# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/16/21

# The Master Will Judge



We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ… —[2 Corinthians 5:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A10)

Paul says that we must all, preachers and other people alike, “appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” But if you will learn here and now to live under the scrutiny of Christ’s pure light, your final judgment will bring you only delight in seeing the work God has done in you. Live constantly reminding yourself of the judgment seat of Christ, and walk in the knowledge of the holiness He has given you. Tolerating a wrong attitude toward another person causes you to follow the spirit of the devil, no matter how saintly you are. One carnal judgment of another person only serves the purposes of hell in you. Bring it immediately into the light and confess, “Oh, Lord, I have been guilty there.” If you don’t, your heart will become hardened through and through. One of the penalties of sin is our acceptance of it. It is not only God who punishes for sin, but sin establishes itself in the sinner and takes its toll. No struggling or praying will enable you to stop doing certain things, and the penalty of sin is that you gradually get used to it, until you finally come to the place where you no longer even realize that it is sin. No power, except the power that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit, can change or prevent the inherent consequences of sin.

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light…” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)). For many of us, walking in the light means walking according to the standard we have set up for another person. The deadliest attitude of the Pharisees that we exhibit today is not hypocrisy but that which comes from unconsciously living a lie.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 3/16/21

What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.—[JAS. 4:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.14)

My days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.—Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep . . . in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.—Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.

The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

[Job 9:25,26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.9.html" \l "Job.9.25). -[Psa. 90:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.5). -[Job 14:1-2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.14.html" \l "Job.14.2).[I John 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.17). -[Psa. 102:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.102.html" \l "Ps.102.26). -[Heb. 13:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.8).

“I am a stranger with thee.” [Psalm 39:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.39.html" \l "Ps.39.12)

Yes, O Lord, with thee, but not to thee. All my natural alienation from thee, thy grace has effectually removed; and now, in fellowship with thyself, I walk through this sinful world as a pilgrim in a foreign country. Thou art a stranger in thine own world. Man forgets thee, dishonours thee, sets up new laws and alien customs, and knows thee not. When thy dear Son came unto his own, his own received him not. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. Never was foreigner so speckled a bird among the denizens of any land as thy beloved Son among his mother’s brethren. It is no marvel, then, if I who live the life of Jesus, should be unknown and a stranger here below. Lord, I would not be a citizen where Jesus was an alien. His pierced hand has loosened the cords which once bound my soul to earth, and now I find myself a stranger in the land. My speech seems to these Babylonians among whom I dwell an outlandish tongue, my manners are singular, and my actions are strange. A Tartar would be more at home in Cheapside than I could ever be in the haunts of sinners. But here is the sweetness of my lot: I am a stranger with thee. Thou art my fellow-sufferer, my fellow-pilgrim. Oh, what joy to wander in such blessed society! My heart burns within me by the way when thou dost speak to me, and though I be a sojourner, I am far more blest than those who sit on thrones, and far more at home than those who dwell in their ceiled houses.

“To me remains nor place, nor time:

My country is in every clime;

I can be calm and free from care

On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,

The soul finds happiness in none:

But with a God to guide our way,

’Tis equal joy to go or stay.

# Word Live – 3/16/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/16/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/16/21

# Rebekah - Seeking the Will of God

**Read:** [**Genesis 24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24)

### **Isaac and Rebekah**

24 Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. 2He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh. 3I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

5The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”

6“Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said. 7“The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#fen-NIV-599a)] I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. 8If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.” 9So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

10Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master’s camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#fen-NIV-602b)] and made his way to the town of Nahor. 11He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

12Then he prayed, “Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. 14May it be that when I say to a young woman, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

15Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor. 16The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

17The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

18“Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

19After she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink.” 20So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

22When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#fen-NIV-614c)] and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24" \l "fen-NIV-614d" \o "See footnote d)] 23Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

24She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor.” 25And she added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.”

26Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, 27saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

28The young woman ran and told her mother’s household about these things. 29Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. 30As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. 31“Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

32So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. 33Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.”

“Then tell us,” Laban said.

34So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. 35The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36My master’s wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. 37And my master made me swear an oath, and said, ‘You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, 38but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.’

39“Then I asked my master, ‘What if the woman will not come back with me?’

40“He replied, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family. 41You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.’

42“When I came to the spring today, I said, ‘Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. 43See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar,” 44and if she says to me, “Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels too,” let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master’s son.’

45“Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’

46“She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

47“I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’

“She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.’

“Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, 48and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son. 49Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.”

50Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. 51Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has directed.”

52When Abraham’s servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. 53Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. 54Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, “Send me on my way to my master.”

55But her brother and her mother replied, “Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#fen-NIV-647e)] may go.”

56But he said to them, “Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master.”

57Then they said, “Let’s call the young woman and ask her about it.” 58So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?”

“I will go,” she said.

59So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham’s servant and his men. 60And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you increase  
    to thousands upon thousands;  
may your offspring possess  
    the cities of their enemies.”

61Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63He went out to the field one evening to meditate,[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24" \l "fen-NIV-655f" \o "See footnote f)] and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?”

“He is my master,” the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

66Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. 67Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 24:7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-599) Or seed
2. [Genesis 24:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-602) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
3. [Genesis 24:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-614) That is, about 1/5 ounce or about 5.7 grams
4. [Genesis 24:22](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-614) That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams
5. [Genesis 24:55](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-647) Or she
6. [Genesis 24:63](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+24#en-NIV-655) The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

As a college professor, one of the most common conversations I have with my students is about God’s will. How does He reveal His leading to us? In Abraham’s advanced years, his primary concern became a wife for Isaac. Only through Isaac’s marriage and fatherhood would God’s covenant continue, so Abraham gave his chief servant specific instructions on how to find the right woman.

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. Proverbs 16:3

When the servant came to Nahor, he stopped by a well with his ten camels, and in prayer, he devised a unique method for discovering God’s will. He would administer a test. The servant would ask a girl for a drink, and if she offered to water his camels too, then she would be “the one.” Before he had even finished praying, Rebekah arrived (v. 15). The servant noticed her beauty and immediately asked Rebekah for a drink. She offered one without hesitation. Then she offered to water his camels as well. Her jug was 3 gallons or so in capacity. Since a thirsty camel can drink 25–40 gallons, Rebekah had to fill her jug about 130 times! The servant could add “hard worker” and “servant spirit” to her qualities.

The servant watched her intently, praying for internal confirmation for his external observations. He clearly received the assurance he sought because, when Rebekah finished, he gave her costly gifts and asked about her family (vv. 22–23). Upon hearing that she was Abraham’s close relative, the servant worshiped the Lord. The servant’s visit with Rebekah’s family served as further confirmation, as did Rebekah’s willingness to go immediately—even when her family asked for ten more days together.

**Apply the Word**

The process of discerning God’s will involves prayerful assessment of our circumstances and motivations. We should ask God to direct our thinking and help us walk in step with His Spirit. Sometimes He reveals His will through unusual events. But more often He opens and closes doors and His Spirit gives us discernment. Over what decisions are you seeking His will right now?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord in Heaven, we desire nothing more and nothing less than to walk according to your will. As we face difficult decisions, please teach us to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Guide us in your wisdom and goodness.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/16/21

# A Strong Heart

 **Read:** [**Psalm 73:21–28**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2073.21%E2%80%9328)

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.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. [Psalm 73:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2073.26)

In his book Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, co-authored with Philip Yancey, Dr. Paul Brand observed, “A hummingbird heart weighs a fraction of an ounce and beats eight hundred times a minute; a blue whale’s heart weighs half a ton, beats only ten times per minute, and can be heard two miles away. In contrast to either, the human heart seems dully functional, yet it does its job, beating 100,000 times a day [65–70 times a minute] with no time off for rest, to get most of us through seventy years or more.”

The amazing heart so thoroughly powers us through life that it has become a metaphor for our overall inner well-being. Yet, both our literal and metaphorical hearts are prone to failure. What can we do?

The psalmist Asaph, a worship leader of Israel, acknowledged in [Psalm 73](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2073) that true strength comes from somewhere—Someone—else. He wrote, “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (v. 26). Asaph was right. The living God is our ultimate and eternal strength. As the Maker of heaven and earth, He knows no such limitations to His perfect power.

In our times of difficulty and challenge, may we discover what Asaph learned through his own struggles: God is the true strength of our hearts. We can rest in that strength every day.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How is your metaphorical heart like your spiritual heart? When you feel like you’re “losing heart,” how can you find strength in your loving, caring Father?

Heavenly Father, I thank You that when I’m weak, You’re strong. That when I’m overwhelmed, You’re enough. That when I’m confused, You have perfect clarity.

#### **Insight**

Asaph, whose name means “Jehovah has gathered,” is the author of twelve psalms ([Psalms 50](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2050), [73–83](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalms%2073%E2%80%9383)). He was a Levite and one of David’s three chief musicians ([1 Chronicles 6:31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%206.31), [39–43](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chronicles%206.39%E2%80%9343); [15:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chronicles%2015.16%E2%80%9317); [16:4–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chronicles%2016.4%E2%80%935); [25:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chronicles%2025.1%E2%80%932)). He was also a prophet or seer ([1 Samuel 9:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%209.9); [1 Chronicles 25:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2025.2); [2 Chronicles 29:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Chron%2029.30)).

