# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/19/20

# Out of the Wreck I Rise



Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? —[Romans 8:35](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+8%3A35)

God does not keep His child immune from trouble; He promises, “I will be with him in trouble…” ([Psalm 91:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+91:15)). It doesn’t matter how real or intense the adversities may be; nothing can ever separate him from his relationship to God. “In all these things we are more than conquerors…” ([Romans 8:37](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8:37)). Paul was not referring here to imaginary things, but to things that are dangerously real. And he said we are “super-victors” in the midst of them, not because of our own ingenuity, nor because of our courage, but because none of them affects our essential relationship with God in Jesus Christ. I feel sorry for the Christian who doesn’t have something in the circumstances of his life that he wishes were not there.

“Shall tribulation…?” Tribulation is never a grand, highly welcomed event; but whatever it may be— whether exhausting, irritating, or simply causing some weakness— it is not able to “separate us from the love of Christ.” Never allow tribulations or the “cares of this world” to separate you from remembering that God loves you ([Matthew 13:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:22)).

“Shall…distress…?” Can God’s love continue to hold fast, even when everyone and everything around us seems to be saying that His love is a lie, and that there is no such thing as justice?

“Shall…famine…?” Can we not only believe in the love of God but also be “more than conquerors,” even while we are being starved?

Either Jesus Christ is a deceiver, having deceived even Paul, or else some extraordinary thing happens to someone who holds on to the love of God when the odds are totally against him. Logic is silenced in the face of each of these things which come against him. Only one thing can account for it— the love of God in Christ Jesus. “Out of the wreck I rise” every time.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The message of the prophets is that although they have forsaken God, it has not altered God. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the same truth, that God remains God even when we are unfaithful (see 2 Timothy 2:13). Never interpret God as changing with our changes. He never does; there is no variableness in Him.  Notes on Ezekiel, 1477 L

# CCEL – 5/19/20

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.—[PSA. 51:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html#Ps.51.2)

I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.—Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

He saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.—Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

[Jer. 33:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.33.html#Jer.33.8). -[Ezek. 36:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.36.html#Ezek.36.25).[John 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html#John.3.5). -[Heb. 9:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html#Heb.9.13).[Psa. 106:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.106.html#Ps.106.8). -[Psa. 115:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.115.html#Ps.115.1).

“I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.” [Ecclesiastes 10:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eccl.10.html#Eccl.10.7)

Upstarts frequently usurp the highest places, while the truly great pine in obscurity. This is a riddle in providence whose solution will one day gladden the hearts of the upright; but it is so common a fact, that none of us should murmur if it should fall to our own lot. When our Lord was upon earth, although he is the Prince of the kings of the earth, yet he walked the footpath of weariness and service as the Servant of servants: what wonder is it if his followers, who are princes of the blood, should also be looked down upon as inferior and contemptible persons? The world is upside down, and therefore, the first are last and the last first. See how the servile sons of Satan lord it in the earth! What a high horse they ride! How they lift up their horn on high! Haman is in the court, while Mordecai sits in the gate; David wanders on the mountains, while Saul reigns in state; Elijah is complaining in the cave while Jezebel is boasting in the palace; yet who would wish to take the places of the proud rebels? and who, on the other hand, might not envy the despised saints? When the wheel turns, those who are lowest rise, and the highest sink. Patience, then, believer, eternity will right the wrongs of time.

Let us not fall into the error of letting our passions and carnal appetites ride in triumph, while our nobler powers walk in the dust. Grace must reign as a prince, and make the members of the body instruments of righteousness. The Holy Spirit loves order, and he therefore sets our powers and faculties in due rank and place, giving the highest room to those spiritual faculties which link us with the great King; let us not disturb the divine arrangement, but ask for grace that we may keep under our body and bring it into subjection. We were not new created to allow our passions to rule over us, but that we, as kings, may reign in Christ Jesus over the triple kingdom of spirit, soul, and body, to the glory of God the Father.

