# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/28/20

# What You Will Get

 I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go. —[Jeremiah 45:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Jeremiah+45%3A5)

This is the firm and immovable secret of the Lord to those who trust Him– “I will give your life to you….” What more does a man want than his life? It is the essential thing. “…your life…as a prize…” means that wherever you may go, even if it is into hell, you will come out with your life and nothing can harm it. So many of us are caught up in exhibiting things for others to see, not showing off property and possessions, but our blessings. All these things that we so proudly show have to go. But there is something greater that can never go– the life that “is hidden with Christ in God” ([Colossians 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3:3)).

Are you prepared to let God take you into total oneness with Himself, paying no more attention to what you call the great things of life? Are you prepared to surrender totally and let go? The true test of abandonment or surrender is in refusing to say, “Well, what about this?” Beware of your own ideas and speculations. The moment you allow yourself to think, “What about this?” you show that you have not surrendered and that you do not really trust God. But once you do surrender, you will no longer think about what God is going to do. Abandonment means to refuse yourself the luxury of asking any questions. If you totally abandon yourself to God, He immediately says to you, “I will give your life to you as a prize….” The reason people are tired of life is that God has not given them anything— they have not been given their life “as a prize.” The way to get out of that condition is to abandon yourself to God. And once you do get to the point of total surrender to Him, you will be the most surprised and delighted person on earth. God will have you absolutely, without any limitations, and He will have given you your life. If you are not there, it is either because of disobedience in your life or your refusal to be simple enough.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

“I have chosen you” (John 15:16). Keep that note of greatness in your creed. It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you.  My Utmost for His Highest, October 25, 837 R

# CCEL – 4/28/20

Behold the Lamb of God.—[JOHN 1:29.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.29)

It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: . . . manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God . . . that your faith and hope might be in God.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

[Heb. 10:4-7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.4). -[Isa. 53:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.7).[I Pet. 1:18-21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.18).[Rev. 5:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.5.html" \l "Rev.5.12).

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.” **[Psalm 119:49](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.49)**

Whatever your especial need may be, you may readily find some promise in the Bible suited to it. Are you faint and feeble because your way is rough and you are weary? Here is the promise—“He giveth power to the faint.” When you read such a promise, take it back to the great Promiser, and ask him to fulfil his own word. Are you seeking after Christ, and thirsting for closer communion with him? This promise shines like a star upon you—“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Take that promise to the throne continually; do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this—“Lord, thou hast said it, do as thou hast said.” Are you distressed because of sin, and burdened with the heavy load of your iniquities? Listen to these words—“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will no more remember thy sins.” You have no merit of your own to plead why he should pardon you, but plead his written engagements and he will perform them. Are you afraid lest you should not be able to hold on to the end, lest, after having thought yourself a child of God, you should prove a castaway? If that is your state, take this word of grace to the throne and plead it: “The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of my love shall not depart from thee.” If you have lost the sweet sense of the Saviour’s presence, and are seeking him with a sorrowful heart, remember the promises: “Return unto me, and I will return unto you;” “For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.” Banquet your faith upon God’s own word, and whatever your fears or wants, repair to the Bank of Faith with your Father’s note of hand, saying, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”

# Word Live – 4/28/20

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

# Scripture Union – 4/28/20

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

# Today in the Word – 4/28/20

# A Misunderstood Question

**Read:** [**Matthew 27:45–56**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356)

### **The Death of Jesus**

45From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356" \l "fen-NIV-24176a" \o "See footnote a)] lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#fen-NIV-24176b)]

47When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

48Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

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[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#fen-NIV-24183c)] 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!”

55Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356" \l "fen-NIV-24186d" \o "See footnote d)] and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 27:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#en-NIV-24176) Some manuscripts Eloi, Eloi
2. [Matthew 27:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#en-NIV-24176) Psalm 22:1
3. [Matthew 27:53](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#en-NIV-24183) Or tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they
4. [Matthew 27:56](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+27%3a45%e2%80%9356#en-NIV-24186) Greek Joses, a variant of Joseph

After Steve Jobs died, his family reported that his last words were “Oh, wow!” Blues singer Bessie Smith’s last words were “I’m going but I’m going in the name of the Lord.” Singer Frank Sinatra’s final words were less hopeful. It is reported that he died after saying, “I’m losing it.”

For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one. Psalm 22:24

In His last moments on the cross, Jesus cried out to the Father: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (v. 46). Some find this cry disturbing. Did it mean Jesus lost hope when the Father did not deliver Him from the suffering of the cross? No. This was not a cry of despair but a quotation from the Psalms. By praying the words of Psalm 22:1, Jesus also claimed for Himself the promise of Psalm 22:24: “For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.” The Savior’s last words were words of hope.

Some who heard Jesus thought He was calling on the prophet Elijah for help (v. 48). When Jesus was offered a sponge soaked with sour wine, they said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him” (v. 49). This was probably another taunt rather than an expression of genuine hope. It may reflect a common expectation that Elijah would announce the Messiah’s arrival (Matt. 17:10). The words “gave up” speak of control. Jesus delivered up His spirit to the Father (v. 50).

Matthew records two remarkable consequences of Christ’s death. The first is the rending of the temple curtain that signified the separation between God and humanity. The thickly woven curtain tore from top to bottom. The second was a resurrection of “many holy people” after Christ rose from the dead. They “appeared to many people” (v. 53).

>> When we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Today, take a moment to reflect on the significance of the Crucifixion. What does it mean to you? How does it feel to know that the Son of God was willing to suffer on your behalf?

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s passage mentions a surprising occurrence: the temple curtain torn from top to bottom. What a striking metaphor of Christ removing the separation between God and us! Thank Jesus in prayer for the wonder and joy of His salvation.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/28/20

# Let Us Praise!



### **Read: Psalm 67 [**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+67&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14895a)**]**

#### **For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.**

1May God be gracious to us and bless us  
    and make his face shine on us—[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+67&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14895b)]  
2so that your ways may be known on earth,  
    your salvation among all nations.

3May the peoples praise you, God;  
    may all the peoples praise you.  
4May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
    for you rule the peoples with equity  
    and guide the nations of the earth.  
5May the peoples praise you, God;  
    may all the peoples praise you.

6The land yields its harvest;  
    God, our God, blesses us.  
7May God bless us still,  
    so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 67:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+67&version=NIV#en-NIV-14895) In Hebrew texts 67:1-7 is numbered 67:2-8.
2. [Psalm 67:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+67&version=NIV#en-NIV-14895) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 4.

May the nations be glad and sing for joy. [Psalm 67:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2067.4)

When the alarm on Shelley’s phone goes off every day at 3:16 in the afternoon, she takes a praise break. She thanks God and acknowledges His goodness. Although she communicates with God throughout the day, Shelley loves to take this break because it helps her celebrate her intimate relationship with Him.

Inspired by her joyful devotion, I decided to set a specific time each day to thank Christ for His sacrifice on the cross and to pray for those who have yet to be saved. I wonder what it would be like if all believers in Jesus stopped to praise Him in their own way and pray for others every day.

The image of a beautiful wave of worship rolling to the ends of the earth resounds in the words of [Psalm 67](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2067). The psalmist pleads for God’s grace, proclaiming his desire to make His name great in all the nations (vv. 1–2). He sings, “May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you” (v. 3). He celebrates His sovereign rule and faithful guidance (v. 4). As a living testimony of God’s great love and abundant blessings, the psalmist leads God’s people into jubilant praise (vv. 5–6).