In [Psalm 73](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2073)—a Wisdom psalm that instructs readers on how to deal with life’s challenges and pain—Asaph is bitterly overwhelmed by the injustice of the prosperity of the wicked (vv. 1–14). But when he understands God’s presence in his life, his own glorious destiny, and the destined punishment of the wicked (vv. 23–28), his perspective on this present world changes. Certain that “earth has nothing” he desires (v. 25), Asaph embraces the sovereign God as his strength (literally “rock” in Hebrew), refuge, and permanent and eternal possession (vv. 25–28).

# God Calling – 3/16/21

# Reflect Me

My children, I am here beside you. Draw near in spirit to Me. Shut out the distractions of the world. I am your Life, the very breath of your soul. Learn what it is to shut yourself in the secret place of your being, which is My secret place too.

True it is, I wait in many a heart, but so few retire into that inner place of the being to commune with Me. Wherever the soul is, I am. Man has rarely understood this. I am actually at the center of every man's being, but, distracted with the things of the sense-life, he finds Me not.

Do you realize that I am telling you truths, revealing them, not repeating oft-told facts. Meditate on all I say. Ponder it. Not to draw your own conclusions, but to absorb Mine.

All down the ages, men have been too eager to say what they thought about My truth, and so doing, they have grievously erred. Hear Me. Talk to Me. Reflect Me. Do not say what you think about me. My words need none of man's explanation. I can explain to each heart.

Make Me real, and leave Me to do My own work. To lead a soul to Me is one thing, to seek to stay with it to interpret mars the first great act. So would it be with human intercourse. How much more then, when it is a question of the soul, and Me, its Maker, and only real Spirit that understands it.

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." - Isaiah 30:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/17/21

# The Servant’s Primary Goal



We make it our aim…to be well pleasing to Him. —[2 Corinthians 5:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A9)

“We make it our aim….” It requires a conscious decision and effort to keep our primary goal constantly in front of us. It means holding ourselves to the highest priority year in and year out; not making our first priority to win souls, or to establish churches, or to have revivals, but seeking only “to be well pleasing to Him.” It is not a lack of spiritual experience that leads to failure, but a lack of working to keep our eyes focused and on the right goal. At least once a week examine yourself before God to see if your life is measuring up to the standard He has for you. Paul was like a musician who gives no thought to audience approval, if he can only catch a look of approval from his Conductor.

Any goal we have that diverts us even to the slightest degree from the central goal of being “approved to God” ([2 Timothy 2:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2:15)) may result in our rejection from further service for Him. When you discern where the goal leads, you will understand why it is so necessary to keep “looking unto Jesus” ([Hebrews 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:2)). Paul spoke of the importance of controlling his own body so that it would not take him in the wrong direction. He said, “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest…I myself should become disqualified” ([1 Corinthians 9:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+9:27)).

I must learn to relate everything to the primary goal, maintaining it without interruption. My worth to God publicly is measured by what I really am in my private life. Is my primary goal in life to please Him and to be acceptable to Him, or is it something less, no matter how lofty it may sound?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Our danger is to water down God’s word to suit ourselves. God never fits His word to suit me; He fits me to suit His word. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 3/17/21

He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.—[LEV. 1:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.1.html" \l "Lev.1.4)

Ye know that 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.—Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

He hath made us accepted in the beloved. As lively stones, . . . built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

[I Pet. 1:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.18). -[I Pet. 2:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.24).[Eph. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.6).[I Pet. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.5). -[Rom. 12:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1).[Jude 24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.24).

“Remember the poor.” [Galatians 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.2.html" \l "Gal.2.10)

Why does God allow so many of his children to be poor? He could make them all rich if he pleased; he could lay bags of gold at their doors; he could send them a large annual income; or he could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions, as once he made the quails lie in heaps round the camp of Israel, and rained bread out of heaven to feed them. There is no necessity that they should be poor, except that he sees it to be best. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are his”—he could supply them; he could make the richest, the greatest, and the mightiest bring all their power and riches to the feet of his children, for the hearts of all men are in his control. But he does not choose to do so; he allows them to suffer want, he allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? There are many reasons: one is, to give us, who are favoured with enough, an opportunity of showing our love to Jesus. We show our love to Christ when we sing of him and when we pray to him; but if there were no sons of need in the world we should lose the sweet privilege of evidencing our love, by ministering in alms-giving to his poorer brethren; he has ordained that thus we should prove that our love standeth not in word only, but in deed and in truth. If we truly love Christ, we shall care for those who are loved by him. Those who are dear to him will be dear to us. Let us then look upon it not as a duty but as a privilege to relieve the poor of the Lord’s flock—remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Surely this assurance is sweet enough, and this motive strong enough to lead us to help others with a willing hand and a loving heart—recollecting that all we do for his people is graciously accepted by Christ as done to himself.

# Word Live – 3/17/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/17/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/17/21

# Rebekah - A War in the Womb

**Read:** [**Genesis 25:19–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+)

### **Jacob and Esau**

19This is the account of the family line of Abraham’s son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, 20and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#fen-NIV-679a)] and sister of Laban the Aramean.

21Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

23The Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,  
    and two peoples from within you will be separated;  
one people will be stronger than the other,  
    and the older will serve the younger.”

24When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#fen-NIV-684b)] 26After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob.[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#fen-NIV-685c)] Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

27The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. 28Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!” (That is why he was also called Edom.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+" \l "fen-NIV-689d" \o "See footnote d)])

31Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”

32“Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?”

33But Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

34Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 25:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#en-NIV-679) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
2. [Genesis 25:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#en-NIV-684) Esau may mean hairy.
3. [Genesis 25:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#en-NIV-685) Jacob means he grasps the heel, a Hebrew idiom for he deceives.
4. [Genesis 25:30](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+25%3a19%e2%80%9334+#en-NIV-689) Edom means red.

Twins have a fascinating relationship. Even as babies they seem to share an unspoken language, understanding one another in a way no one else can. And when they grow up, they remain instinctively connected. In Genesis 25, we learn that Rebekah’s married life began with barrenness. Isaac’s response differed from his father’s, however. While Abraham and Sarah tried to solve infertility their own way, Isaac prayed (v. 21). And the Lord answered—albeit 20 long years later.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. Ephesians 1:11

Infertility wasn’t Rebekah’s biggest problem though. Instead, the text focuses on what happened after she became pregnant. Not knowing she was carrying twins, she was troubled by excessive movement, so she inquired of the Lord. He revealed to her that her two sons—yes: two!—would be embroiled in sibling rivalry, with the younger one prevailing. This conflict would mark their lives and people in deep and lasting ways.

From the moment the babies were born, the Lord’s prophetic word was proven. Jacob emerged, grasping Esau’s heel. We can only imagine how the tension played out through childhood because the text summarizes their juvenile years: “The boys grew up.” They became very different men. Esau, a skillful hunter. Jacob, a quiet homebody. The passage also reveals parental preferences. Isaac appreciated Esau’s hunting skills, while Rebekah loved Jacob’s gentle nature.

The point of the passage is not parenting though. Instead, we find the infamous scene of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew and some bread. This brotherly conflict is the center of the story. This is the next obstacle that stands in the way of God’s covenant promises to His people.

**Apply the Word**

God’s character continues to be consistently revealed in Rebekah’s narrative. His choices are based on His own sovereign will—not human merit or convention. The comfort we take is that no conflict (in our nuclear or church families) can ultimately deter God’s plan from going forth.

### **Pray with Us**

We are grateful that your plans always come to fruition, Lord, but we grieve over the conflicts that so often divide your children. We ask for your peace in our communities so that we can serve you in unity.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/17/21

# It’s Jesus!

 **Read:** [**Colossians 1:27–29**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.27%E2%80%9329)

27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

**Read:** [**Colossians**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.27%E2%80%9329) [**2:6–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Colossians%202.6%E2%80%9310)

### **Spiritual Fullness in Christ**

6So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A27%E2%80%9329+%3B+2%3A6%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29503a)] of this world rather than on Christ.

9For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Colossians 2:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A27%E2%80%9329+%3B+2%3A6%E2%80%9310&version=NIV#en-NIV-29503) Or the basic principles; also in verse 20

God has chosen to make known . . . the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Colossians 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.27)

During an episode of the popular US television talent competition America’s Got Talent, a five-year-old girl sang with such exuberance that a judge compared her to a famous child singer and dancer in the 1930s. He remarked, “I think Shirley Temple is living somewhere inside of you.” Her unexpected response: “Not Shirley Temple. Jesus!”

