astray. Worship helped him realize his error and revive his faith (vv. 15–17). His error was to take the troubling phenomena he saw as the whole truth. Ultimately, God will make sure that the wicked receive justice (vv. 18–20, 27). God has promised it and His nature is perfectly just. With a wrong view of God, the psalmist failed. He was ignorant and bitter. He misinterpreted what he saw. He acted like a “brute beast” rather than a believer made in God’s image (vv. 21–22).

By contrast, with a right view of God, Asaph found guidance, strength, and fulfillment through his relationship with the Lord (vv. 23–28). His song took on a new theme: “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (v. 26).

**Apply the Word**

It is helpful to be honest about our failure . . . both with ourselves and before God. Today, consider those times in life when you have failed Him. Rather than sinking into despair, and acting like a “brutal beast”—let God turn your disappointment and fear into joy.

### Pray with Us

Join us as we pray the beautiful words from today’s Scripture reading, Psalm 73: “But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/25/20

# Deep-Rooted Faith

 **Read:** [**Matthew 13:18–23**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2013.18%E2%80%9323)

18“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. [Matthew 13:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2013.23)

The Holy Oak stood next to Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church in New Jersey for more than six hundred years until it had to be removed. At its prime, the twisting branches spanned high and wide. Cool breezes rustled its green leaves and acorns. The sun peeked through wind-blown gaps, creating dancing glimmers of light in the shade below its canopy. But beneath the ground’s surface lay its true magnificence—its root system. An oak’s main root grows vertically, securing a reliable supply of nourishment. From that taproot, a mass of roots spreads horizontally to supply the tree with a lifetime of moisture and nutrients. This intricate root system often grows more massive than the tree it supports and serves as a lifeline and an anchor for stabilizing the trunk.

Like the mighty oak, most of our life-giving growth occurs beneath the surface. When Jesus explained the parable of the sower to His disciples, He emphasized the importance of being firmly planted in a personal relationship with the Father. As we grow in the knowledge of God as revealed through the Scriptures, our faith roots are sustained by His Spirit. God helps His followers thrive through ever-changing circumstances, trials, persecution, and worry ([Matthew 13:18–23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2013.18%E2%80%9323)).

Our loving Father nourishes our hearts with His Word. As His Spirit transforms our character, He makes sure the fruit of our deep-rooted faith becomes evident to people around us.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What can you do this week to ensure your heart will be good soil nourished by God’s Word? What fruit of deep-rooted faith have you seen become evident in your life over the last year?

Loving Father, please change me from the inside out and anchor me in faith rooted deep in the unchanging Scriptures.

#### Insight

Unlike the teachers of the law, Jesus taught with wisdom and authority ([Mark 1:22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%201.22); [6:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%206.2); [Luke 4:32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%204.32)) and often used parables ([Mark 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%204.2)). Mark tells us that “[Jesus] did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything” (4:34).

[Matthew 13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2013) contains eight parables (sower, weeds, mustard seed, yeast, hidden treasure, pearls, net, and prophet without honor). Verses 10–17 explain that Jesus spoke in parables to separate His genuine followers from those who were not.

# God Calling – 6/25/20

# God's Friendship

I am your Friend.  The Companion of the dreary ways of life.

I rob those ways of their grayness and horror.  I transform them. Even in earthly friendships the common way, the weary way, the steep way, may seem a way to Heaven if the presence of some loved human friend transforms them.

Let the Sabbath calm enwrap your minds and hearts.  Let it be a rest from the worry and fret of life, a halt by the busy highway when you seek some rest and shade.

Have you ever realized the wonder of the friendship you can have with Me?  Have you ever thought what it means to be able to summon at will the God of the World?

Even with a privileged visitor to an earthly king there is the palace antechamber, and the time must be at the pleasure of the king.

But to My subjects I have given the right to enter My Presence when they will, nay more they can summon Me to bedside, to workshop - and I am there.

Could Divine Love do more?  Your nearest earthly friend cannot be with you on the instant.  Your Lord, your Master, your Divine Friend – Yes

When men seek to worship Me they think of the worlds I rule over, of creation, of mighty law and order - and then they feel the awe that precedes worship.

To you I say feel awe, feel the desire to worship Me in wondering amazement. But think too of the mighty, tender, humble condescension of My Friendship. Think of Me in the little things of everyday life.

For who hath despised the day of small things?  Zechariah 4:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/26/20

# Drawing on the Grace of God— Now



We…plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. —[2 Corinthians 6:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+6%3A1)

The grace you had yesterday will not be sufficient for today. Grace is the overflowing favor of God, and you can always count on it being available to draw upon as needed. “…in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses”— that is where our patience is tested ([2 Corinthians 6:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6:4)). Are you failing to rely on the grace of God there? Are you saying to yourself, “Oh well, I won’t count this time”? It is not a question of praying and asking God to help you— it is taking the grace of God now. We tend to make prayer the preparation for our service, yet it is never that in the Bible. Prayer is the practice of drawing on the grace of God. Don’t say, “I will endure this until I can get away and pray.” Pray now — draw on the grace of God in your moment of need. Prayer is the most normal and useful thing; it is not simply a reflex action of your devotion to God. We are very slow to learn to draw on God’s grace through prayer.