God’s continued faithfulness toward His beloved children inspires us to acknowledge Him. As we do, others can join us in trusting Him, revering Him, following Him, and acclaiming Him as Lord.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When can you take a few minutes today to praise God? What do you have to be thankful for?

God, You are worthy of all our praise!

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 67](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2067) is a prayer that draws from God’s blessing to Abraham in [Genesis 12:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2012.1%E2%80%933) as well as the Aaronic blessing in [Numbers 6:24–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%206.24%E2%80%9327) (“the Lord bless you and keep you . . .”). Because it emphasizes crops as a sign of God’s blessing ([Psalm 67:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2067.6)), this psalm might have been composed for use during harvest celebrations like the Festival of Tabernacles.

Typically, in the Old Testament the word translated “people” (Hebrew ‘am) refers primarily to the nation of Israel; however, [Psalm 67](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2067) suggests that God’s blessing on “the people” extends beyond Israel to “the nations” (v. 4) and strongly emphasizes the universal scope of God’s goodness. Through God’s goodness to His people, He becomes known and revered throughout the earth (v. 2), just as God promised Abraham.

# God Calling – 4/28/20

# The Roundabout Way

Through briers, through waste places, through glades, up mountain heights, down into valleys, I lead. But ever with the Leadership goes the Helping Hand.

Glorious to follow where your Master goes. But remember that the varied path does not always mean that you need the varied training.

We are seeking lost sheep -- we are bringing the Kingdom into places where it has not been known before. So realize that you are joining Me on My quest -- My undying quest, tracking down the souls.

I am not choosing ways that will fret and tire -- just to fret and tire; we are out to save. You may not always see the soul we seek. I know.

"Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." Luke 15:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/29/20

# Gracious Uncertainty

 …it has not yet been revealed what we shall be… —[1 John 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+John+3%3A2)

Our natural inclination is to be so precise– trying always to forecast accurately what will happen next– that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think that we must reach some predetermined goal, but that is not the nature of the spiritual life. The nature of the spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty. Consequently, we do not put down roots. Our common sense says, “Well, what if I were in that circumstance?” We cannot presume to see ourselves in any circumstance in which we have never been.

Certainty is the mark of the commonsense life– gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, not knowing what tomorrow may bring. This is generally expressed with a sigh of sadness, but it should be an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God. As soon as we abandon ourselves to God and do the task He has placed closest to us, He begins to fill our lives with surprises. When we become simply a promoter or a defender of a particular belief, something within us dies. That is not believing God– it is only believing our belief about Him. Jesus said, “…unless you…become as little children…” ([Matthew 18:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:3)). The spiritual life is the life of a child. We are not uncertain of God, just uncertain of what He is going to do next. If our certainty is only in our beliefs, we develop a sense of self-righteousness, become overly critical, and are limited by the view that our beliefs are complete and settled. But when we have the right relationship with God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy. Jesus said, “…believe also in Me” ([John 14:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14:1)), not, “Believe certain things about Me”. Leave everything to Him and it will be gloriously and graciously uncertain how He will come in– but you can be certain that He will come. Remain faithful to Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/29/20

Consider how great things He hath done for you.—[I SAM. 12:24.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html" \l "iSam.12.24)

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.—The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.—He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

[Deut. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.2),[5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.8.html" \l "Deut.8.5).[Psa. 119:75](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.75),[71](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.71),[67](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.67). -[Psa. 118:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.118.html" \l "Ps.118.18). -[Psa. 103:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.10),[14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.14).

“Thou art my hope in the day of evil.” **[Jeremiah 17:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.17.html" \l "Jer.17.17)**

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. True, it is written in God’s Word, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;” and it is a great truth, that religion is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience tells us that if the course of the just be “As the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” yet sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer’s sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light. There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian career; they have walked along the “green pastures” by the side of the “still waters,” but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the Land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, “Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen.” Oh! say not so, thou who art walking in darkness. The best of God’s saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of his children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his harp from the willows. Perhaps the Lord allotted you at first a smooth and unclouded path, because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God’s full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten bough of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

# Word Live – 4/29/20

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# Scripture Union – 4/29/20

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

# Today in the Word – 4/29/20

# As Good as His Word

**Read:** [**Matthew 28:1–15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3a1%e2%80%9315)

### **Jesus Has Risen**

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

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

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

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

### **The Guards’ Report**

11While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, 13telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” 15So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the linchpin of the Christian faith. “If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?” Timothy Keller explains. “The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead.”

He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Matthew 28:6

Early on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary,” went to the tomb. Luke reveals that the “other” Mary was the mother of James the younger (Mark 16:1). Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John, was also with them. Their visit was an expression of love more than an act of faith. They did not expect to find the tomb empty. They went with spices to anoint Jesus’ body (Luke 23:56; 24:1). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had already prepared Jesus’ body for burial with seventy-five pounds of spices on Friday (John 19:38–39). The women may or may not have known this. What is clear is that they were not expecting to find Jesus alive.

Instead, the women found the great stone that covered the tomb rolled away and an angel seated on top of the stone, as if at leisure (v. 2). Perhaps this underscored the fact that the tomb was empty. In his message the angel reminded the women of what Jesus had promised: “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said” (Matt 28:6). As they ran back to announce this good news to the disciples, Jesus met them. This was no apparition or hallucination: “They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him” (v. 9). Jesus rose bodily.

>> The resurrection was a powerful moment that continues to affect our lives today. Because Jesus, who was crucified in weakness, now lives by God’s power, we also live by God’s power. How can this knowledge shape the way you live today?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, Jesus, our risen Savior, show us by your Spirit how to live in the light of your Resurrection as your people, freed by your blood and reconciled to the Father. Amen!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/29/20

# Right Beside You

 **Read:** [**Deuteronomy 4:5–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%204.5%E2%80%938)

5See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. 6Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” 7What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

The Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him. [Deuteronomy 4:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%204.7)

Each day at a post office in Jerusalem, workers sort through piles of undeliverable letters in an attempt to guide each to its recipient. Many end up in a specially marked box labeled “Letters to God.”

About a thousand such letters reach Jerusalem each year, addressed simply to God or Jesus. Puzzled by what to do with them, one worker began taking the letters to Jerusalem’s Western Wall to have them placed between its stone blocks with other written prayers. Most of the letters ask for a job, a spouse, or good health. Some request forgiveness, others just offer thanks. One man asked God if his deceased wife could appear in his dreams because he longed to see her again. Each sender believed God would listen, if only He could be reached.

The Israelites learned much as they journeyed through the wilderness. One lesson was that their God wasn’t like the other gods known at the time—distant, deaf, geographically bound, reached only by lengthy pilgrimage or international mail. No, “the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him” ([Deuteronomy 4:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%204.7)). What other people could claim that? This was revolutionary news!

God doesn’t live in Jerusalem. He’s close by us, wherever we are. Some still need to discover this radical truth. If only each of those letters could be sent the reply: God is right beside you. Just talk to Him.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

God’s accessibility to us is a profound gift. How can you avoid taking it for granted? Who in your life needs to know of God’s readiness to hear their prayer?

God, You are bigger than the universe yet closer than a breath. Thank You for being so interested in us, attending to every prayer.