I marveled at the young girl’s deep awareness that her joy came from Jesus living in her. Scripture assures us of the amazing reality that all who trust in Him not only receive the promise of eternal life with God but also Jesus’ presence living in them through His Spirit—our hearts become Jesus’ home ([Colossians 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.27); [Ephesians 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.17)).

Jesus’ presence in our hearts fills us with countless reasons for gratitude ([Colossians 2:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%202.6%E2%80%937)). He brings the ability to live with purpose and energy (1:28–29). He cultivates joy in our hearts in the midst of all circumstances, in both times of celebration and times of struggle ([Philippians 4:12–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%204.12%E2%80%9313)). Christ’s Spirit provides hope to our hearts that God is working all things together for good, even when we can’t see it ([Romans 8:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%208.28)). And the Spirit gives a peace that persists regardless of the chaos swirling around us ([Colossians 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.15)).

With the confidence that comes from Jesus living in our hearts, we can allow His presence to shine through so that others can’t help but notice.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What blessing of Jesus’ presence in your life encourages you today? How might you share Him as the reason for your hope and joy?

Jesus, thank You for making my heart Your home. Please help my life to reflect Your presence.

To learn more about Jesus and who He is, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/NT111](https://ChristianUniversity.org/NT111).

#### **Insight**

Paul’s letter to the Colossians describes the supremacy of Christ. One interesting phrase Paul uses is that Jesus is “the firstborn from among the dead” ([Colossians 1:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%201.18)). In other words, Jesus was the first to die and rise again in a body that wouldn’t die. For this reason, He has supremacy over all things (v. 18). Additionally, He’s the head of the church (vv. 18–20). Some scholars see the word head as a metaphor for leader. Verse 15 tells us He’s “the image of the invisible God.” The word for image is eikon, which explains something that represents the original, such as a picture. These passages proclaim the deity of Jesus as fully God (see also v. 19; 2:9). Because Jesus is both fully God and fully man, He was the only one able to “reconcile” all things to God through His death on the cross (1:20).

# God Calling – 3/17/21

# "No Greater Joy"

Withdraw into the calm of communion with Me. Rest - rest, rest in that calm and Peace. Life knows no greater joy than you will find in converse and companionship with Me.

You are Mine. When the soul finds its home of rest in Me, then it is, that its real Life begins. Not in years, as man counts it, do we measure in My Kingdom.

We count only from his second birth, that new birth of which I spoke to Nicodemus when I said, "Ye must be born again." We know no life but Eternal Life and when a man enters into that, then he lives.

And this is Life Eternal, to know God, My Father and Me, the Son sent by Him. So immature, so childish, so empty is all so-called living before that. I shower Love on you. Pass Love on.

Do not fear. To fear is as foolish as if a small child with a small coin, but a rich father, fretted about how rent and rates should be paid, and what he or she would do about it. Is this work Mine or not? You need to trust Me for everything.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.  For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." - Hebrews 4:9,10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/18/21

# Will I Bring Myself Up to This Level?



…perfecting holiness in the fear of God. —[2 Corinthians 7:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+7%3A1)

“Therefore, having these promises….” I claim God’s promises for my life and look to their fulfillment, and rightly so, but that shows only the human perspective on them. God’s perspective is that through His promises I will come to recognize His claim of ownership on me. For example, do I realize that my “body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,” or am I condoning some habit in my body which clearly could not withstand the light of God on it? ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)). God formed His Son in me through sanctification, setting me apart from sin and making me holy in His sight (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)). But I must begin to transform my natural life into spiritual life by obedience to Him. God instructs us even in the smallest details of life. And when He brings you conviction of sin, do not “confer with flesh and blood,” but cleanse yourself from it at once ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)). Keep yourself cleansed in your daily walk.

I must cleanse myself from all filthiness in my flesh and my spirit until both are in harmony with the nature of God. Is the mind of my spirit in perfect agreement with the life of the Son of God in me, or am I mentally rebellious and defiant? Am I allowing the mind of Christ to be formed in me? (see [Philippians 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:5)). Christ never spoke of His right to Himself, but always maintained an inner vigilance to submit His spirit continually to His Father. I also have the responsibility to keep my spirit in agreement with His Spirit. And when I do, Jesus gradually lifts me up to the level where He lived— a level of perfect submission to His Father’s will— where I pay no attention to anything else. Am I perfecting this kind of holiness in the fear of God? Is God having His way with me, and are people beginning to see God in my life more and more?

Be serious in your commitment to God and gladly leave everything else alone. Literally put God first in your life.

**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 – 3/18/21

Mine eyes fail with looking upward.—[ISA. 38:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.38.html" \l "Isa.38.14)

Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.—My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

Ye have need of patience.

While they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.—Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.—That blessed hope,. . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

[Psa. 6:2-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.6.html" \l "Ps.6.2). -[Psa. 55:4-6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.55.html" \l "Ps.55.4).[Heb. 10:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.36).[Acts 1:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.1.html" \l "Acts.1.10). -[Phi. 3:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.20). -[Tit. 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.13).

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” [Galatians 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.3.html" \l "Gal.3.26)

The fatherhood of God is common to all his children. Ah! Little-faith, you have often said, “Oh that I had the courage of Great-heart, that I could wield his sword and be as valiant as he! But, alas, I stumble at every straw, and a shadow makes me afraid.” List thee, Little-faith. Great-heart is God’s child, and you are God’s child too; and Great-heart is not one whit more God’s child than you are. Peter and Paul, the highly-favoured apostles, were of the family of the Most High; and so are you also; the weak Christian is as much a child of God as the strong one.

“This cov'nant stands secure,

Though earth’s old pillars bow;

The strong, the feeble, and the weak,

Are one in Jesus now.”

All the names are in the same family register. One may have more grace than another, but God our heavenly Father has the same tender heart towards all. One may do more mighty works, and may bring more glory to his Father, but he whose name is the least in the kingdom of heaven is as much the child of God as he who stands among the King’s mighty men. Let this cheer and comfort us, when we draw near to God and say, “Our Father.”

Yet, while we are comforted by knowing this, let us not rest contented with weak faith, but ask, like the Apostles, to have it increased. However feeble our faith may be, if it be real faith in Christ, we shall reach heaven at last, but we shall not honour our Master much on our pilgrimage, neither shall we abound in joy and peace. If then you would live to Christ’s glory, and be happy in his service, seek to be filled with the spirit of adoption more and more completely, till perfect love shall cast out fear.

# Word Live – 3/18/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/18/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/18/21

# Rebekah - Fearful, but Blessed

**Read:** [**Genesis 26:1–17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26%3a1%e2%80%9317+)

### **Isaac and Abimelek**

26 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham’s time—and Isaac went to Abimelek king of the Philistines in Gerar. 2The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. 3Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26%3a1%e2%80%9317+#fen-NIV-697a)] all nations on earth will be blessed,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26%3a1%e2%80%9317+#fen-NIV-697b)] 5because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.” 6So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

7When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” because he was afraid to say, “She is my wife.” He thought, “The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful.”

8When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. 9So Abimelek summoned Isaac and said, “She is really your wife! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’?”

Isaac answered him, “Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her.”

10Then Abimelek said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

11So Abimelek gave orders to all the people: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

12Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. 13The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. 14He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. 15So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

16Then Abimelek said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

17So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 26:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26%3a1%e2%80%9317+#en-NIV-697) Or seed
2. [Genesis 26:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+26%3a1%e2%80%9317+#en-NIV-697) Or and all nations on earth will use the name of your offspring in blessings (see 48:20)

Fear is a powerful motivator. It can drive us to do dastardly things. Some of us shut down, attack, or distract ourselves. Others face fear by trying to wrestle a problem in their own strength. In Genesis 26, Isaac and his family faced fear in the form of famine. You may notice that this entire chapter bears a resemblance to the Abraham narrative. Just as Abraham had done, Isaac moved his family south to survive. But the Lord stopped them: “Do not go down to Egypt,” God told Isaac. “Live in the land where I tell you to live” (v. 2). Then the Lord reaffirmed His covenant: “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky” (v. 4).

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights. James 1:17

So it may surprise you that immediately following God’s covenant reminder, however, comes a record of Isaac’s deception (v. 7). He lied about Rebekah’s identity, saying she was his sister rather than his wife (again, just like his father!). Isaac was afraid the men of Gerar might kill him and take Rebekah for themselves. Isaac succeeded for some time it seems—until finally, King Abimelek himself saw Isaac and Rebekah in an intimate embrace (v. 8). Abimelek had not yet sent for Rebekah as Pharaoh had sent for Sarah. In that regard, Isaac and Rebekah were spared. God’s grace to them was already evident. Nevertheless, the king confronted Isaac, and Isaac reiterated his fear.

Abimelek’s reaction was to provide Isaac with additional protection. He did not send Isaac away, as Pharaoh did Abraham. Instead, he made a decree that anyone who harmed Isaac or Rebekah would be put to death (v. 11). Despite Isaac’s fear, the covenant of God was again being made manifest.