“…in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors…” ([2 Corinthians 6:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6:5))— in all these things, display in your life a drawing on the grace of God, which will show evidence to yourself and to others that you are a miracle of His. Draw on His grace now, not later. The primary word in the spiritual vocabulary is now. Let circumstances take you where they will, but keep drawing on the grace of God in whatever condition you may find yourself. One of the greatest proofs that you are drawing on the grace of God is that you can be totally humiliated before others without displaying even the slightest trace of anything but His grace.

“…having nothing….” Never hold anything in reserve. Pour yourself out, giving the best that you have, and always be poor. Never be diplomatic and careful with the treasure God gives you. “…and yet possessing all things”— this is poverty triumphant ([2 Corinthians 6:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6:10)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 6/26/20

Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil! And God granted him that which he requested.—[I CHR. 4:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.4.html" \l "iChr.4.10)

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.—When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people.—How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.—I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Prov. l0:22. -[Job 34:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.34.html" \l "Job.34.29).[Psa. 3:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.3.html" \l "Ps.3.8). -[Psa. 31:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.19). -[John 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.15).[Matt. 7:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.7.html" \l "Matt.7.7). -[Psa. 34:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.22).

“Art thou become like unto us?” **[Isaiah 14:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.14.html" \l "Isa.14.10)**

What must be the apostate professor’s doom when his naked soul appears before God? How will he bear that voice, “Depart, ye cursed; thou hast rejected me, and I reject thee; thou hast played the harlot, and departed from me: I also have banished thee forever from my presence, and will not have mercy upon thee.” What will be this wretch’s shame at the last great day when, before assembled multitudes, the apostate shall be unmasked? See the profane, and sinners who never professed religion, lifting themselves up from their beds of fire to point at him. “There he is,” says one, “will he preach the gospel in hell?” “There he is,” says another, “he rebuked me for cursing, and was a hypocrite himself!” “Aha!” says another, “here comes a psalm-singing Methodist—one who was always at his meeting; he is the man who boasted of his being sure of everlasting life; and here he is!” No greater eagerness will ever be seen among Satanic tormentors, than in that day when devils drag the hypocrite’s soul down to perdition. Bunyan pictures this with massive but awful grandeur of poetry when he speaks of the back-way to hell. Seven devils bound the wretch with nine cords, and dragged him from the road to heaven, in which he had professed to walk, and thrust him through the back-door into hell. Mind that back-way to hell, professors! “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” Look well to your state; see whether you be in Christ or not. It is the easiest thing in the world to give a lenient verdict when oneself is to be tried; but O, be just and true here. Be just to all, but be rigorous to yourself. Remember if it be not a rock on which you build, when the house shall fall, great will be the fall of it. O may the Lord give you sincerity, constancy, and firmness; and in no day, however evil, may you be led to turn aside.

# Word Live – 6/26/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/26/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/26/20

# What Elijah Needed

**Read:** [**1 Kings 19:1–18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+19%3a1%e2%80%9318)

### Elijah Flees to Horeb

19 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

3Elijah was afraid[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+19%3a1%e2%80%9318#fen-NIV-9391a)] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” 5Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9There he went into a cave and spent the night.

### The Lord Appears to Elijah

And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

10He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

11The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

15The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Kings 19:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+19%3a1%e2%80%9318#en-NIV-9391) Or Elijah saw

Are you having trouble sleeping? A “sound” pillow advertises itself as the solution. It looks like a regular pillow but includes two speakers inside. The pillow is comfortable (you don’t feel the speakers) and you can listen to music as you drift off to sleep. Elijah could have used one of these. He was tired and burned out. But why? Shouldn’t he have felt successful? He’d just won the confrontation on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). Fire from the Lord had fallen from heaven. The pagan priests had been killed. The people of Israel had returned to the Lord.

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. Psalm 3:5

Yet sometimes after a high comes a crash. For whatever reasons—there’s more to it than Jezebel’s threat (v. 2)—Elijah felt down and depressed. The physical causes were straightforward (vv. 4–8). He needed rest and food. He slept soundly under a broom bush, and God twice sent an angel to him with bread and water.

Spiritually, Elijah was experiencing a crisis of faith (vv. 9–14). The faithless Israelites had rejected the covenant. His prophetic ministry seemed useless. Given what had happened on Mount Carmel, these feelings weren’t logical, but that’s often the way it is during depression. Elijah went to Mount Horeb (Sinai), looking to God for answers. And the Lord did reveal Himself—not through the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a “gentle whisper” (v. 12).