# Word Live – 5/*19*/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/19/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/19/20

# Not Ashamed

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:6–12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3a6%e2%80%9312)

### Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel

6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 8So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. 9He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

Men and women face numerous challenges after the release from prison. One of the biggest challenges is finding employment. Most job applications ask if the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime. Many employers avoid hiring people with a criminal past. As of 2018, the ex-convict unemployment rate was twenty-seven percent, higher than during the Great Depression.

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

In Paul’s world, there was an even greater stigma for prisoners. The ancient world had a highly developed code of honor and shame that governed most relationships. Paul’s imprisonment would impact not only him but also all those associated with him. In today’s reading, Paul encourages Timothy to “not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me as his prisoner” (v. 8).

Rather than being ashamed of his imprisonment, Paul encourages Timothy to “join with me in suffering for the gospel” (v. 8). Paul recognizes that God saved us not just for our own benefit, but because He has a purpose for our life (v. 9). The Lord Jesus defeated death and called Paul and Timothy to herald the good news that all people can be forgiven and find new life in Christ because of His work on the cross (vv. 10–11).

Paul recognizes that Christ’s call on his life could lead to suffering. Yet, he is not discouraged because he is convinced that when Christ returns, his suffering would be vindicated (v. 12). All of this provides Timothy with a good reason “to fan into flame the gift of God” (v. 6). He should continue in the work God had called and equipped him for by His Spirit. Through Him, he would find the “power, love and self-discipline” needed to faithfully live out his calling (v. 7).

>> In a culture often hostile to the Christian faith, it can be easy to get discouraged. We need Paul’s reminder to “not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord” (v. 8). God has called us to join in His work and gives us hope of His imminent return!

### Pray with Us

Lord, thank you for the hope of your imminent return and for the joy of walking with you! We pray against discouragement in this often hostile environment. The truth of your Word helps us live worthy of your calling.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/19/20

# Where Choices Lead

 **Read:** [**Psalm 1**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201)

1Blessed is the one  
    who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
    or sit in the company of mockers,  
2but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
    and who meditates on his law day and night.  
3That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
    which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
    whatever they do prospers.

4Not so the wicked!  
    They are like chaff  
    that the wind blows away.  
5Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
    nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
    but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

The Lord watches over the way of the righteous. [Psalm 1:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201.6)

With no cell service and no trail map, we had just our memory of a fixed map at the trailhead to guide us. More than an hour later, we finally emerged from the woods into the parking lot. Having missed the turn-off that would have made for a half-mile hike, we took a much longer trek.

Life can be like that: we have to ask not simply if something is right or wrong, but where it will lead. [Psalm 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201) compares two ways of living—that of the righteous (those who love God) and that of the wicked (the enemies of those who love God). The righteous flourish like a tree, but the wicked blow away like chaff (vv. 3–4). This psalm reveals what flourishing really looks like. The person who lives it out is dependent on God for renewal and life.

So how do we become that kind of person? Among other things, [Psalm 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201) urges us to disengage from destructive relationships and unhealthy habits and to delight in God’s instruction (v. 2). Ultimately, the reason for our flourishing is God’s attentiveness to us: “The Lord watches over the way of the righteous” (v. 6).

Commit your way to God, let Him redirect you from old patterns that lead to nowhere, and allow the Scriptures to be the river that nourishes the root system of your heart.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What friendships or habits do you need to make a break from? How can you create more time in your schedule to read the Bible?

Dear Jesus, give me the grace to turn away from the things leading me down the wrong path. Lead me to the river of Your presence, and nourish me with the Scriptures. Make my life faithful and fruitful for Your honor.

#### Insight

[Psalm 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201) sets up a key theme for the rest of the book as it explains the benefits and blessings people can gain from habitually walking with God—they will be fruitful and prosper (v. 3). This prosperity may not be seen in material possessions or life circumstances, however, but rather in a relationship with God.

[Psalm 1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%201) tells us to “delight . . . in the law of the Lord” and to meditate on it “day and night” (v. 2). The Hebrew word used for meditate means “to mutter.” The definition can be expanded to mean one uttering something to oneself. This form of meditation is deliberate and thoughtful; it’s comparable to the act of studying. A deliberate focus on and study of God’s Word is a practical way readers can learn how to apply Scripture to their daily lives.