**Apply the Word**

How do you respond to fear? Today, release your fear to Him and rest in His promises and provision. Even though our emotions may waiver, you have a God who does not change “like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

### **Pray with Us**

Father, we are frail and finite beings, and fear is never far from us. May we take each fearful moment as an opportunity to lean on you and to listen for your voice.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/18/21

# Small Yet Mighty

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 2:4–10**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.4%E2%80%9310)

4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. [Ephesians 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.10)

There are times late at night in North America’s harsh Sonoran Desert where one can hear a faint, high-pitched howl. But you probably wouldn’t suspect the source of the sound—the small yet mighty grasshopper mouse, howling at the moon to establish its territory.

This unique rodent (dubbed the “werewolf mouse”) is also carnivorous. In fact, it preys on creatures few would dare mess with, such as the scorpion. But the werewolf mouse is uniquely equipped for that particular battle. It not only has a resistance to scorpion venom but can even convert the toxins into a painkiller!

There’s something inspiring about the way this resilient little mouse seems custom-made to survive and even thrive in its harsh environment. As Paul explains in [Ephesians 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.10), that kind of marvelous craftsmanship characterizes God’s designs for His people as well. Each of us is “God’s handiwork” in Jesus, uniquely equipped to contribute to His kingdom. No matter how God has gifted you, you have much to offer. As you embrace with confidence who He’s made you to be, you’ll be a living witness to the hope and joy of life in Him.

So as you face whatever feels most menacing in your own life, take courage. You may feel small, but through the gifting and empowerment of the Spirit, God can use you to do mighty things.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Is it easy or difficult for you to see yourself as God’s marvelous handiwork? Why? In what areas of your life might remembering this truth give you renewed confidence and courage?

God, thank You for the incredible way You’ve designed me to live with joy and purpose. Help me to believe, and find courage in, the truth of who I am in You.

#### **Insight**

In Ephesians, we learn that it’s because of the grace of God that we’ve been saved (kept from eternal separation from God), through our faith (wholehearted trust) in His Son (2:5, 8). What is grace? Grace is an undeserved, freely given “gift” (v. 8). It isn’t earned through anything we do. It’s not by our good works or kind actions (v. 9; [Romans 11:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2011.5%E2%80%936)). Jesus’ death on the cross paid the penalty we deserved because of our sins (wrongdoings) and made a way for us to be with Him for eternity ([John 3:16–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.16%E2%80%9318)). Because of His sacrifice, we have “peace with God” ([Romans 5:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%205.1)). In Psalms we find a wonderful description of God’s grace: “He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him” ([Psalm 103:10–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20103.10%E2%80%9311); see [Ephesians 2:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.4)).

# God Calling – 3/18/21

# Your Resolutions

Listen, listen, I am your Lord. Before me there is none other. Just trust Me in everything. Help is here all the time.

The difficult way is nearly over, but you have learnt in it lessons you could learn in no other way. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Wrest from Me, by firm and simple trust and persistent prayer, the treasures of My Kingdom.

Such wonderful things are coming to you, Joy - Peace - Assurance - Security - Health - Happiness - Laughter.

Claim big, really big, things now. Remember, nothing is too big. Satisfy the longings of My Heart to give. Blessing, abundant blessing on you both now and always. Peace.

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and   
mighty things, which thou knowest not." - Jeremiah 33:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/19/21

# Abraham’s Life of Faith



He went out, not knowing where he was going. —[Hebrews 11:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+11%3A8)

In the Old Testament, a person’s relationship with God was seen by the degree of separation in that person’s life. This separation is exhibited in the life of Abraham by his separation from his country and his family. When we think of separation today, we do not mean to be literally separated from those family members who do not have a personal relationship with God, but to be separated mentally and morally from their viewpoints. This is what Jesus Christ was referring to in [Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26).

Living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led. But it does mean loving and knowing the One who is leading. It is literally a life of faith, not of understanding and reason— a life of knowing Him who calls us to go. Faith is rooted in the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest traps we fall into is the belief that if we have faith, God will surely lead us to success in the world.

The final stage in the life of faith is the attainment of character, and we encounter many changes in the process. We feel the presence of God around us when we pray, yet we are only momentarily changed. We tend to keep going back to our everyday ways and the glory vanishes. A life of faith is not a life of one glorious mountaintop experience after another, like soaring on eagles’ wings, but is a life of day-in and day-out consistency; a life of walking without fainting (see [Isaiah 40:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+40:31)). It is not even a question of the holiness of sanctification, but of something which comes much farther down the road. It is a faith that has been tried and proved and has withstood the test. Abraham is not a type or an example of the holiness of sanctification, but a type of the life of faith— a faith, tested and true, built on the true God. “Abraham believed God…” ([Romans 4:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4:3)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 3/19/21

God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in the turning away every one of you from his iniquities.—[ACTS 3:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.3.html" \l "Acts.3.26)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercies hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—Saved by his life.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.—Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

[I Pet. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.3). -[Rom. 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.10).[Tit. 2:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.13). -[I Pet. 1:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.15).[Eph. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.3). -[Col. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.9). -[John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16).[Rom. 8:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.32).

“Strong in faith.” [Romans 4:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.20)

Christian, take good care of thy faith; for recollect faith is the only way whereby thou canst obtain blessings. If we want blessings from God, nothing can fetch them down but faith. Prayer cannot draw down answers from God’s throne except it be the earnest prayer of the man who believes. Faith is the angelic messenger between the soul and the Lord Jesus in glory. Let that angel be withdrawn, we can neither send up prayer, nor receive the answers. Faith is the telegraphic wire which links earth and heaven—on which God’s messages of love fly so fast, that before we call he answers, and while we are yet speaking he hears us. But if that telegraphic wire of faith be snapped, how can we receive the promise? Am I in trouble?—I can obtain help for trouble by faith. Am I beaten about by the enemy?—my soul on her dear Refuge leans by faith. But take faith away—in vain I call to God. There is no road betwixt my soul and heaven. In the deepest wintertime faith is a road on which the horses of prayer may travel—aye, and all the better for the biting frost; but blockade the road, and how can we communicate with the Great King? Faith links me with divinity. Faith clothes me with the power of God. Faith engages on my side the omnipotence of Jehovah. Faith ensures every attribute of God in my defence. It helps me to defy the hosts of hell. It makes me march triumphant over the necks of my enemies. But without faith how can I receive anything of the Lord? Let not him that wavereth—who is like a wave of the Sea—expect that he will receive anything of God! O, then, Christian, watch well thy faith; for with it thou canst win all things, however poor thou art, but without it thou canst obtain nothing. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

# Word Live – 3/19/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/19/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/19/21

# Rebekah - Give Me Your Blessing

**Read:** [**Genesis 27:1–28:5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5)

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”

“Here I am,” he answered.

2Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. 3Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. 4Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

5Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, 6Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, 7‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.’ 8Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: 9Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. 10Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

11Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. 12What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

13His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

14So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. 15Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. 16She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. 17Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

18He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” he answered. “Who is it?”

19Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

20Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The Lord your God gave me success,” he replied.

21Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.”

22Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. 24“Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” he replied.

25Then he said, “My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.”

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. 26Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.”

27So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

“Ah, the smell of my son  
    is like the smell of a field  
    that the Lord has blessed.  
28May God give you heaven’s dew  
    and earth’s richness—  
    an abundance of grain and new wine.  
29May nations serve you  
    and peoples bow down to you.  
Be lord over your brothers,  
    and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.  
May those who curse you be cursed  
    and those who bless you be blessed.”

30After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. 31He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

32His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

33Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

34When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!”

35But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

36Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5#fen-NIV-764a)]? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

37Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

38Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud.

39His father Isaac answered him,

“Your dwelling will be  
    away from the earth’s richness,  
    away from the dew of heaven above.  
40You will live by the sword  
    and you will serve your brother.  
But when you grow restless,  
    you will throw his yoke  
    from off your neck.”

41Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

42When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. 43Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Harran. 44Stay with him for a while until your brother’s fury subsides. 45When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I’ll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”

46Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.”

28 So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. 2Go at once to Paddan Aram,[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5" \l "fen-NIV-776b" \o "See footnote b)] to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. 3May God Almighty[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5#fen-NIV-777c)] bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. 4May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.” 5Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 27:36](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5#en-NIV-764) Jacob means he grasps the heel, a Hebrew idiom for he takes advantage of or he deceives.
2. [Genesis 28:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5#en-NIV-776) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia; also in verses 5, 6 and 7
3. [Genesis 28:3](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+27%3a1%e2%80%9328%3a5#en-NIV-777) Hebrew El-Shaddai

In the Old Testament, the patriarchal blessing was not merely a father’s wish for his child. Rather, it was a permanent declaration, mediated by God, that often included an inheritance. When Isaac was old and blind, he asked Esau to hunt and prepare a meal, so he could impart his blessing. This is interesting for a couple of reasons. First, the Lord had communicated to Rebekah before the boys were even born that “the older will serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23). Second, Esau himself had already sold his birthright to Jacob (25:33). But—in his persistent preference for his eldest son—Isaac determined to bless him anyhow.