Elijah’s despair also had a social dimension (vv. 15–18). He felt alone, vulnerable, and persecuted. God told him there were still 7,000 true worshipers. He also gave him a young prophet, Elisha, to mentor. And He gave him work to do (kings to anoint). God was saying, in essence: Just be faithful. I’m taking care of everything.

**Apply the Word**

Which of these three areas—physical, spiritual, or social—is currently your area of greatest need? Once you decide, ask God to encourage you by meeting your needs and revealing Himself to you in a special way.

### Pray with Us

In today’s Bible passage, God revealed Himself to Elijah in a “gentle whisper.” During your prayer time, ask: How does God speak to me? Do I recognize His gentle whisper? Do I follow His leading?

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/26/20

# Beat Again

 **Read:** [**Judges 5:19–21**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%205.19%E2%80%9321)

19“Kings came, they fought,  
    the kings of Canaan fought.  
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo,  
    they took no plunder of silver.  
20From the heavens the stars fought,  
    from their courses they fought against Sisera.  
21The river Kishon swept them away,  
    the age-old river, the river Kishon.  
    March on, my soul; be strong!

March on, my soul; be strong! [Judges 5:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%205.21)

In 2012, Phillips, Craig and Dean released their song “Tell Your Heart to Beat Again.” It was inspired by the true story of a heart surgeon. After removing a patient’s heart to repair it, the surgeon returned it to the chest and began gently massaging it back to life. But the heart wouldn’t restart. More intense measures followed, but the heart still wouldn’t beat. Finally, the surgeon knelt next to the unconscious patient and spoke to her: “Miss Johnson,” he said, “this is your surgeon. The operation went perfectly. Your heart has been repaired. Now tell your heart to beat again.” Her heart began to beat.

The idea that we could tell our physical heart to do something might seem strange, but it has spiritual parallels. “Why, my soul, are you downcast?” the psalmist says to himself. “Put your hope in God” ([Psalm 42:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2042.5)). “Return to your rest, my soul,” says another, “for the Lord has been good to you” (116:7). After beating Israel’s enemies in war, Deborah, a judge, revealed that she too had spoken to her heart during battle. “March on, my soul,” she told it, “be strong!” ([Judges 5:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%205.21)), because the Lord had promised victory (4:6–7).

Our capable Surgeon has mended our heart ([Psalm 103:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.3)). So when fear, depression, or condemnation come, perhaps we too should address our souls and say: March on! Be strong! Feeble heart, beat again.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What was your first response to the surgeon’s words to the patient? What words from Scripture do you need to speak to your soul today?

Master Physician, thank You for being with me in every trial and battle. Because of Your promised presence, I will direct my soul to act bravely.

#### Insight

Today’s passage ([Judges 5:19–21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%205.19%E2%80%9321)) is part of the Song of Deborah (vv. 1–31), sung by Deborah and Barak after they were victorious over the Canaanites (4:23–24). We first read of Deborah in [Judges 4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Judg%204) and learn she was a prophetess, Lappidoth’s wife, and a judge (the only female judge in the book of Judges) who settled disputes among the Israelites (vv. 4–5). She served during a time when, once again, “the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord,” were oppressed, and cried out to God (vv. 1–3). In this case, Jabin, king of Canaan, had been oppressing the Israelites for twenty years. Deborah was holding court when she sent for Barak (son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali) and gave him God’s instructions to assemble an army to attack Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army. Barak agreed only on the condition that Deborah accompany him. She did, and the army was defeated.

# God Calling – 6/26/20

# Do Not Rush

Learn in the little daily things of life to delay action until you get My Guidance ...

So many lives lack poise.  For in the momentous decisions and the big things of life, they ask My help but into the small things they rush alone.

By what you do in the small things those around you are most often antagonized or attracted.

They soon forget his works; they waited not for his counsel.  Psalm 106:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/27/20

# The Overshadowing of God’s Personal Deliverance



"…I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. —[Jeremiah 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+1%3A8)

God promised Jeremiah that He would deliver him personally— “…your life shall be as a prize to you…” ([Jeremiah 39:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+39:18)). That is all God promises His children. Wherever God sends us, He will guard our lives. Our personal property and possessions are to be a matter of indifference to us, and our hold on these things should be very loose. If this is not the case, we will have panic, heartache, and distress. Having the proper outlook is evidence of the deeply rooted belief in the overshadowing of God’s personal deliverance.