#### **Insight**

[Deuteronomy 4:5–8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%204.5%E2%80%938) comes just after Moses has recounted the greatest disappointment of his long life. God prevented Moses from entering the Promised Land because of how he mishandled his anger with the people (3:23–27; also [Numbers 20:1–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2020.1%E2%80%9313)). Despite his grief, Moses continued to serve God by advising His people even as he transitioned power to Joshua. Here Moses emphasizes the distinctiveness of Israel. “What other nation is so great?” he asks rhetorically ([Deuteronomy 4:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%204.7%E2%80%938)). After all, God had chosen this nation to be His treasured possession (see [Exodus 19:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2019.5); [Deuteronomy 14:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2014.2); [26:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deuteronomy%2026.18)).

Those who follow Jesus are also treasured by God and set apart for Him. Peter reminds us, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession” ([1 Peter 2:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%202.9)).

# God Calling – 4/29/20

# Disharmony

Seek and ye shall find. Shall find that inner knowledge that makes the problems of life plain.

The difficulties of life are caused by disharmony in the individual. There is no discord in My Kingdom, only a something unconquered in My disciples. The rule of My Kingdom is perfect order, perfect harmony, perfect supply, perfect love, perfect honesty, perfect obedience -- all power, all conquest, all success,

But so often My servants lack power, conquest, success, supply, harmony, and think I fail in My promises because these are not manifested in their lives.

These are but the outward manifestations that result from the obedience, honesty, order, love -- and they come, not in answer to urgent prayer, but naturally as light results from a lighted candle.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/30/20

# Spontaneous Love

 Love suffers long and is kind… —[1 Corinthians 13:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+13%3A4)

Love is not premeditated– it is spontaneous; that is, it bursts forth in extraordinary ways. There is nothing of precise certainty in Paul’s description of love. We cannot predetermine our thoughts and actions by saying, “Now I will never think any evil thoughts, and I will believe everything that Jesus would have me to believe.” No, the characteristic of love is spontaneity. We don’t deliberately set the statements of Jesus before us as our standard, but when His Spirit is having His way with us, we live according to His standard without even realizing it. And when we look back, we are amazed at how unconcerned we have been over our emotions, which is the very evidence that real spontaneous love was there. The nature of everything involved in the life of God in us is only discerned when we have been through it and it is in our past.

The fountains from which love flows are in God, not in us. It is absurd to think that the love of God is naturally in our hearts, as a result of our own nature. His love is there only because it “has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit…” ([Romans 5:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5:5)).

If we try to prove to God how much we love Him, it is a sure sign that we really don’t love Him. The evidence of our love for Him is the absolute spontaneity of our love, which flows naturally from His nature within us. And when we look back, we will not be able to determine why we did certain things, but we can know that we did them according to the spontaneous nature of His love in us. The life of God exhibits itself in this spontaneous way because the fountains of His love are in the Holy Spirit.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

When you are joyful, be joyful; when you are sad, be sad. If God has given you a sweet cup, don’t make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don’t try and make it sweet; take things as they come.  Shade of His Hand, 1226 L

# CCEL – 4/30/20

Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.—[I JOHN 2:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.5)

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.—If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

[Heb. 13:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.20).[I John 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.3). -[John 14:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.23). -[I John 3:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.6). -[I John 4:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.17).

“And all the children of Israel murmured.” **[Numbers 14:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.14.html" \l "Num.14.2)**

There are murmurers amongst Christians now, as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who, when the rod falls, cry out against the afflictive dispensation. They ask, “Why am I thus afflicted? What have I done to be chastened in this manner?” A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Can he treat thee more hardly than thou deservest? Consider what a rebel thou wast once, but he has pardoned thee! Surely, if he in his wisdom sees fit now to chasten thee, thou shouldst not complain. After all, art thou smitten as hardly as thy sins deserve? Consider the corruption which is in thy breast, and then wilt thou wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh thyself, and discern how much dross is mingled with thy gold; and dost thou think the fire too hot to purge away so much dross as thou hast? Does not that proud rebellious spirit of thine prove that thy heart is not thoroughly sanctified? Are not those murmuring words contrary to the holy submissive nature of God’s children? Is not the correction needed? But if thou wilt murmur against the chastening, take heed, for it will go hard with murmurers. God always chastises his children twice, if they do not bear the first stroke patiently. But know one thing—“He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” All his corrections are sent in love, to purify thee, and to draw thee nearer to himself. Surely it must help thee to bear the chastening with resignation if thou art able to recognize thyFather's hand. For “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” “Murmur not as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

# Word Live – 4/30/20

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

# Scripture Union – 4/30/20

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

# Today in the Word – 4/30/20

# Faith and Doubt

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

### **The Great Commission**

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

In one parable, Jesus told the story of a man in hell who pleaded with Abraham to send someone back from the dead to warn his brothers of the danger. Abraham refused the man’s request: “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead” (Luke 16:31).

Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. John 20:29

Jesus’ point was proven after His own resurrection. He had directed the eleven remaining disciples to meet Him on “the mountain” in Galilee (Matt. 28:16). Matthew adds a surprising detail about this encounter with Jesus in verse 17: “some doubted.” Who were these doubters? Some believe they were the eleven. Others think it was a larger group that was present. At first the eleven struggled to accept the testimony of those who had seen the risen Christ (Luke 24:11; John 20:24–27).

There is more to faith than hearing or seeing. We may think that it would be easier for us to believe if we had been eyewitnesses. Yet some saw Jesus after the resurrection and still doubted. There is strong evidence to support the resurrection of Christ. Hundreds saw Him (1 Cor. 15:6). But the Bible teaches that seeing is not essential to faith. Jesus promised a special blessing to those who would believe without seeing: “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

Not only is Jesus still alive, He is present with us and has given us authority to act as His representatives. The church’s task is to make disciples by baptizing and teaching. They must then learn what it means to live under the authority of Jesus Christ.

>> As we conclude this month’s study, know that our task, as Christ’s church, is done for Jesus but also with Jesus. He empowers us by His Spirit to bear witness to the truth of His resurrection with our lips and by our lives (Acts 1:8). Go forward today as a bearer of this amazing news!

### **Pray with Us**

On this last day of the month, our prayer is that we will grow in our love and commitment to our Savior, will continue to be surprised by Him, and will speak of His truth and love with our lives. Thank you for praying with us!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 4/30/20

# Free Indeed

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

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

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

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

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

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

The film Amistad tells the story of West African slaves in 1839 taking over the boat that was transporting them and killing the captain and some of the crew. Eventually they were recaptured, imprisoned, and taken to trial. An unforgettable courtroom scene features Cinqué, leader of the slaves, passionately pleading for freedom. Three simple words—repeated with increasing force by a shackled man with broken English—eventually silenced the courtroom, “Give us free!” Justice was served and the men were freed.

Most people today aren’t in danger of being physically bound, yet true liberation from the spiritual bondage of sin remains elusive. The words of Jesus in [John 8:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.36) offer sweet relief: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” Jesus pointed to Himself as the source of true emancipation because He offers forgiveness to anyone who believes in Him. Though some in Christ’s audience claimed freedom (v. 33), their words, attitudes, and actions regarding Jesus betrayed their claim.

Jesus longs to hear those who would echo Cinqué’s plea and say, “Give me freedom!” With compassion He awaits the cries of those who are shackled by unbelief or fear or failure. Freedom is a matter of the heart. Such liberty is reserved for those who believe that Jesus is God’s Son who was sent into the world to break the power of sin’s hold on us through His death and resurrection.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How has Jesus set you free? What can you share with others about God’s liberating power?