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. Numbers 6:24–25

Rebekah overheard the exchange and plotted with Jacob to deceive Isaac and take the blessing from Esau (vv. 5–10). Jacob donned Esau’s coat. Rebekah wrapped him in skins, and she cooked a tasty goat meal. When Jacob approached, Isaac was skeptical (v. 21). He queried Jacob’s speed. He touched his skin. He questioned his voice. He asked him straight-up to tell him the truth. Finally, he smelled his clothes, which convinced him. Isaac blessed Jacob.

When Esau returned, he was understandably livid. He begged for another blessing, but Isaac could give no more. So Esau threatened to kill his brother. When Rebekah heard Esau’s intentions, she sent Jacob away. This was the last time Rebekah saw her favored son. She bore the consequences of their deceit as much as Jacob did. And, sadly, we don’t hear much more about her life. The details of her death are not recorded. We simply learn in Genesis 49 that she was buried with Isaac.

**Apply the Word**

Rebekah’s story begins with beauty, faith, and love, but finishes with deception, isolation, and unbelief. Her story challenges us to remain faithful throughout our days. May we not allow the concerns of life to fill us with bitterness or tempt us to control. May we trust and obey for all our days that God gives us.

### **Pray with Us**

We don’t want anything in our lives to steal one moment of joy from us. Father, forgive our attempts to control events and reliance on our own strength or wisdom. We depend fully on you, our all-seeing God.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/19/21

# The Purple Shawl

 **Read:** [**Romans 15:23–33**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.23%E2%80%9333)

### **Paul’s Plan to Visit Rome**

23But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, 24I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there. 26For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. 27They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. 28So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. 29I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

30I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. 31Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, 32so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed. 33The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

I urge you . . . to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. [Romans 15:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.30)

While serving as my mom’s live-in caregiver at a cancer center hundreds of miles away from my home, I asked people to pray for us. As the months passed, isolation and loneliness sapped my strength. How could I care for my mom if I gave in to my physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion?

One day, a friend sent me an unexpected care package. Jodi had crocheted a purple prayer shawl, a warm reminder that we had people praying for us daily. Whenever I wrapped the soft yarn around my shoulders, I felt God hugging me with the prayers of His people. Years later, He still uses that purple shawl to comfort me and strengthen my resolve.

The apostle Paul affirmed the importance and spirit-refreshing power of praying for others. Through his passionate request for prayerful support and encouragement during his travels, Paul demonstrated how those who pray for others become partners in ministry ([Romans 15:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2015.30)). Offering specific requests, the apostle not only showed his dependence on the support of fellow believers but his trust that God powerfully answers prayer (vv. 31–33).

We’ll all experience days when we feel alone. But Paul shows us how to ask for prayer as we pray for others. When we’re wrapped in the intercessory prayers of God’s people, we can experience God’s strength and comfort no matter where life takes us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who has God used to encourage you through intercessory prayer? Who can you pray for today?

Loving God, thank You for the gift of intercessory prayers and for assuring me that You hear me and care for me wherever I go.

Read Moving Mountains: The Practice of Persistent Prayer at [DiscoverySeries.org/Q0740.](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0740.)

#### **Insight**

The book of Acts tells us that Paul desired to go to Rome to minister (19:21). During his three-month stay in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey (20:2–3), he wrote to the Roman believers in Jesus about his proposed visit and to solicit support for his future work in Spain ([Romans 1:10–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%201.10%E2%80%9315); [15:23–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Romans%2015.23%E2%80%9324), [28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Romans%2015.28%E2%80%9329)). Giving a summary of his missionary work and his future plans (15:14–33), the apostle said he had proclaimed the gospel of Christ “from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum [modern-day Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Albania]” (v. 19). But not ready to retire just yet, Paul intended to push further west all the way to Spain, visiting Rome on the way (v. 28).

# God Calling – 3/19/21

# Courage

I am here. Fear not. Can you really trust Me? I am a God of Power, as well as a Man of Love, so human, yet so divine.

Just trust. I cannot, and I will not, fail you. All is well. Courage.

Many are praying for you both.

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." - Psalm 20:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/20/21

# Friendship with God



Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing…? —[Genesis 18:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+18%3A17)

**The Delights of His Friendship.** Genesis 18 brings out the delight of true friendship with God, as compared with simply feeling His presence occasionally in prayer. This friendship means being so intimately in touch with God that you never even need to ask Him to show you His will. It is evidence of a level of intimacy which confirms that you are nearing the final stage of your discipline in the life of faith. When you have a right-standing relationship with God, you have a life of freedom, liberty, and delight; you are God’s will. And all of your commonsense decisions are actually His will for you, unless you sense a feeling of restraint brought on by a check in your spirit. You are free to make decisions in the light of a perfect and delightful friendship with God, knowing that if your decisions are wrong He will lovingly produce that sense of restraint. Once he does, you must stop immediately.

**The Difficulties of His Friendship.** Why did Abraham stop praying when he did? He stopped because he still was lacking the level of intimacy in his relationship with God, which would enable him boldly to continue on with the Lord in prayer until his desire was granted. Whenever we stop short of our true desire in prayer and say, “Well, I don’t know, maybe this is not God’s will,” then we still have another level to go. It shows that we are not as intimately acquainted with God as Jesus was, and as Jesus would have us to be— “…that they may be one just as We are one…” ([John 17:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:22)). Think of the last thing you prayed about— were you devoted to your desire or to God? Was your determination to get some gift of the Spirit for yourself or to get to God? “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” ([Matthew 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:8)). The reason for asking is so you may get to know God better. “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” ([Psalm 37:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37:4)). We should keep praying to get a perfect understanding of God Himself.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is an easy thing to argue from precedent because it makes everything simple, but it is a risky thing to do. Give God “elbow room”; let Him come into His universe as He pleases. If we confine God in His working to religious people or to certain ways, we place ourselves on an equality with God.  Baffled to Fight Better, 51 L

# CCEL – 3/20/21

The entrance of thy words giveth light.—[PSA. 119:130.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.130)

This . . . is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.—God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—The Word was God. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.—If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.—Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.—Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

[I John 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.5). -[II Cor. 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.6). -[John 1:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.1),[4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.4). -[I John 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.7).[Psa. 119:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.11). -[John 15:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.3).[Eph. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.8). -[I Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.9).

“My beloved.” [Song of Solomon 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.8)

This was a golden name which the ancient Church in her most joyous moments was wont to give to the Anointed of the Lord. When the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in her land, her love-note was sweeter than either, as she sang, “My beloved is mine and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.” Ever in her song of songs doth she call him by that delightful name, “My beloved!” Even in the long winter, when idolatry had withered the garden of the Lord, her prophets found space to lay aside the burden of the Lord for a little season, and to say, as Esaias did, “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.” Though the saints had never seen his face, though as yet he was not made flesh, nor had dwelt among us, nor had man beheld his glory, yet he was the consolation of Israel, the hope and joy of all the chosen, the “beloved” of all those who were upright before the Most High. We, in the summer days of the Church, are also wont to speak of Christ as the best beloved of our soul, and to feel that he is very precious, the “chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” So true is it that the Church loves Jesus, and claims him as her beloved, that the apostle dares to defy the whole universe to separate her from the love of Christ, and declares that neither persecutions, distress, affliction, peril, or the sword have been able to do it; nay, he joyously boasts, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

O that we knew more of thee, thou ever precious one!

“My sole possession is thy love;

In earth beneath, or heaven above,

I have no other store;

And though with fervent suit I pray,

And importune thee day by day,

I ask thee nothing more.”

# Word Live – 3/20/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/20/21

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# Today in the Word – 3/20/21

# Rachel - A Taste of Your Own Medicine

**Read:** [**Genesis 29:1–30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a1%e2%80%9330)

### **Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram**

29 Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. 2There he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. 3When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well’s mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.

4Jacob asked the shepherds, “My brothers, where are you from?”

“We’re from Harran,” they replied.

5He said to them, “Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?”

“Yes, we know him,” they answered.

6Then Jacob asked them, “Is he well?”

“Yes, he is,” they said, “and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.”

7“Look,” he said, “the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture.”

8“We can’t,” they replied, “until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep.”

9While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherd. 10When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban’s sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle’s sheep. 11Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. 12He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.

13As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister’s son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. 14Then Laban said to him, “You are my own flesh and blood.”

### **Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel**

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, 15Laban said to him, “Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.”

16Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17Leah had weak[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a1%e2%80%9330#fen-NIV-813a)] eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. 18Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, “I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.”

19Laban said, “It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.” 20So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

21Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her.”

22So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. 23But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. 24And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

25When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

26Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.”

28And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 29:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a1%e2%80%9330#en-NIV-813) Or delicate

Most couples enjoy telling the “how we met” story. It is fun to hear what brought two lives together. In Genesis 28 and 29, we learn the love story of Jacob and Rachel. When Jacob left home, his father instructed him to go to his uncle’s home in Paddan Aram, and “take a wife for yourself there” (28:2).