The Sermon on the Mount indicates that when we are on a mission for Jesus Christ, there is no time to stand up for ourselves. Jesus says, in effect, “Don’t worry about whether or not you are being treated justly.” Looking for justice is actually a sign that we have been diverted from our devotion to Him. Never look for justice in this world, but never cease to give it. If we look for justice, we will only begin to complain and to indulge ourselves in the discontent of self-pity, as if to say, “Why should I be treated like this?” If we are devoted to Jesus Christ, we have nothing to do with what we encounter, whether it is just or unjust. In essence, Jesus says, “Continue steadily on with what I have told you to do, and I will guard your life. If you try to guard it yourself, you remove yourself from My deliverance.” Even the most devout among us become atheistic in this regard— we do not believe Him. We put our common sense on the throne and then attach God’s name to it. We do lean to our own understanding, instead of trusting God with all our hearts (see [Proverbs 3:5-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+3:5-6)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God created man to be master of the life in the earth and sea and sky, and the reason he is not is because he took the law into his own hands, and became master of himself, but of nothing else.  The Shadow of an Agony, 1163 L

# CCEL – 6/27/20

Who shall be able to stand?—[REV. 6:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.6.html" \l "Rev.6.17)

Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more: neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

[Mal. 3:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.2).[Rev. 7:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.9),[14-17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.14).[Rom. 8:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.1). -[Gal. 5:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.1).

“Only ye shall not go very far away.” **[Exodus 8:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.8.html" \l "Exod.8.28)**

This is a crafty word from the lip of the arch-tyrant Pharaoh. If the poor bondaged Israelites must needs go out of Egypt, then he bargains with them that it shall not be very far away; not too far for them to escape the terror of his arms, and the observation of his spies. After the same fashion, the world loves not the non-conformity of nonconformity, or the dissidence of dissent; it would have us be more charitable and not carry matters with too severe a hand. Death to the world, and burial with Christ, are experiences which carnal minds treat with ridicule, and hence the ordinance which sets them forth is almost universally neglected, and even condemned. Worldly wisdom recommends the path of compromise, and talks of “moderation.” According to this carnal policy, purity is admitted to be very desirable, but we are warned against being too precise; truth is of course to be followed, but error is not to be severely denounced. “Yes,” says the world, “be spiritually minded by all means, but do not deny yourself a little gay society, an occasional ball, and a Christmas visit to a theatre. What’s the good of crying down a thing when it is so fashionable, and everybody does it?” Multitudes of professors yield to this cunning advice, to their own eternal ruin. If we would follow the Lord wholly, we must go right away into the wilderness of separation, and leave the Egypt of the carnal world behind us. We must leave its maxims, its pleasures, and its religion too, and go far away to the place where the Lord calls his sanctified ones. When the town is on fire, our house cannot be too far from the flames. When the plague is abroad, a man cannot be too far from its haunts. The further from a viper the better, and the further from worldly conformity the better. To all true believers let the trumpet-call be sounded, “Come ye out from among them, be ye separate.”

# Word Live – 6/27/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/27/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/27/20

# Doubt and Failure

**Read:** [**John 20:19–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a19%e2%80%9331)

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

### Jesus Appears to Thomas

24Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a19%e2%80%9331#fen-NIV-26892a)]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

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

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

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

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

### The Purpose of John’s Gospel

30Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31But these are written that you may believe[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a19%e2%80%9331#fen-NIV-26899b)] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

#### Footnotes:

1. [John 20:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a19%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-26892) Thomas (Aramaic) and Didymus (Greek) both mean twin.
2. [John 20:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3a19%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-26899) Or may continue to believe

Four million people, mostly in southwestern India, call themselves “Thomas Christians.” They trace their roots back to the apostle Thomas—the same “doubting Thomas” in today’s reading. Tradition says Thomas went as a missionary to India in 52 A.D. and was martyred in 72 A.D. The resulting “Thomas Christians” are one of the oldest non-Western Christian groups in the world. What a powerful reminder that once Thomas had his doubts answered, he was quite a force for the kingdom of God!

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. .John 20:31

After His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in a locked room. He showed them the scars in His hands and side, and they knew it was really Him. Thomas was absent on that occasion, however, and when the other disciples told him the news, he responded: “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (v. 25). Thomas’s skepticism was actually quite rational. Given the natural impossibility of a dead person coming back to life, he was demanding evidence. When Jesus next appeared, Thomas was present. Christ commanded him, “Stop doubting and believe,” and Thomas responded in faith, “My Lord and my God!” (vv. 27–28). Confronted with the evidence, Thomas immediately surrendered his doubt.

If we cling to doubt, as we learned back on June 4, it’s a mark of immature faith (see Rom. 14:23) or sinful mistrust in God’s character. But there’s also a kind of doubt—found often in the Psalms, for example, as well as here—that takes its questions straight to the Lord. That’s the best strategy, since only He can answer them! This episode is recounted not only for Thomas’s faith but also for ours (v. 31)!

**Apply the Word**

Do you have doubts about the validity of the Christian faith? Do you know someone else who struggles? The Case for Christ, the bestselling book by former atheist Lee Strobel, will help answer questions and strengthen your faith.