Jesus, help me to believe that You can set me free.

#### **Insight**

The debate that started in [John 7:25–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%207.25%E2%80%9327) over Jesus’ identity and whether He was the Messiah intensified in chapter 8. The people asked Him, “Who are you?” (v. 25). John tells us that “many believed in him” (v. 30). Then Jesus clarified the identity of His true disciples: those who not only know Jesus, but also obey Him (v. 31). Jesus also cautioned the Jews that their privileged status as God’s chosen people and their heritage standing as descendants of Abraham had blinded them. They refused to see that they too were slaves to sin (vv. 31–36). Only when they accepted and believed the truth that Jesus is their Messiah—that He’s “the way and the truth and the life” (14:6)—would they be truly set free. “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (8:36).

# God Calling – 4/30/20

# Springtime

Rejoice in the Spring time of the year. Let there be Spring time in your hearts. The full time of fruit is not yet but there is the promise of the blossom.

Know surely that your lives too are full of glad promise. Such blessings are to be yours. Such joys, such wonders.

All is indeed well. Live in My Sunshine and My Love.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Psalm 4:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/1/20

# Faith— Not Emotion

 We walk by faith, not by sight. —[2 Corinthians 5:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A7)

For a while, we are fully aware of God’s concern for us. But then, when God begins to use us in His work, we begin to take on a pitiful look and talk only of our trials and difficulties. And all the while God is trying to make us do our work as hidden people who are not in the spotlight. None of us would be hidden spiritually if we could help it. Can we do our work when it seems that God has sealed up heaven? Some of us always want to be brightly illuminated saints with golden halos and with the continual glow of inspiration, and to have other saints of God dealing with us all the time. A self-assured saint is of no value to God. He is abnormal, unfit for daily life, and completely unlike God. We are here, not as immature angels, but as men and women, to do the work of this world. And we are to do it with an infinitely greater power to withstand the struggle because we have been born from above.

If we continually try to bring back those exceptional moments of inspiration, it is a sign that it is not God we want. We are becoming obsessed with the moments when God did come and speak with us, and we are insisting that He do it again. But what God wants us to do is to “walk by faith.” How many of us have set ourselves aside as if to say, “I cannot do anything else until God appears to me”? He will never do it. We will have to get up on our own, without any inspiration and without any sudden touch from God. Then comes our surprise and we find ourselves exclaiming, “Why, He was there all the time, and I never knew it!” Never live for those exceptional moments— they are surprises. God will give us His touches of inspiration only when He sees that we are not in danger of being led away by them. We must never consider our moments of inspiration as the standard way of life— our work is our standard.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The attitude of a Christian towards the providential order in which he is placed is to recognize that God is behind it for purposes of His own.  Biblical Ethics, 99 R

# CCEL – 5/1/20

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

To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

God hath called us to peace.—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.—Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Great peace have they which love thy law.

[Rom. 8:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.6).[I Cor. 7:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html" \l "iCor.7.15). -[John 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.27). -[Rom. 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.13).[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12). -[Isa. 26:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.3).[Isa. 32:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.32.html" \l "Isa.32.17). -[Prov. 1:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.1.html" \l "Prov.1.33).[Psa. 119:165](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.165).

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” **[Song of Solomon 5:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.13)**

Lo, the flowery month is come! March winds and April showers have done their work, and the earth is all bedecked with beauty. Come my soul, put on thine holiday attire and go forth to gather garlands of heavenly thoughts. Thou knowest whither to betake thyself, for to thee “the beds of spices” are well known, and thou hast so often smelt the perfume of “the sweet flowers,” that thou wilt go at once to thy well-beloved and find all loveliness, all joy in him. That cheek once so rudely smitten with a rod, oft bedewed with tears of sympathy and then defiled with spittle—that cheek as it smiles with mercy is as fragrant aromatic to my heart. Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting, O Lord Jesus, and therefore I will find my dearest delight in praising thee. Those cheeks were furrowed by the plough of grief, and crimsoned with red lines of blood from thy thorn-crowned temples; such marks of love unbounded cannot but charm my soul far more than “pillars of perfume.” If I may not see the whole of his face I would behold his cheeks, for the least glimpse of him is exceedingly refreshing to my spiritual sense and yields a variety of delights. In Jesus I find not only fragrance, but a bed of spices; not one flower, but all manner of sweet flowers. He is to me my rose and my lily, my heartsease and my cluster of camphire. When he is with me it is May all the year round, and my soul goes forth to wash her happy face in the morning-dew of his grace, and to solace herself with the singing of the birds of his promises. Precious Lord Jesus, let me in very deed know the blessedness which dwells in abiding, unbroken fellowship with thee. I am a poor worthless one, whose cheek thou hast deigned to kiss! O let me kiss thee in return with the kisses of my lips.

# Word Live – 5/1/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/1/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/1/20

# The Family of God

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 1:1–2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+1%3a1%e2%80%932)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2To Timothy my true son in the faith:

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

“The pastor holds a significant role as a shepherd of the church. They teach the Word and shepherd God’s people. For a pastor, competence is measured by character.”

Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Proverbs 1:8

Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus are often referred to as the “pastoral epistles” because they include guidelines for church practice and qualifications for leaders. Paul does not use the term pastor. In 1 Timothy 3:1–13, he speaks of overseers and deacons. In Titus 1:5–6 overseers are called elders. The term pastor comes from the Latin word for shepherd. Paul uses this term in his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus. He urges them: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Peter uses the same language urging church elders to be “shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care” (1 Peter 5:1–2).

Today’s churches often consider pastors who have great resumes. They want someone who has valuable experience. Interestingly, Paul’s qualifications in 1 Timothy and Titus primarily emphasize character. The skills he does list have to do with teaching and management. When Paul says the church’s leaders must be “able to teach,” he means they must be knowledgeable in the faith. Titus 1:9 develops this thought in greater detail: “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” The emphasis is not on preaching style, but the pastor’s conviction and ability to defend the faith.

The way a leader manages relationships takes precedent over the development of church programs. The proving ground for this skill is in our family (1 Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6). In addition to positive qualifications, the apostle also includes several negatives. Church leaders should not be bullies whose interactions are marked by violence and quarreling (1 Tim. 3:3). They should not be addicted to alcohol or consumed with greed (Titus 1:7). The pastor holds a significant role as a shepherd of the church. They teach the Word and shepherd God’s people. For a pastor, competence is measured by character.

### **Pray with Us**

As we start this month’s Bible study and prayer journey, From Generation to Generation, we thank the Lord for the Today in the Word family and for the generations of believers, past and present.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/1/20

# Living in the Branches

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 4:14–24**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.14%E2%80%9324)

14Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

### **Instructions for Christian Living**

17So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. [Ephesians 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%203.17) nlt

As I shared with my counselor my roller-coaster of emotions after a stress-filled week, she listened thoughtfully. Then she invited me to look out the window at the trees, lush with autumnal oranges and golds, the branches swaying in the wind.

Pointing out that the trunks weren’t moving at all in the wind, my counselor explained, “We’re a bit like that. When life is blowing at us from every direction, of course our emotions will go up and down and all around. But sometimes we live as if we only have branches. Our goal is to help you find your own trunk. That way, even when life is pulling from all sides, you won’t be living in your branches. You’ll still be secure and stable.”