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. Deuteronomy 10:17

On the way, Jacob had a dream—and the Lord spoke the covenant over Jacob. What had been promised to Abraham and Isaac would now be his. Jacob was astonished. “If God watches over me, then He will be my God,” he vowed. This is our first indication of Jacob’s spiritual state.

When Jacob arrived in the east, he met shepherds by a well and asked if they knew his uncle Laban. They did (29:5), and Rachel—Laban’s daughter—entered, providentially, right on cue (v. 9). Laban greeted Jacob with hugs: “My own flesh and blood” (v. 14). Jacob arranged to work for seven years for Rachel’s hand in marriage. He was so in love that those years seemed like days. But on their wedding, Laban played a trick on the trickster. He sent Leah to Jacob in the dark of night (v. 23). When Jacob awoke, he was dismayed. “Why have you deceived me?” he asked (v. 25). The two men made another agreement—another seven years of work for Rachel. It is hard to feel too sorry for Jacob who suffered the consequences of his own tricky behavior. He was treated in the same way he had treated others. His own character stood between him and the full blessing of God.

**Apply the Word**

At some point, each of us has received a “taste of our own medicine.” Someone has acted toward us just as we have acted toward them or others. To Jacob’s credit, he didn’t lash out or deceive Laban in response. How have you responded in similar circumstances?

### **Pray with Us**

At some point, each of us has received a “taste of our own medicine.” Someone has acted toward us just as we have acted toward them or others. To Jacob’s credit, he didn’t lash out or deceive Laban in response. How have you responded in similar circumstances?

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/20/21

# Loving Correction

 **Read:** [**Luke 10:38–42**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2010.38%E2%80%9342)

### **At the Home of Martha and Mary**

38As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42but few things are needed—or indeed only one.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A38%E2%80%9342&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25406a)] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 10:42](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A38%E2%80%9342&version=NIV#en-NIV-25406) Some manuscripts but only one thing is needed

Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise. [Proverbs 15:31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2015.31)

For more than fifty years, my dad strove for excellence in his editing. His passion wasn’t to just look for mistakes but also to make the copy better in terms of clarity, logic, flow, and grammar. Dad used a green pen for his corrections, rather than a red one. A green pen he felt was “friendlier,” while slashes of red might be jarring to a novice or less confident writer. His objective was to gently point out a better way.

When Jesus corrected people, He did so in love. In some circumstances—such as when He was confronted with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees ([Matthew 23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2023))—He rebuked them harshly, yet still for their benefit. But in the case of his friend Martha, a gentle correction was all that was needed ([Luke 10:38–42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2010.38%E2%80%9342)). While the Pharisees responded poorly to His rebuke, Martha remained one of His dearest friends ([John 11:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2011.5)).

Correction can be uncomfortable and few of us like it. Sometimes, because of our pride, it’s hard to receive it graciously. The book of Proverbs talks much about wisdom and indicates that “heeding correction” is a sign of wisdom and understanding (15:31–32).

God’s loving correction helps us to adjust our direction and to follow Him more closely. Those who refuse it are sternly warned (v. 10), but those who respond to it through the power of the Holy Spirit will gain wisdom and understanding (vv. 31–32).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How do you usually respond to loving correction from your heavenly Father? What correction have you received from someone that’s made a significant difference in your life?

Father, help me learn to graciously accept Your loving correction so I can grow in wisdom and understanding.

#### **Insight**

There are at least two ways of reading Jesus’ correction of Martha in [Luke 10:38–42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2010.38%E2%80%9342). One is to hear Him gently telling her to put first things first: to join Mary and sit with the other disciples at His feet, listening to His teaching. There would be time later to prepare something to eat.

The other possibility is to hear the Teacher lovingly addressing what was happening in Martha’s heart. Yes, she was upset with Mary, but she also seems to be questioning Jesus’ concern for her. Didn’t He care that she had to do all the work by herself? Perhaps Jesus wants Martha to see that if she’d been attending to the details of her hospitality with the kind of heart she’d seen in Him—serving her guests out of love for Him and the others—then she, like Mary, would have been expressing a devotion and trust that would never be taken from her.

# God Calling – 3/20/21

# Help from Everywhere

Your foolish little activities are valueless in themselves. Seemingly trivial or of seemingly great moment, all deeds are alike if directed by Me. Just cease to function except through Me.

I am your Lord, just obey Me as you would expect a faithful willing secretary to carry out your directions. Just have no choice but Mine, no will but Mine.

I am dependent on no one agency when I am your supply. Through many channels My help and material flow can come.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God." - Psalm 40:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/21/21

# Identified or Simply Interested?



I have been crucified with Christ… —[Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+2%3A20)

The inescapable spiritual need each of us has is the need to sign the death certificate of our sin nature. I must take my emotional opinions and intellectual beliefs and be willing to turn them into a moral verdict against the nature of sin; that is, against any claim I have to my right to myself. Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ….” He did not say, “I have made a determination to imitate Jesus Christ,” or, “I will really make an effort to follow Him” —but— “I have been identified with Him in His death.” Once I reach this moral decision and act on it, all that Christ accomplished for me on the Cross is accomplished in me. My unrestrained commitment of myself to God gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to grant to me the holiness of Jesus Christ.

“…it is no longer I who live….” My individuality remains, but my primary motivation for living and the nature that rules me are radically changed. I have the same human body, but the old satanic right to myself has been destroyed.

“…and the life which I now live in the flesh,” not the life which I long to live or even pray that I live, but the life I now live in my mortal flesh— the life which others can see, “I live by faith in the Son of God….” This faith was not Paul’s own faith in Jesus Christ, but the faith the Son God had given to him (see [Ephesians 2:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2:8)). It is no longer a faith in faith, but a faith that transcends all imaginable limits— a faith that comes only from the Son of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

An intellectual conception of God may be found in a bad vicious character. The knowledge and vision of God is dependent entirely on a pure heart. Character determines the revelation of God to the individual. The pure in heart see God. Biblical Ethics, 125 R

# CCEL – 3/21/21

**Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.**—[REV. 3:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.2)

The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.—Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.—The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand.

[I Pet. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.7). -[I Pet. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.8). -[Deut. 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.4.html" \l "Deut.4.9). -[Heb. 10:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.38).[Mark 13:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.13.html" \l "Mark.13.37).[Isa. 41:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.10),[13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.13).

“Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.” [John 16:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.32)

Few had fellowship with the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the disciples were not sufficiently advanced in grace to be admitted to behold the mysteries of “the agony.” Occupied with the passover feast at their own houses, they represent the many who live upon the letter, but are mere babes as to the spirit of the gospel. To twelve, nay, to eleven only was the privilege given to enter Gethsemane and see “this great sight.” Out of the eleven, eight were left at a distance; they had fellowship, but not of that intimate sort to which men greatly beloved are admitted. Only three highly favoured ones could approach the veil of our Lord’s mysterious sorrow: within that veil even these must not intrude; a stone's-cast distance must be left between. He must tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there must be none with him. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, represent the few eminent, experienced saints, who may be written down as “Fathers;” these having done business on great waters, can in some degree measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemer’s passion. To some selected spirits it is given, for the good of others, and to strengthen them for future, special, and tremendous conflict, to enter the inner circle and hear the pleadings of the suffering High Priest; they have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are made conformable unto his death. Yet even these cannot penetrate the secret places of the Saviour’s woe. “Thine unknown sufferings” is the remarkable expression of the Greek liturgy: there was an inner chamber in our Master’s grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. There Jesus is “left alone.” Here Jesus was more than ever an “Unspeakable gift!” Is not Watts right when he sings—

“And all the unknown joys he gives,

Were bought with agonies unknown.”

# Word Live – 3/21/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/21/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/21/21

# Rachel and Leah - Conflict Management

**Read:** [**Genesis 29:31–30:24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24)

### **Jacob’s Children**

31When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. 32Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-828a" \o "See footnote a)] for she said, “It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.”

33She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too.” So she named him Simeon.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-829b" \o "See footnote b)]

34Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So he was named Levi.[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-830c" \o "See footnote c)]

35She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” So she named him Judah.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-831d" \o "See footnote d)] Then she stopped having children.

30 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”

2Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

3Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my servant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and I too can build a family through her.”

4So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, 5and she became pregnant and bore him a son. 6Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan.[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-837e" \o "See footnote e)]

7Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8Then Rachel said, “I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.” So she named him Naphtali.[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-839f" \o "See footnote f)]

9When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11Then Leah said, “What good fortune!”[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#fen-NIV-842g)] So she named him Gad.[[h](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-842h" \o "See footnote h)]

12Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13Then Leah said, “How happy I am! The women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.[[i](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-844i" \o "See footnote i)]

14During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

15But she said to her, “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?”

“Very well,” Rachel said, “he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

16So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. “You must sleep with me,” she said. “I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he slept with her that night.