### Pray with Us

Remember that doubt is not sinful in itself. The risen Christ who reassured Thomas encourages us as well. Come to Christ in prayer and greet Him with Thomas’s words: “My Lord and my God!”

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/27/20

# Love Passed Down

 **Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:1–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.1%E2%80%938)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Thanksgiving

3I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

### Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel

6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 8So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner.

Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.1%E2%80%938)[**13–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Timothy%201.13%E2%80%9314)

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

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and . . . now lives in you. [2 Timothy 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.5)

My daughter has become fascinated with Nancy Drew. In the last three weeks, she’s read at least a dozen of the novels featuring the girl sleuth. She comes by her love of detective stories honestly: I loved Nancy Drew too, and the blue-bound copies that my mom read in the 1960s still line a shelf in her house.

Seeing this affection passed down makes me wonder what else I’m passing down. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote that when he thought of Timothy, he was reminded of the “sincere faith” that lived in Timothy’s grandmother and mother. I hope that along with her love of mysteries, my daughter is also inheriting faith—that she will “serve” as her grandparents have, that she will pray, and that she will hold on “to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus” ([2 Timothy 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.1)).

I also see hope here for those who don’t have parents or grandparents who know Jesus. Though Timothy’s father isn’t mentioned, Paul calls Timothy his “dear son” (v. 2). Those who don’t have families to pass down faith can still find parents and grandparents in the church—people who will help us figure out how to live a “holy life” (v. 9), and to embrace the gifts God has given us of “power, love and self-discipline” (v. 7). Truly, we all have a beautiful inheritance.

By:  [Amy Peterson](https://odb.org/author/petersonamy/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What are some things you’ve learned from fathers or mothers in the faith? How are you working to pass down a legacy of faith to your children or those in your church?

Heavenly Father, thank You for saving me by grace through faith in Jesus. Help me to pass down to the next generation the gifts I’ve received and the truth of the gospel.

#### Insight

In this, Paul’s last known letter, the apostle’s words are warm and personal despite his awareness that execution awaits him. After praising Timothy’s grandmother and mother, Paul mentions his protégé’s tears ([2 Timothy 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%201.4)). What would cause Timothy to weep? We don’t know for certain, but it’s likely that Timothy had been sorrowful at their previous parting. Such was the case when Paul said goodbye to another group of believers at Miletus (see [Acts 20:37–38](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2020.37%E2%80%9338)). Those believers in Jesus understood they wouldn’t see Paul again. Yet the apostle hoped to see Timothy again in this life. In his concluding remarks he wrote, “Do your best to come to me quickly” ([2 Timothy 4:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Tim%204.9))—a poignantly human longing from this aged prisoner.

# God Calling – 6/27/20

# No Self-Reproach

The Eternal Arms shelter you.  "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."  This promise is to those who rise above the earth-life and seek to soar higher, to the Kingdom of Heaven.

You must not feel the burden of your failure.  Go on in faith, the clouds will clear, and the way will lighten - the path becomes less stony with every step you take.  So run that you may obtain.  A rigid doing of the simple duties, and success will crown your efforts.

I had no words of reproach for any I healed.  The man was whole and free who had wrecked his physical being by sin - whose palsy I healed.

The woman at the well was not overwhelmed by My "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband."

The woman taken in adultery was told "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."  She was not told to bear the burden of the consciousness of her sin ...

Remember now abideth these three, Faith, Hope, and Charity.  Faith is your attitude towards Me. Charity your attitude towards your fellow man, but as necessary, is Hope, which is confidence in yourself to succeed.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,   
who walk  not after the flesh, but after the

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/28/20

# Held by the Grip of God



I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. —[Philippians 3:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Philippians+3%3A12)

Never choose to be a worker for God, but once God has placed His call on you, woe be to you if you “turn aside to the right hand or to the left” ([Deuteronomy 5:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+5:32)). We are not here to work for God because we have chosen to do so, but because God has “laid hold of” us. And once He has done so, we never have this thought, “Well, I’m really not suited for this.” What you are to preach is also determined by God, not by your own natural leanings or desires. Keep your soul steadfastly related to God, and remember that you are called not simply to convey your testimony but also to preach the gospel. Every Christian must testify to the truth of God, but when it comes to the call to preach, there must be the agonizing grip of God’s hand on you— your life is in the grip of God for that very purpose. How many of us are held like that?

Never water down the Word of God, but preach it in its undiluted sternness. There must be unflinching faithfulness to the Word of God, but when you come to personal dealings with others, remember who you are— you are not some special being created in heaven, but a sinner saved by grace.

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do…I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” ([Philippians 3:13-14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3:13-14)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The life of Abraham is an illustration of two things: of unreserved surrender to God, and of God’s complete possession of a child of His for His own highest end. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 6/28/20

I know that my Redeemer liveth.—[JOB 19:25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.19.html" \l "Job.19.25)

If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.—This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Because I live, ye shall live also.—If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.—We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.—Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

[Rom. 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.10). -[Heb. 7:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.24).[John 14:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.19). -[I Cor. 15:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.19).[Isa. 59:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.20). -[Eph. 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.7). -[I Pet. 1:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.18).