It’s an image that’s stuck with me, and it’s similar to the image Paul offered new believers in Ephesians. Reminding them of God’s incredible gift—a new life of tremendous purpose and value ([Ephesians 2:6–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.6%E2%80%9310)), Paul shared his longing that they’d become deeply “rooted and established” in Christ’s love (3:17), no longer “blown here and there by every wind of teaching” (4:14).

On our own, it’s easy to feel insecure and fragile, pummeled by our fears and insecurities. But as we grow in our true identity in Christ (vv. 22–24), we can experience deep peace with God and each other (v. 3), nourished and sustained by Christ’s power and beauty (vv. 15–16).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When do you feel most “blown here and there” by life’s challenges? How might remembering your identity in Jesus encourage and strengthen you?

Jesus, thank You for the overwhelmingly good news that the strength needed to withstand life’s challenges isn’t our own. Help us to grow ever-deeper roots in Your love and our place in Your family.

#### **Insight**

The church at Ephesus faced tremendous challenges in their home city. One was the fanatical devotion of the Ephesian people to the goddess Artemis, whose temple there was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Additionally, Ephesus was a center of the dark arts—magic and the occult. In [Acts 19:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2019.19), some of the people who trusted Christ displayed their spiritual commitment by destroying the scrolls used in the practice of sorcery—scrolls valued at 50,000 drachmas (a drachma was a day’s wage). With challenges like these, Ephesus was a difficult place to live for Christ.

# God Calling – 5/1/20

# Delay Is Not Denial

Read the lessons of Divine control in Nature's laws.

Nature is but the expression of Eternal Thought in Time. Study the outward form - grasp the Eternal Thought, and if you can read the thoughts of the Father, then indeed you know Him.

Leave Me out of nothing. Love all My ways with you. Know indeed that "All is well."  Delay is but the wonderful and all-loving restraint of your Father - not reluctance, not desire to deny - but the Divine control of a Father who can scarcely brook the delay.

Delay has to be - sometimes.  Your lives are so linked up with those of others, so bound by circumstances that to let your desire have instant fulfillment might in many cases cause another, as earnest prayer, to go unanswered.

But think for a moment of the Love and thoughtful care that seek to harmonize and reconcile all your desires and longings and prayers.

Delay is not denial - not even withholding. It is the opportunity for God to work out your problems and accomplish your desires in the most wonderful way possible for you.

Oh! children, trust Me. Remember that your Maker is also your Servant, quick to fulfill, quick to achieve, faithful in accomplishment.  Yes.  All is well.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than  your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.  Isaiah 55:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/2/20

# The Patience To Wait for the Vision

Though it tarries, wait for it… —[Habakkuk 2:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Habakkuk+2%3A3)

Patience is not the same as indifference; patience conveys the idea of someone who is tremendously strong and able to withstand all assaults. Having the vision of God is the source of patience because it gives us God’s true and proper inspiration. Moses endured, not because of his devotion to his principles of what was right, nor because of his sense of duty to God, but because he had a vision of God. “…he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” ([Hebrews 11:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11:27)). A person who has the vision of God is not devoted to a cause or to any particular issue— he is devoted to God Himself. You always know when the vision is of God because of the inspiration that comes with it. Things come to you with greatness and add vitality to your life because everything is energized by God. He may give you a time spiritually, with no word from Himself at all, just as His Son experienced during His time of temptation in the wilderness. When God does that, simply endure, and the power to endure will be there because you see God.

“Though it tarries, wait for it….” The proof that we have the vision is that we are reaching out for more than we have already grasped. It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually. The psalmist said, “What shall I render to the Lord…? I will take up the cup of salvation…” ([Psalm 116:12-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+116:12-13)). We are apt to look for satisfaction within ourselves and say, “Now I’ve got it! Now I am completely sanctified. Now I can endure.” Instantly we are on the road to ruin. Our reach must exceed our grasp. Paul said, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on…” ([Philippians 3:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3:12)). If we have only what we have experienced, we have nothing. But if we have the inspiration of the vision of God, we have more than we can experience. Beware of the danger of spiritual relaxation.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The great point of Abraham’s faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God.  Not Knowing Whither, 903 R

# CCEL – 5/2/20

Surely theLordis in this place; and I knew it not.—[GEN. 28:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.28.html" \l "Gen.28.16)

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.—Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded?—Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Ye are the temple of living God.

[Matt. 18:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.18.html" \l "Matt.18.20). -[Matt. 28:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.28.html" \l "Matt.28.20). -[Exo. 33:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.14).[Psa. 139:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.7). -[Jer. 23:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.23.html" \l "Jer.23.23).[I Kgs. 8:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iKgs.8.html" \l "iKgs.8.27). -[Isa. 57:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.57.html" \l "Isa.57.15). -[II Cor. 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16).

“I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.” **[John 17:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.15)**

It is a sweet and blessed event which will occur to all believers in God’s own time—the going home to be with Jesus. In a few more years the Lord’s soldiers, who are now fighting “the good fight of faith” will have done with conflict, and have entered into the joy of their Lord. But although Christ prays that his people may eventually be with him where he is, he does not ask that they may be taken at once away from this world to heaven. He wishes them to stay here. Yet how frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, “O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest;” but Christ does not pray like that, he leaves us in his Father’s hands, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each be gathered into our Master’s garner. Jesus does not plead for our instant removal by death, for to abide in the flesh is needful for others if not profitable for ourselves. He asks that we may be kept from evil, but he never asks for us to be admitted to the inheritance in glory till we are of full age. Christians often want to die when they have any trouble. Ask them why, and they tell you, “Because we would be with the Lord.” We fear it is not so much because they are longing to be with the Lord, as because they desire to get rid of their troubles; else they would feel the same wish to die at other times when not under the pressure of trial. They want to go home, not so much for the Saviour’s company, as to be at rest. Now it is quite right to desire to depart if we can do it in the same spirit that Paul did, because to be with Christ is far better, but the wish to escape from trouble is a selfish one. Rather let your care and wish be to glorify God by your life here as long as he pleases, even though it be in the midst of toil, and conflict, and suffering, and leave him to say when “it is enough.”

# Word Live – 5/2/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/2/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/2/20

# Correcting with Love

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 1:3–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+1%3a3%e2%80%9311)

### **Timothy Charged to Oppose False Teachers**

3As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer 4or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work—which is by faith. 5The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 7They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

8We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 11that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

In the years leading to the American Civil War, some church leaders made the grievous error of using the Bible to justify slavery. One bishop preached, “[There are] millions who have learned the way to Heaven and who have been made to know their Savior through the means of African slavery!” Using the gospel to justify slavery was not only evil but an example of false teaching.

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5

The church in Ephesus was being influenced by a group of false teachers (v. 3). While we do not know the exact nature of their teaching, one scholar suggests it was a “form of aberrant Judaism . . . that overemphasized the law and underemphasized Christ and faith.” Paul urged Timothy to take a strong stand against their teaching. Their misuse of the Old Testament law was causing confusion and blocking God’s work (v. 4). Instead of helping the church grow in their love for God and neighbor (Matt. 22:37–40), the false teachers were engaged in “meaningless talk” (v. 6). Even worse, they did not realize their error. They were confident in their teaching. Instead of trying to impress their listeners with their knowledge, these teachers should have had as their goal “love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (v. 5).