17God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar.[[j](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-849j" \o "See footnote j)]

19Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20Then Leah said, “God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun.[[k](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-851k" \o "See footnote k)]

21Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

22Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. 23She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, “God has taken away my disgrace.” 24She named him Joseph,[[l](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24" \l "fen-NIV-855l" \o "See footnote l)] and said, “May the Lord add to me another son.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 29:32](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-828) Reuben sounds like the Hebrew for he has seen my misery; the name means see, a son.
2. [Genesis 29:33](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-829) Simeon probably means one who hears.
3. [Genesis 29:34](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-830) Levi sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for attached.
4. [Genesis 29:35](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-831) Judah sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for praise.
5. [Genesis 30:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-837) Dan here means he has vindicated.
6. [Genesis 30:8](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-839) Naphtali means my struggle.
7. [Genesis 30:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-842) Or “A troop is coming!”
8. [Genesis 30:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-842) Gad can mean good fortune or a troop.
9. [Genesis 30:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-844) Asher means happy.
10. [Genesis 30:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-849) Issachar sounds like the Hebrew for reward.
11. [Genesis 30:20](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-851) Zebulun probably means honor.
12. [Genesis 30:24](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29%3a31%e2%80%9330%3a24#en-NIV-855) Joseph means may he add.

When young couples engage in premarital counseling, they discuss topics like family, finances, communication, and—of course—conflict. Scripture is full of passages that can guide the newlyweds through difficult days, but Genesis 29:31–30:24 is not one of them. This passage records how God began to provide a family for Jacob, but things did not go as hoped. New obstacles to God’s covenant arose, and conflict ensued.

He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations. Psalm 105:8

Leah became pregnant quickly and often, providing Jacob with four sons. The names she gave her first three babies revealed her desperation to be loved by Jacob (29:34). But the name of her fourth son, Judah (“This time I will praise the Lord”), was a departure (v. 35). Perhaps this was evidence of growth. Then Leah stopped having children (v. 35). Whether Jacob no longer spent nights with her or God closed her womb, we do not know.

Tensions ran high in the household, as Rachel was unable to conceive (30:1). Each sister envied the other. Leah had children. Rachel had love. Rachel’s jealousy grew until she gave Jacob an ultimatum, “Give me children, or I’ll die!” (v. 1). Although Jacob felt anger, his words communicated God’s sovereignty. “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?” (v. 2). Rachel offered her handmaid to Jacob—to provide a child on her behalf. The plan “worked,” and Rachel named the child Dan (“vindication”) (v. 6). Tensions continued to mount. Eventually, God remembered Rachel (v. 22). He opened her womb, and she gave Jacob a son—a boy named Joseph. The original audience would have understood his importance. Again we see that God is the main actor here. God’s grace alone will bring His covenant to pass—regardless of human scheming and despite familial conflict.

**Apply the Word**

Are you involved in a conflict that you need God to resolve? What is your role? Can you release any jealousy or anger that might be standing in the way?

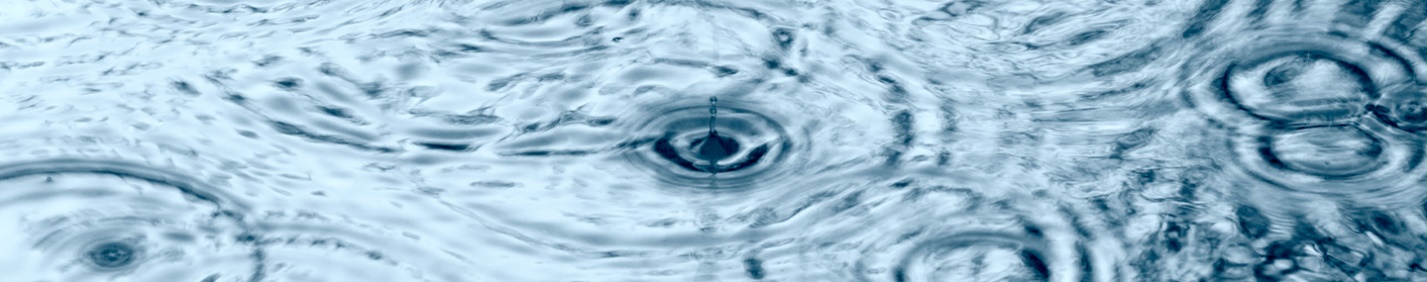
### **Pray with Us**

Lord, please convict us when we create barriers of anger or jealousy between ourselves and others. Turn our anger to forgiveness and our jealousy to compassion; teach us to serve rather than compete.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/21/21

# God at Work

 **Read:** [**Matthew 27:50–54**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.50%E2%80%9354)

50And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3A50%E2%80%9354&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24183a)] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

54When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 27:53](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3A50%E2%80%9354&version=NIV#en-NIV-24183) Or tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they

Surely he was the Son of God! [Matthew 27:54](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.54)

“God is crying.” Those were the words whispered by Bill Haley’s ten-year-old daughter as she stood in the rain with a group of multiethnic believers in Jesus. They had come to Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley to seek God and make sense of the legacy of racial discord in America. As they stood on the grounds where former slaves were buried, they joined hands in prayer. Then suddenly the wind began to blow, and it started to rain. As the leader called out for racial healing, the rain began to fall even harder. Those gathered believed that God was at work to bring reconciliation and forgiveness.

And so was it at Calvary—God was at work. After the crucified Jesus breathed His last, “The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open” ([Matthew 27:51–52](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.51%E2%80%9352)). Though some had denied who Jesus was, a centurion assigned to guard Him had come to a different conclusion: “When the centurion and those with him . . . saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, ‘Surely he was the Son of God!’ ” (v. 54).

In the death of Jesus, God was at work providing forgiveness of sin for all who believe in Him. “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them” ([2 Corinthians 5:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%205.19)). And what better way to demonstrate that we’ve been forgiven by God than to extend forgiveness to each other.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what ways have you shared the forgiveness you’ve received from God with others, even those who are different from you? If you haven’t received forgiveness from God through the death of Jesus, what’s keeping you from doing so today?

Father, thank You for loving the world so much that You sent Jesus so I can be forgiven. Help me to demonstrate forgiveness toward others by the way I live.

#### **Insight**

Matthew records three events and their aftereffects that occurred at the moment of Jesus’ death ([Matthew 27:51–53](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.51%E2%80%9353)). First, the temple curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. Many theologians have written that this symbolized God removing the barrier that separated people from His presence (only the high priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place, and only once a year with a blood sacrifice). Second, there was an earthquake. This caused rocks to split and tombs to open. An earthquake was a fitting response of creation to the death of its Creator. Finally, after Jesus’ resurrection, the dead from the open tombs were brought back to life and entered the city—another fitting result. When the Giver of life defeated death, the power that raised Him spread to others who had died.

# God Calling – 3/21/21

# All Is Well

Remember My Words to My disciples, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Can you tread the way I trod? Can you drink of My cup? "All is well." Say always, "All is well."

Long though the way may seem, there is not one inch too much. I, your Lord, am not only with you on the journey - I planned, and am planning, the journey.

There are Joys unspeakable in the way you go. Courage - courage - couragee.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet  
 believing, ye rejoice.

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/22/21

# The Burning Heart

Did not our heart burn within us? — [Luke 24:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+24%3A32)

We need to learn this secret of the burning heart. Suddenly Jesus appears to us, the fires are kindled, we have wonderful visions, then we have to learn to keep the secret of the burning heart that will go through anything. It is the dull, bald, dreary, commonplace day, with commonplace duties and people, that kills the burning heart unless we have learned the secret of abiding in Jesus.

Much of our distress as Christians comes not because of sin, but because we are ignorant of the laws of our own nature. For instance, the only test as to whether we ought to allow an emotion to have its way is to see what the outcome of the emotion will be. Push it to its logical conclusion, and if the outcome is something God would condemn, allow it no more way. But if it be an emotion kindled by the Spirit of God and you do not let that emotion have its right issue in your life, it will react on a lower level. That is the way sentimentalists are made. The higher the emotion is, the deeper the degradation will be, if it is not worked out on its proper level. If the Spirit of God has stirred you, make as many things inevitable as possible, let the consequences be what they will. We cannot stay on the mount of transfiguration, but we must obey the light we received there; we must act it out. When God gives a vision, transact business on that line, no matter what it costs.

"We cannot kindle when we will  
The fire which in the heart resides,  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides;  
But tasks in hours of insight will’d  
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill’d."

**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 – 3/22/21

**Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan.**—[GEN. 13:10,11.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.13.html" \l "Gen.13.10)

Just Lot . . . that righteous man.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Remember Lot's wife.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.—Be not ye . . . partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

[II Pet. 2:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.2.html" \l "iiPet.2.7).[Gal. 6:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.7). -[Luke 17:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.32).[II Cor. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.14),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17). -[Eph. 5:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.7),[10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.10).