“Looking unto Jesus.” **[Hebrews 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.2)**

It is ever the Holy Spirit’s work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan’s work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ. He insinuates, “Your sins are too great for pardon; you have no faith; you do not repent enough; you will never be able to continue to the end; you have not the joy of his children; you have such a wavering hold of Jesus.” All these are thoughts about self, and we shall never find comfort or assurance by looking within. But the Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self: he tells us that we are nothing, but that “Christ is all in all.” Remember, therefore, it is not thy hold of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ’s blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Jesus, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by “looking unto Jesus.” Keep thine eye simply on him; let his death, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon thy mind; when thou wakest in the morning look to him; when thou liest down at night look to him. Oh! let not thy hopes or fears come between thee and Jesus; follow hard after him, and he will never fail thee.

“My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness:

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

# Word Live – 6/28/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/28/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/28/20

# Turned Upside Down

**Read:** [**1 Corinthians 1:18–31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3a18%e2%80%9331)

### Christ Crucified Is God’s Power and Wisdom

18For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
    the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3a18%e2%80%9331#fen-NIV-28383a)]

20Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

26Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29so that no one may boast before him. 30It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3a18%e2%80%9331#fen-NIV-28395b)]

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Corinthians 1:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3a18%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-28383) Isaiah 29:14
2. [1 Corinthians 1:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3a18%e2%80%9331#en-NIV-28395) Jer. 9:24

Educator Michael Bycraft argues that failure can be a valuable experience for children. He explains: “If we have always taught our kids that every test must be an A+, then how do we support them when it isn’t?” He argues there’s a better approach: “Failure is a gift. Setbacks, changes and struggles are an essential part of learning.” Failure gives us all an opportunity to learn. As believers, it helps to realize that God’s views of wisdom and strength are often the reverse of our own (vv. 18–20, 25). Human wisdom is foolishness to the Lord, while God’s wisdom looks like foolishness to the world. Similarly, human strength is weakness to the Lord, while God’s strength looks like weakness to the world.

The weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 1 Corinthians 1:25

The ultimate example of this is the “message of the cross.” Traditionally, a cross is a symbol of failure and death, but God used it to achieve victory and life for all who believe. The Jewish people wondered how Christ’s death could possibly show God’s power. And Greeks saw claims of miracles, especially the Resurrection, as nonsense (see Acts 17:32). Only those “whom God has called” see the reality here of God’s power and wisdom (v. 24).

Additional evidence for this God’s upside-down perspective is seen in the lives of believers (vv. 26–31). Paul reminded the Corinthians (and also us) that God does not choose us for our wealth, social status, intelligence, or other qualities. God’s selections may seem unlikely—we are all “in Christ Jesus” because of God’s grace, not our merit. In order to see failure and success through God’s eyes, we must understand and live according to this upside-down truth!

**Apply the Word**

We invite you to do today what Paul asked the Corinthians to do: “Think of what you were when you were called” (v. 26). What did you value? How did you live? Where would you be today without the good news of Christ?

### Pray with Us

Paul’s words, “Think of what you were when you were called” (1 Cor. 1:26), prompt our prayer of gratitude: Lord Jesus, we praise you for your salvation, for taking us from darkness into your light, and for giving us beauty for ashes!

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/28/20

# Redemption’s Hope

 **Read:** [**Acts 9:1–4**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%209.1%E2%80%934)

### Saul’s Conversion

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest 2and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

**Read:** [**Acts 9:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%209.1%E2%80%934)[**10–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%209.10%E2%80%9318)

10In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

11The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

13“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

15But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. [Acts 2:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.21)

The man seemed beyond redemption. His crimes included eight shootings (killing six) and starting nearly 1,500 fires that terrorized New York City in the 1970s. He left letters at his crime scenes taunting the police, and he was eventually apprehended and given consecutive sentences of twenty-five years to life for each murder.

Yet God reached down to this man. Today he is a believer in Christ who spends time daily in the Scriptures, has expressed deep regret to his victims’ families, and continues to pray for them. Although imprisoned for more than four decades, this man who seemed beyond redemption finds hope in God and claims, “My freedom is found in one word: Jesus.”

Scripture tells of another unlikely conversion. Before he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Saul (who later became the apostle Paul) was “breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples” ([Acts 9:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%209.1)). Yet Paul’s heart and life were transformed by Jesus (vv. 17–18), and he became one of the most powerful witnesses for Him in history. The man who once plotted the death of Christians devoted his life to spreading the hope of the gospel.