The Old Testament law is a wonderful gift from God (v. 8). But like any good gift, it needs to be used properly. Paul reminded Timothy that the purpose of the law was not to encourage endless speculations or show off our knowledge, but to expose people’s sinfulness and highlight their need for a Savior.

>> As you study the Bible, are you growing more in your love for God and others? Or are you engaged in “meaningless talk” and immoral behavior? (vv. 6, 9–11). Understanding the Bible is not just about mastering content, but allowing God’s Spirit to transform us into the image of our Lord Jesus.

### **Pray with Us**

Today, let’s ask the Father to help us grow in our love for Him and for each other. May we, as believers, be known by love, “which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/2/20

# Community Memory

 **Read:** [**Luke 22:14–23**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2022.14%E2%80%9323)

14When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

17After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. 18For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

19And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

20In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22%3A14%E2%80%9323&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-25885a" \o "See footnote a)] 21But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. 22The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” 23They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 22:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22%3A14%E2%80%9323&version=NIV#en-NIV-25885) Some manuscripts do not have given for you … poured out for you.

He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you.” [Luke 22:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2022.19)

In his book Restless Faith, theologian Richard Mouw talks about the importance of remembering the lessons of the past. He quotes sociologist Robert Bellah, who said that “healthy nations must be ‘communities of memory.’ ” Bellah extended that principle to other societal bonds such as families. Remembering is an important part of living in community.

The Scriptures teach the value of community memory as well. The Israelites were given the Passover feast to remind them of what God had done to rescue them from slavery in Egypt (see [Exodus 12:1–30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2012.1%E2%80%9330)). Still today, Jewish people around the world revisit that rich community memory every spring.

Passover holds great meaning for followers of Christ too, for Passover has always pointed to the work of the Messiah on the cross. It was during Passover, the night before the cross, that Jesus established His own memorial table. [Luke 22:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2022.19) records, “He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’”

Every time we gather at the Lord’s Table to celebrate Communion, we remember that Christ rescued us from slavery to sin and provided us with eternal life. May the rescuing love of Jesus remind us that His cross is worth remembering—together.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why is it valuable to take Communion with other believers in Jesus? How does the shared event remind you of Jesus’ sacrificial love?

Thank You, Father, for the gift of Your Son. Thank You also that He has given us a tangible way to remember His sacrifice whenever we gather at the Table.

Read For This He Came: Jesus’ Journey to the Cross at [discoveryseries.org/hp191.](https://discoveryseries.org/hp191.)

#### **Insight**

Communion refers to our celebration of the Lord’s Supper commemorating the last Passover meal Jesus had with His disciples before He was crucified. At this meal He instituted and explained the new covenant He was making with His followers. The bread represents His body, and the wine represents His blood. In [Luke 22:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2022.15) Jesus says, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” Other translations render this phrase “earnestly desired” (nasb), “with desire I have desired” (kjv), and “fervent desire” (nkjv). The Greek word is epithumia and is sometimes translated “lust” (see [James 1:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.14%E2%80%9315); [2 Peter 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Pet%201.4); [2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Peter%202.10); [1 John 2:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%202.16%E2%80%9317)). While the word lust is often used negatively, in this instance it refers to Jesus’ consuming desire for this meal and its result: instating the new covenant that would define the relationship between God and people.

# God Calling – 5/2/20

# Souls That Smile

To conquer adverse circumstances, conquer yourselves. The answer to the desire of My Disciples to follow Me was "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

To accomplish much, be much.  In all cases the doing, to be well-doing, must be the mere unconscious expression of the being.

Fear not, fear not, all is well. Let the day be full of little prayers to Me, little turnings toward me. The smiles of the soul at one it loves.

Men call the Father the First Cause. Yes! See Him as the First Cause of every warm ray, every color in the sunset, every gleam on the water, every beautiful flower, every planned pleasure.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.  Ephesians 4:32

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/3/20

# Vital Intercession

…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit… —[Ephesians 6:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ephesians+6%3A18)

As we continue on in our intercession for others, we may find that our obedience to God in interceding is going to cost those for whom we intercede more than we ever thought. The danger in this is that we begin to intercede in sympathy with those whom God was gradually lifting up to a totally different level in direct answer to our prayers. Whenever we step back from our close identification with God’s interest and concern for others and step into having emotional sympathy with them, the vital connection with God is gone. We have then put our sympathy and concern for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.

It is impossible for us to have living and vital intercession unless we are perfectly and completely sure of God. And the greatest destroyer of that confident relationship to God, so necessary for intercession, is our own personal sympathy and preconceived bias. Identification with God is the key to intercession, and whenever we stop being identified with Him it is because of our sympathy with others, not because of sin. It is not likely that sin will interfere with our intercessory relationship with God, but sympathy will. It is sympathy with ourselves or with others that makes us say, “I will not allow that thing to happen.” And instantly we are out of that vital connection with God.

Vital intercession leaves you with neither the time nor the inclination to pray for your own “sad and pitiful self.” You do not have to struggle to keep thoughts of yourself out, because they are not even there to be kept out of your thinking. You are completely and entirely identified with God’s interests and concerns in other lives. God gives us discernment in the lives of others to call us to intercession for them, never so that we may find fault with them.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God engineers circumstances to see what we will do. Will we be the children of our Father in heaven, or will we go back again to the meaner, common-sense attitude? Will we stake all and stand true to Him? “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” The crown of life means I shall see that my Lord has got the victory after all, even in me.  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 530 L

# CCEL – 5/3/20

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—[MATT. 5:48.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.5.html" \l "Matt.5.48)

I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.—Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.—Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.—Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

[Gen. 17:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.17.html" \l "Gen.17.1). -[Lev. 20:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.20.html" \l "Lev.20.26).[I Cor. 6:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.20).[Col. 2:l0](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[Tit. 2:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.14). –[II Pet. 3:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.14).[Psa. 119:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.1). –[Jas.1:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.25). -[Psa. 139:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.23).

“In the world ye shall have tribulation.” **[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.33)**

Art thou asking the reason of this, believer? Look upward to thy heavenly Father, and behold him pure and holy. Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like him? Wilt thou easily be conformed to his image? Wilt thou not require much refining in the furnace of affliction to purify thee? Will it be an easy thing to get rid of thy corruptions, and make thee perfect even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect? Next, Christian, turn thine eye downward. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? Thou wast once a servant of Satan, and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan will let thee alone? No, he will be always at thee, for he “goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Expect trouble, therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee. Then look around thee. Where art thou? Thou art in an enemy’s country, a stranger and a sojourner. The world is not thy friend. If it be, then thou art not God’s friend, for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. Be assured that thou shalt find foe-men everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou art resting on the battlefield; when thou walkest, suspect an ambush in every hedge. As mosquitoes are said to bite strangers more than natives, so will the trials of earth be sharpest to you. Lastly, look within thee, into thine own heart and observe what is there. Sin and self are still within. Ah! if thou hadst no devil to tempt thee, no enemies to fight thee, and no world to ensnare thee, thou wouldst still find in thyself evil enough to be a sore trouble to thee, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Expect trouble then, but despond not on account of it, for God is with thee to help and to strengthen thee. He hath said, “I will be with thee in trouble; I will deliver thee and honour thee.”