“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed.” [Matthew 26:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html" \l "Matt.26.39)

There are several instructive features in our Saviour’s prayer in his hour of trial. It was lonely prayer. He withdrew even from his three favoured disciples. Believer, be much in solitary prayer, especially in times of trial. Family prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, will not suffice, these are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God's.

It was humble prayer. Luke says he knelt, but another evangelist says he “fell on his face.” Where, then, must be thy place, thou humble servant of the great Master? What dust and ashes should cover thy head! Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of prevalence with God unless we abase ourselves that he may exalt us in due time.

It was filial prayer. “Abba, Father.” You will find it a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. You have no rights as a subject, you have forfeited them by your treason; but nothing can forfeit a child’s right to a father’s protection. Be not afraid to say, “My Father, hear my cry.”

Observe that it was persevering prayer. He prayed three times. Cease not until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Lastly, it was the prayer of resignation. “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Yield, and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will determine for the best. Be thou content to leave thy prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet with humility and resignation, thou shalt surely prevail.

# Word Live – 3/22/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/22/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/22/21

# Rachel - Caught, Not Taught

**Read:** [**Genesis 31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31)

### **Jacob Flees From Laban**

31 Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, “Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.” 2And Jacob noticed that Laban’s attitude toward him was not what it had been.

3Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”

4So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were. 5He said to them, “I see that your father’s attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. 6You know that I’ve worked for your father with all my strength, 7yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. 8If he said, ‘The speckled ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, ‘The streaked ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked young. 9So God has taken away your father’s livestock and has given them to me.

10“In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. 11The angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob.’ I answered, ‘Here I am.’ 12And he said, ‘Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.’”

14Then Rachel and Leah replied, “Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father’s estate? 15Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. 16Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you.”

17Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, 18and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31#fen-NIV-892a)] to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

19When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father’s household gods. 20Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. 21So he fled with all he had, crossed the Euphrates River, and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

### **Laban Pursues Jacob**

22On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. 23Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. 24Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

25Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too. 26Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You’ve deceived me, and you’ve carried off my daughters like captives in war. 27Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn’t you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of timbrels and harps? 28You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You have done a foolish thing. 29I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’ 30Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father’s household. But why did you steal my gods?”

31Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. 32But if you find anyone who has your gods, that person shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it.” Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

33So Laban went into Jacob’s tent and into Leah’s tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he found nothing. After he came out of Leah’s tent, he entered Rachel’s tent. 34Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them inside her camel’s saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through everything in the tent but found nothing.

35Rachel said to her father, “Don’t be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I’m having my period.” So he searched but could not find the household gods.

36Jacob was angry and took Laban to task. “What is my crime?” he asked Laban. “How have I wronged you that you hunt me down? 37Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your household? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine, and let them judge between the two of us.

38“I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. 39I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. 40This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. 41It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. 42If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you.”

43Laban answered Jacob, “The women are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine. Yet what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children they have borne? 44Come now, let’s make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us.”

45So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. 46He said to his relatives, “Gather some stones.” So they took stones and piled them in a heap, and they ate there by the heap. 47Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, and Jacob called it Galeed.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31" \l "fen-NIV-921b" \o "See footnote b)]

48Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” That is why it was called Galeed. 49It was also called Mizpah,[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31" \l "fen-NIV-923c" \o "See footnote c)] because he said, “May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. 50If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.”

51Laban also said to Jacob, “Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me. 52This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me. 53May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.”

So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. 54He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

55Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31" \l "fen-NIV-929d" \o "See footnote d)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 31:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31#en-NIV-892) That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
2. [Genesis 31:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31#en-NIV-921) The Aramaic Jegar Sahadutha and the Hebrew Galeed both mean witness heap.
3. [Genesis 31:49](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31#en-NIV-923) Mizpah means watchtower.
4. [Genesis 31:55](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+31#en-NIV-929) In Hebrew texts this verse (31:55) is numbered 32:1.

My dad was a quiet man. His cerebral palsy made speech difficult. Consequently, most of what I learned from him I learned through observation. I absorbed some of his strengths and some of his weakness. From him, I learned tenacity and timidity, discipline and avoidance—none of which were overtly taught. A father’s character has influence on his children.

May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. Genesis 31:49

In Genesis 31, Laban’s sons grew resentful of Jacob’s fortune. The tension between the households escalated so much that Jacob contemplated a move. Relational strain was not the only motivation, however. God told Jacob to return to his fathers’ land (v. 3). To Rachel and Leah, Jacob articulated another frustration. Laban had cheated him repeatedly (v. 7). Only through God’s grace had he prospered. Rachel and Leah responded with their own complaints. The bride price Laban should have saved for them was gone. “Do whatever God has told you,” they said (v. 16). So, Rachel stole Laban’s gods, and the family ran. When Laban pursued and caught them, God told him: “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad” (v. 24). Disregarding God’s warning, Laban leveled a fourfold accusation against Jacob, including a question about stolen gods. When asked, Rachel lied, saying she couldn’t stand up because it was “that” time of the month (v. 35). In turn, Jacob recounted his own poor treatment by Laban.

The men finally made a truce called the Mizpah (v. 49). Although it sounds like a friendly blessing, “May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other” (v. 49), it was originally a warning and a declaration of mistrust.

**Apply the Word**

Isn’t it sobering how deception, mistrust, and manipulation extended throughout this chosen family of God? We pass on to our children both our good traits and our bad—without even trying. Ultimately, our children learn far more from how they see us live than any “lessons” that might pass through our lips.

### **Pray with Us**

We all know the painful truth that there is no perfect family. Lord, we cling to your grace, trusting you to heal and restore the hurts we inflict on one another. With each wrong we suffer, may you grant us the strength to forgive.

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/22/21

# Sweeter than Honey

 **Read:** [**Psalm 119:97–105**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20119.97%E2%80%93105)

#### **מ Mem**

97Oh, how I love your law!  
    I meditate on it all day long.  
98Your commands are always with me  
    and make me wiser than my enemies.  
99I have more insight than all my teachers,  
    for I meditate on your statutes.  
100I have more understanding than the elders,  
    for I obey your precepts.  
101I have kept my feet from every evil path  
    so that I might obey your word.  
102I have not departed from your laws,  
    for you yourself have taught me.  
103How sweet are your words to my taste,  
    sweeter than honey to my mouth!  
104I gain understanding from your precepts;  
    therefore I hate every wrong path.

#### **נ Nun**

105Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
    a light on my path.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! [Psalm 119:103](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20119.103)

On Chicago Day in October 1893, the city’s theaters shut down because the owners figured everyone would be attending the World’s Fair. Over seven hundred thousand people went, but Dwight Moody (1837–1899) wanted to fill a music hall at the other end of Chicago with preaching and teaching. His friend R. A. Torrey (1856–1928) was skeptical that Moody could draw a crowd on the same day as the fair. But by God’s grace, he did. As Torrey later concluded, the crowds came because Moody knew “the one Book that this old world most longs to know—the Bible.” Torrey longed for others to love the Bible as Moody did, reading it regularly with dedication and passion.

God through His Spirit brought people back to Himself at the end of the nineteenth century in Chicago, and He continues to speak today. We can echo the psalmist’s love for God and His Scriptures as he exclaims, “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” ([Psalm 119:103](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20119.103)). For the psalmist, God’s messages of grace and truth acted as a light for his path, a lamp for his feet (v. 105).

How can you grow more in love with the Savior and His message? As we immerse ourselves in Scripture, God will increase our devotion to Him and guide us, shining His light along the paths we walk.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what ways does your life change when you read the Bible regularly? How could you ensure you don’t lose this practice in the busyness of your daily life?

Gracious God, You’ve given me the gift of Scripture. Help me to read it and digest it, that I might serve You faithfully.

#### **Insight**

In the ancient Near East, lamps were made of clay bowls designed to support a wick and hold oil. Because oil could easily spill, the lamps were generally only used either indoors or in spaces of complete darkness such as a cave, where not even moonlight could be seen. Nighttime could be a particularly dangerous time in those days ([Psalm 91:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2091.5)), making a lamp a particularly powerful metaphor for hope and safety in what would otherwise be a desperately dangerous situation. Similar to [Psalm 119:105](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20119.105)’s comparison of Scripture to the illuminating guidance of a lamp, [Psalm 18:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2018.28) praises God by saying, “You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.”

# God Calling – 3/22/21

# A Bud Opened

To me, your intimate Friend, all Power is given. It is given Me of My Father, and have not My intimate friends a right to ask it?

You cannot have a need I cannot supply. A flower or one thousand pounds, one is no more difficult than the other.

Your need is a spiritual need to carry on My work. All spiritual supply is fashioned from Love. The flower and the thousand pounds - both fashioned from Love to those who need it. Do you not see this?

I thought of you, a bud opened, you converted that into a cheer for one you love or a smile. That cheer meant increased health. Increased health means work for Me, and that means souls for Me.

And so it goes on, a constant supply, but only if the need is a spiritual one.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." - John 15:15