Redemption is always a miraculous work of God. Some stories are more dramatic, but the underlying truth remains the same: None of us deserve His forgiveness, yet Jesus is a powerful Savior! He “[saves] completely those who come to God through him” ([Hebrews 7:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%207.25)).

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Do you know someone who seems like a “tough case” for redemption? Nothing is too hard for God! Bring that person before Him in prayer.

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us so much You died to bring us into a relationship with You.

#### Insight

While Saul was on the way to Damascus, Jesus spoke to him from a heavenly light. Afterward he was blind for three days ([Acts 9:8–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%209.8%E2%80%939)). We’re not told why or how Saul was blinded. It may have been a natural consequence of the light, or it may have been a supernatural occurrence. But it’s interesting that it was through Ananias that his sight was restored. While God caused the blindness, He chose to remove it through a person. Sometimes God works in unexpected ways.

# God Calling – 6/28/20

# Table of Delights

It has not been in vain this training and teaching time.  The time of suppression, repression, depression is changed now into a time of glorious expression.

Life is flooded through and through with Joy and Gladness.  Indeed I have prepared a table of delights, a feast of all good things for you.

Indeed your cup runneth over and you can feel from the very depth of your heart.  "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Proverbs 15:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 6/29/20

# The Strictest Discipline



If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. —[Matthew 5:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A30)

Jesus did not say that everyone must cut off his right hand, but that “if your right hand causes you to sin” in your walk with Him, then it is better to “cut it off.” There are many things that are perfectly legitimate, but if you are going to concentrate on God you cannot do them. Your right hand is one of the best things you have, but Jesus says that if it hinders you in following His precepts, then “cut it off.” The principle taught here is the strictest discipline or lesson that ever hit humankind.

When God changes you through regeneration, giving you new life through spiritual rebirth, your life initially has the characteristic of being maimed. There are a hundred and one things that you dare not do— things that would be sin for you, and would be recognized as sin by those who really know you. But the unspiritual people around you will say, “What’s so wrong with doing that? How absurd you are!” There has never yet been a saint who has not lived a maimed life initially. Yet it is better to enter into life maimed but lovely in God’s sight than to appear lovely to man’s eyes but lame to God’s. At first, Jesus Christ through His Spirit has to restrain you from doing a great many things that may be perfectly right for everyone else but not right for you. Yet, see that you don’t use your restrictions to criticize someone else.

The Christian life is a maimed life initially, but in [Matthew 5:48](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:48) Jesus gave us the picture of a perfectly well-rounded life— “You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else. “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord”;…  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 537 L

# CCEL – 6/29/20

His commandments are not grievous.—[I JOHN 5:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.3)

This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.—Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.—Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.—Great peace have they which love thy law and nothing shall offend them.—I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.—Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

[John 6:40](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.40). -[I John 3:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.22).[Matt. 11:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.30). -[John 14:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.15),[21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.21).[Prov. 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.13). -[Prov. 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.17). -[Psa. 119:165](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.165). -[Rom. 7:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.22).[I John 3:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.23). -[Rom. 13:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.13.html" \l "Rom.13.10).

“Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” **[1 Thessalonians 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.14)**

Let us not imagine that the soul sleeps in insensibility. “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise,” is the whisper of Christ to every dying saint. They “sleep in Jesus,” but their souls are before the throne of God, praising him day and night in his temple, singing hallelujahs to him who washed them from their sins in his blood. The body sleeps in its lonely bed of earth, beneath the coverlet of grass. But what is this sleep? The idea connected with sleep is “rest,” and that is the thought which the Spirit of God would convey to us. Sleep makes each night a Sabbath for the day. Sleep shuts fast the door of the soul, and bids all intruders tarry for a while, that the life within may enter its summer garden of ease. The toil-worn believer quietly sleeps, as does the weary child when it slumbers on its mother’s breast. Oh! happy they who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Their quiet repose shall never be broken until God shall rouse them to give them their full reward. Guarded by angel watchers, curtained by eternal mysteries, they sleep on, the inheritors of glory, till the fulness of time shall bring the fulness of redemption. What an awaking shall be theirs! They were laid in their last resting place, weary and worn, but such they shall not rise. They went to their rest with the furrowed brow, and the wasted features, but they wake up in beauty and glory. The shrivelled seed, so destitute of form and comeliness, rises from the dust a beauteous flower. The winter of the grave gives way to the spring of redemption and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it, through the divine power, disrobes us of this work-day garment, to clothe us with the wedding garment of incorruption. Blessed are those who “sleep in Jesus.”

# Word Live – 6/29/20

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

# Scripture Union – 6/29/20

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

# Today in the Word – 6/29/20

# God’s Love Never Fails

**Read:** [**1 Corinthians 13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13)

13 If I speak in the tongues[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#fen-NIV-28667a)] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13" \l "fen-NIV-28669b" \o "See footnote b)] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

#### Footnotes:

1. [1 Corinthians 13:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#en-NIV-28667) Or languages
2. [1 Corinthians 13:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13#en-NIV-28669) Some manuscripts body to the flames

In his famous sonnet, William Shakespeare praised the steadfast nature of love:

The greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

“Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark [ship].”