# Word Live – 5/3/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/3/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/3/20

# Amazing Grace

**Read:** [**1 Timothy 1:12–20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+1%3a12%e2%80%9320)

### **The Lord’s Grace to Paul**

12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. 13Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 16But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **The Charge to Timothy Renewed**

18Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, 19holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. 20Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

On October 28, 1988, Shon Hopwood pled guilty to robbing several banks in Nebraska. But while he was in prison, his life was changed. He became interested in law and prepared a court petition for a fellow inmate that eventually went to the Supreme Court. He earned his law degree and helped other inmates with legal advice. Today, he is a changed man, teaching at Georgetown University and advocating for prison reform.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 1 Timothy 1:15

The apostle Paul was continually in awe that God had transformed his life. He had been a “blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man” (v. 13). When he was an enemy of Jesus, the Lord met him on the road to Damascus. He had been changed by God’s grace and brought to a place of faith in Christ (v. 14). He had gone from being a man who persecuted Christians to serving as a Christian missionary. This gave him a sense of gratitude and of hope for even the most hardened sinner. After all, if God could change him, no one was beyond reach.

Paul described his background because he wanted to encourage Timothy to go through with church discipline of Hymenaeus and Alexander (v. 20). These men were likely leaders in the church who were engaged in false teaching. Since they had “suffered shipwreck with regard to their faith,” they should be “handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” (v. 20). The language of handing over to Satan is a reference to church discipline. But there is a note of hope in this discipline. Paul himself was once a blasphemer. If God could reach him, He could also reach Hymenaeus and Alexander. But the process would begin with confronting their false teaching.

>> The stories of how the Lord has rescued us from our past sins and addictions highlight God’s power and mercy. Thank God today for what He has done in your life and look for opportunities to share your testimony with others. No one is beyond the reach of God’s grace.

### **Pray with Us**

Following Paul’s example in today’s reading, thank God for His transforming work in your life. Praise Him for the amazing grace of His love: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/3/20

# The One Who Sees

 **Read:** [**Numbers 32:16–24**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2032.16%E2%80%9324)

16Then they came up to him and said, “We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. 17But we will arm ourselves for battle[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+32%3A16%E2%80%9324&version=NIV#fen-NIV-4736a)] and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land. 18We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has received their inheritance. 19We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan.”

20Then Moses said to them, “If you will do this—if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for battle 21and if all of you who are armed cross over the Jordan before the Lord until he has driven his enemies out before him— 22then when the land is subdued before the Lord, you may return and be free from your obligation to the Lord and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the Lord.

23“But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out. 24Build cities for your women and children, and pens for your flocks, but do what you have promised.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Numbers 32:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+32%3A16%E2%80%9324&version=NIV#en-NIV-4736) Septuagint; Hebrew will be quick to arm ourselves

You may be sure that your sin will find you out. [Numbers 32:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2032.23)

“Oh no!” My wife’s voice rang out when she stepped into the kitchen. The moment she did, our ninety-pound Labrador retriever “Max” bolted from the room.

Gone was the leg of lamb that had been sitting too close to the edge of the counter. Max had consumed it, leaving only an empty pan. He tried to hide under a bed. But only his head and shoulders fit. His uncovered rump and tail betrayed his whereabouts when I went to track him down.

“Oh, Max,” I murmured, “Your ‘sin’ will find you out.” The phrase was borrowed from Moses, when he admonished two tribes of Israel to be obedient to God and keep their promises. He told them: “But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out” ([Numbers 32:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2032.23)).

Sin may feel good for a moment, but it causes the ultimate pain of separation from God. Moses was reminding his people that God misses nothing. As one biblical writer put it, “Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” ([Hebrews 4:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%204.13)).

Though seeing all, our holy God lovingly draws us to confess our sin, repent of it (turn from it), and walk rightly with Him ([1 John 1:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%201.9)). May we follow Him in love today.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does the truth that God sees everything we do and still loves us encourage you to turn from sin? In what practical ways can you respond to His love today?

Thank You for being “the God who sees me” ([Genesis 16:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2016.13)). I praise You that though You see both good and bad, You sent Your Son to save and set me free. Help me to walk in loving obedience.

#### **Insight**

The words sinning and sin in [Numbers 32:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2032.23) both come from the same Hebrew root chata’. Meanings of the word include “to lose the path,” “miss,” or “miss the mark.” Though this word is used extensively in the Old Testament, it’s one of several terms used to denote sin and evil. The first occurrence of the word sin in the Bible ([Genesis 4:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%204.7)) is translated from this Hebrew word: “But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door.”

# God Calling – 5/3/20

# Kill Self Now

Self dethroned - that is the lesson, but in its place put Love for Me, knowledge of Me.

Self, not only dethroned, but dead. A dead self is not an imprisoned self.  An imprisoned self is more potent to harm. In all training - (in Mine of you, and in yours of others) - let self die.

But for each blow to the life of self you must at the same time embrace and hold fast the new Life, Life with Me.

It is not a dead self that men have to fear, but a thwarted, captive, imprisoned self.  That self is infinitely more self-centered than the self allowed full play.  But to you, My children, I teach a higher science-law than even freedom of the self.  I teach death to the self.  No repressions, just death.  Petty self-life exchanged for Divine Life

And now I can make more clear to you what I would say about forgiveness of injuries.

But what you do not see is that you, the self in you, can never forgive injuries.  The very thought of them means self in the foreground, then the injury, instead of appearing less, appears greater. It is one of My commands that as you seek My forgiveness, so you must forgive.

No, My children, as all true Love is of God and is God, so all true forgiveness is of God and is God. The self cannot forgive. Kill self.

Cease trying to forgive those who fretted or wronged you.  It is a mistake to think about it.  Aim at killing the self now - in your daily life, and then, and not until then, you will find there is nothing that even remembers injury, because the only one injured, the self, is dead.

As long as it recurs to your mind you deceive yourself if you think it forgiven.

Many deceive themselves in this.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.  Romans 6:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/4/20

# Vicarious Intercession

…having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus… —[Hebrews 10:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+10%3A19)

Beware of thinking that intercession means bringing our own personal sympathies and concerns into the presence of God, and then demanding that He do whatever we ask. Our ability to approach God is due entirely to the vicarious, or substitutionary, identification of our Lord with sin. We have “boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Spiritual stubbornness is the most effective hindrance to intercession, because it is based on a sympathetic “understanding” of things we see in ourselves and others that we think needs no atonement. We have the idea that there are certain good and virtuous things in each of us that do not need to be based on the atonement by the Cross of Christ. Just the sluggishness and lack of interest produced by this kind of thinking makes us unable to intercede. We do not identify ourselves with God’s interests and concerns for others, and we get irritated with Him. Yet we are always ready with our own ideas, and our intercession becomes only the glorification of our own natural sympathies. We have to realize that the identification of Jesus with sin means a radical change of all of our sympathies and interests. Vicarious intercession means that we deliberately substitute God’s interests in others for our natural sympathy with them.

Am I stubborn or substituted? Am I spoiled or complete in my relationship to God? Am I irritable or spiritual? Am I determined to have my own way or determined to be identified with Him?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/4/20

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.—[ISA. 59:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.59.html" \l "Isa.59.1)

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.—While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.—Be not thou far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste thee to help me.

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.—Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.—Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

[Psa. 138:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.3)-[Dan. 9:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Dan.9.html" \l "Dan.9.21).[Psa. 27:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.9). -[Psa. 22:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.19).[Jer. 32:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.17). -[II Cor. 1:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.10). -[Luke 18:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.18.html" \l "Luke.18.7).

“Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods.” **[Jeremiah 16:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.16.html" \l "Jer.16.20)**

One great besetting sin of ancient Israel was idolatry, and the spiritual Israel are vexed with a tendency to the same folly. Remphan’s star shines no longer, and the women weep no more for Tammuz, but Mammon still intrudes his golden calf, and the shrines of pride are not forsaken. Self in various forms struggles to subdue the chosen ones under its dominion, and the flesh sets up its altars wherever it can find space for them. Favourite children are often the cause of much sin in believers; the Lord is grieved when he sees us doting upon them above measure; they will live to be as great a curse to us as Absalom was to David, or they will be taken from us to leave our homes desolate. If Christians desire to grow thorns to stuff their sleepless pillows, let them dote on their dear ones.

It is truly said that “they are no gods,” for the objects of our foolish love are very doubtful blessings, the solace which they yield us now is dangerous, and the help which they can give us in the hour of trouble is little indeed. Why, then, are we so bewitched with vanities? We pity the poor heathen who adore a god of stone, and yet worship a god of gold. Where is the vast superiority between a god of flesh and one of wood? The principle, the sin, the folly is the same in either case, only that in ours the crime is more aggravated because we have more light, and sin in the face of it. The heathen bows to a false deity, but the true God he has never known; we commit two evils, inasmuch as we forsake the living God and turn unto idols. May the Lord purge us all from this grievous iniquity!

“The dearest idol I have known,

Whate'er that idol be;

Help me to tear it from thy throne,

And worship only thee.”

# Word Live – 5/4/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/4/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/4/20

# Pray for All People

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

### **Instructions on Worship**

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

Part of caring for and loving others is taking them before the throne of God. E. M. Bounds knew the importance of prayer for ministry. The 19th-century pastor once wrote, “Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still.”

“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?” declares the Sovereign Lord. “Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” Ezekiel 18:23

In today’s reading, Paul instructs Timothy and the Ephesian church regarding proper worship. He begins by pointing out the central importance of prayer. Of first importance was that “petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people” (v. 1). Here Paul emphasizes two points. The first is that the church in its corporate meetings should be characterized by prayer. He uses four terms to highlight different aspects of prayer, including requests, intercessions, and thanksgiving.

The second point Paul highlights is that these prayers should be for all people. Notice that he uses the inclusive word “all” six times in these seven verses. All kinds of prayers should be made for all kinds of people. This even includes Caesar and others in governmental authority (v. 2). False teachers in Ephesus may have been teaching that prayer should be reserved for the spiritually deserving. Paul counters that view by reminding the Ephesians that God “wants all people to be saved” (v. 4). Since there is only one God, it means that He created all humanity and cares for it (v. 5). He sent Jesus who gave His life as “ransom for all people” (v. 6). It does not mean that everyone will be saved, but it does mean that the gospel message can and should be proclaimed to all. As further proof, Paul points out that he was commissioned by God as an apostle to the Gentiles (v. 7).

>> Examine your prayer list. It is natural for us to spend the most time praying for those who are closest to us, our family and friends. Paul encourages us to expand our horizons and pray for “all people.” This includes government officials and believers around the world.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s Bible passage highlights several kinds of prayer: request, intercession, thanksgiving. Choose one of these and lift up to God the people closest to you first, then government officials, all believers, and leaders around the world.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/4/20

# Eclipse

 **Read:** [**Amos 8:9–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%208.9%E2%80%9312)

9“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord,

“I will make the sun go down at noon  
    and darken the earth in broad daylight.  
10I will turn your religious festivals into mourning  
    and all your singing into weeping.  
I will make all of you wear sackcloth  
    and shave your heads.  
I will make that time like mourning for an only son  
    and the end of it like a bitter day.

11“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord,  
    “when I will send a famine through the land—  
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,  
    but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.  
12People will stagger from sea to sea  
    and wander from north to east,  
searching for the word of the Lord,  
    but they will not find it.

**Read:** [**Amos 9:11–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%209%E2%11%9312)

11“In that day

“I will restore David’s fallen shelter—  
    I will repair its broken walls  
    and restore its ruins—  
    and will rebuild it as it used to be,  
12so that they may possess the remnant of Edom  
    and all the nations that bear my name,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Amos+8%3A9%E2%80%9312+%3B+9%3A11%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22508a)]”  
declares the Lord, who will do these things.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Amos 9:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Amos+8%3A9%E2%80%9312+%3B+9%3A11%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-22508) Hebrew; Septuagint so that the remnant of people / and all the nations that bear my name may seek me

I will restore David’s fallen shelter—I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins—and will rebuild it as it used to be. [Amos 9:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%209.11)

I was prepared with eye protection, an ideal viewing location, and homemade moon pie desserts. Along with millions of people in the US, my family watched the rare occurrence of a total solar eclipse—the moon covering the entire disk of the sun.

The eclipse caused an unusual darkness to come over the typically bright summer afternoon. Although for us this eclipse was a fun celebration and a reminder of God’s incredible power over creation ([Psalm 135:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20135.6%E2%80%937)), throughout history darkness during the day has been seen as abnormal and foreboding ([Exodus 10:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2010.21); [Matthew 27:45](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.45)), a sign that everything is not as it should be.

This is what darkness signified for Amos, a prophet during the time of the divided monarchy in ancient Israel. Amos warned the Northern Kingdom that destruction would come if they continued to turn away from God. As a sign, God would “make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight” ([Amos 8:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%208.9)).

But God’s ultimate desire and purpose was—and is—to make all things right. Even when the people were taken into exile, God promised to one day bring a remnant back to Jerusalem and “repair its broken walls and restore its ruins” (9:11).

Even when life is at its darkest, like Israel, we can find comfort in knowing God is at work to bring light and hope back—to all people ([Acts 15:14–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%2015.14%E2%80%9318)).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When was a time you chose to reject or disobey God? How did God provide rescue and bring light into your dark situation?

Jesus, as we read in [Revelation 21:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rev%2021.23), thank You that You shine brighter than the sun and turn back the darkness.

To learn more about the book of Amos, visit [bit.ly/2YAfbqG.](https://bit.ly/2YAfbqG.)

#### **Insight**

Amos prophesied during the days when Uzziah ruled Judah and Jeroboam II ruled Israel (about 760–750 bc). Yet Amos claimed to be not a prophet but “one of the shepherds of Tekoa” ([Amos 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Amos%201.1)). Tekoa is about five miles south of Bethlehem in Judah. And when commanded by Amaziah the priest of Bethel to stop prophesying, he answered, “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’” God called Amos to drop everything to warn Israel’s people and leaders of God’s impending judgment (7:14–17). Although the people prospered, they were unjust, immoral, and mistreated the poor (2:6–8; 3:10; 5:11); and the judges were corrupt (5:12). Judgment was imminent (8:11–12), but a remnant would be preserved (9:11–12).

# God Calling – 5/4/20

# Share With Me

Delight in My Love. Try to live in the rapture of the Kingdom.

Claim big things. Claim great things. Claim Joy and Peace and freedom from care. Joy in Me.

I am your Lord, your Creator. Remember too that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever. Your Creator, when My thought about the world called it into being - your Creator as much, too, today, when I can, by loving thought for you, call into being all you need on the material plane.

Joy in Me, trust in Me, share all life with Me, see Me in everything, rejoice in me. Share all with Me as a child shares its pains and cuts and griefs and newfound treasures of joys and little work with its Mother.

And give Me the joy of sharing all with you.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.  1 John 4:18