In simpler words, true love is like the North Star, a firm reference point for navigating the storms of life. In today’s reading, Paul contrasts human love with God’s love. This famous chapter begins by proclaiming the value of love as the most important Christian virtue (vv. 1–3). No matter how spectacular a spiritual gift is (1 Corinthians 12), it’s worthless without love.

Key qualities of love are then presented (vv. 4–8). You will notice that some describe what love looks like in action, what it does. For example, “love is patient,” “rejoices with the truth,” and “always hopes.” Then we learn what love does not do, for example, love “does not envy,” “is not self-seeking,” and “keeps no record of wrongs.” Finally, 1 Corinthians 13 explains how love is intertwined with our growing to spiritual maturity (vv. 9–12). While spiritual gifts are temporary, love is eternal.

The bottom line? “Love never fails” (v. 8). This makes sense, since God never fails and God is love (1 John 4:8). We know human love fails all the time. Despite our best efforts, we fall short of loving in a pure and consistent way. But not God’s love. It has never failed! Never. Not even once, in all of history. We can rejoice, then, that we are eternally, unfailingly loved by God. No failure on our part can remove us from His love. And because of this, we can and should love one another: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

**Apply the Word**

Consider the way you show love and the way you experience God’s love? How can we cultivate such love in our own lives? By imitating Christ, the perfect example of love. Consider today how you can express God’s love to someone in your life.

### Pray with Us

First Corinthians 13 presents a beautiful picture of God’s love. Pray through the qualities of love in this chapter, asking God to increase the love in your heart.

## BY Brad Baurain

# Our Daily Bread – 6/29/20

# Simply Ask

 **Read:** [**2 Kings 5:9–14**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%205.9%E2%80%9314)

9So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house. 10Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.”

11But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage.

13Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!” 14So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Before they call I will answer. [Isaiah 65:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2065.24)

Her doctor said her detached retinas couldn’t be repaired. But after living without sight for fifteen years—learning Braille, and using a cane and service dog—a Montana woman’s life changed when her husband asked another eye doctor a simple question: could she be helped? The answer was yes. As the doctor discovered, the woman had a common eye condition, cataracts, which the doctor removed from her right eye. When the eye patch came off the next day, her vision was 20/20. A second surgery for her left eye met with equal success.

A simple question also changed the life of Naaman, a powerful military man with leprosy. But Naaman raged arrogantly at the prophet Elisha’s instructions to “wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored” ([2 Kings 5:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%205.10)). Naaman’s servants, however, asked the military leader a simple question: “If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?” (v. 13). Persuaded, Naaman washed “and his flesh was restored and became clean” (v. 14).

In our lives, sometimes we struggle with a problem because we won’t ask God. Will You help? Should I go? Will You lead? He doesn’t require complicated questions from us to help. “Before they call I will answer,” God promised His people ([Isaiah 65:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2065.24)). So today, simply ask Him.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How complex are your prayer requests? What life problem can you offer to God in a simple prayer?

Dear heavenly Father, when life feels complicated and difficult, thank You for Your promise to hear even my simple prayers.

#### Insight

The Jordan River, where Naaman was told to “wash [himself] seven times” ([2 Kings 5:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%205.10)), was the primary source of water in the ancient Near East and is the most well-known river in the Bible. The melting snow of Mt. Hermon in the north is the main water source for the river that winds for 156 miles through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea and has no outlet. [Joshua 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%203) records the parting of the waters of the Jordan so the Israelites could enter the land of Promise. Twice the waters of the river were parted in [2 Kings 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Kings%202) when they were struck with the cloak of Elijah (vv. 8, 14). In the New Testament, John the Baptist baptized believers in Jesus and even Christ Himself in the Jordan ([Matthew 3:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%203.6), [13–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%203.13%E2%80%9317)).

# God Calling – 6/29/20

# My Will - Your Joy

Our Lord and our God. Lead us, we beseech Thee. Lead us and keep us.

You can never go beyond My Love and Care.  Remember that.  No evil can befall you. Circumstances I bless and use must be the right ones for you.

But I know always that the first step is to lay your will before Me as an offering, ready that I shall do what is best, sure that, if you trust Me, what I do for you will be best.

Your second step is to be sure, and to tell me so, that I am Powerful enough to do everything ("The hearts of kings are in My rule and governance"), that no miracle is impossible with me ("With God all things are possible" and "I and My Father are one").

Then leave all with Me. Glad to leave all your affairs in a Master Hand. Sure of safety and protection. Remember you cannot see the future. I can.

You could not bear it. So only little by little can I reveal it to you. Accept My Will and it will bring you joy.

The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. Psalm 121:5