# God Calling – 5/19/20

# Rescued and Guided

Rest knowing all is so safe in My Hands. Rest is Trust. Ceaseless activity is distrust. Without the knowledge that I am working for you, you do not rest. Inaction then would be the outcome of despair.

My Hand is not shortened that it cannot save. Know that, repeat it, rely on it, welcome the knowledge, delight in it. Such a truth is a hope flung to a drowning man. Every repetition of it is one pull nearer shore and safety.

Let that illustration teach you a great truth.  Lay hold of the truth, pray it, affirm it, hold on to the rope.  How foolish are your attempts to save yourself, one hand on the  rope, and one making efforts to swim ashore!  You may relinquish your hold of the rope and hinder the rescuer – who has to act with the greater caution lest he lose you.

The storms and tempests are not all of life.  The Psalmist who said “All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me” wrote also “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”

Meditate upon that wonder – truth, the three steps safety, security, guidance.  (1) “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit” – Safety.  (2) “He set my feet upon a rock” – Security (3) “He established my goings” – Guidance. No. 3 is the final stage when the saved soul trusts Me so entirely it seeks no more its own way but leaves all future plans to Me its Rescuer.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.  Deuteronomy 33:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/20/20

# Taking Possession of Our Own Soul



By your patience possess your souls. —[Luke 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+21%3A19)

When a person is born again, there is a period of time when he does not have the same vitality in his thinking or reasoning that he previously had. We must learn to express this new life within us, which comes by forming the mind of Christ (see [Philippians 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:5)). [Luke 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+21:19) means that we take possession of our souls through patience. But many of us prefer to stay at the entrance to the Christian life, instead of going on to create and build our soul in accordance with the new life God has placed within us. We fail because we are ignorant of the way God has made us, and we blame things on the devil that are actually the result of our own undisciplined natures. Just think what we could be when we are awakened to the truth!

There are certain things in life that we need not pray about— moods, for instance. We will never get rid of moodiness by praying, but we will by kicking it out of our lives. Moods nearly always are rooted in some physical circumstance, not in our true inner self. It is a continual struggle not to listen to the moods which arise as a result of our physical condition, but we must never submit to them for a second. We have to pick ourselves up by the back of the neck and shake ourselves; then we will find that we can do what we believed we were unable to do. The problem that most of us are cursed with is simply that we won’t. The Christian life is one of spiritual courage and determination lived out in our flesh.

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

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

# CCEL – 5/20/20

Take heed unto thyself.—[I TIM. 4:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.4.html#iTim.4.16)

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.—Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against the flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.—For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

[I Cor. 9:25-27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html#iCor.9.25). -[Eph. 6:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html#Eph.6.11).[Gal. 5:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html#Gal.5.24). -[Rom. 8:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html#Rom.8.14). -[I Tim. 4:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.4.html#iTim.4.15).

“Marvellous lovingkindness.” [Psalm 17:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.17.html#Ps.17.7)

When we give our hearts with our alms, we give well, but we must often plead to a failure in this respect. Not so our Master and our Lord. His favours are always performed with the love of his heart. He does not send to us the cold meat and the broken pieces from the table of his luxury, but he dips our morsel in his own dish, and seasons our provisions with the spices of his fragrant affections. When he puts the golden tokens of his grace into our palms, he accompanies the gift with such a warm pressure of our hand, that the manner of his giving is as precious as the boon itself. He will come into our houses upon his errands of kindness, and he will not act as some austere visitors do in the poor man’s cottage, but he sits by our side, not despising our poverty, nor blaming our weakness. Beloved, with what smiles does he speak! What golden sentences drop from his gracious lips! What embraces of affection does he bestow upon us! If he had but given us farthings, the way of his giving would have gilded them; but as it is, the costly alms are set in a golden basket by his pleasant carriage. It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of his charity, for there is a bleeding heart stamped upon the face of all his benefactions. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Not one hint that we are burdensome to him; not one cold look for his poor pensioners; but he rejoices in his mercy, and presses us to his bosom while he is pouring out his life for us. There is a fragrance in his spikenard which nothing but his heart could produce; there is a sweetness in his honey-comb which could not be in it unless the very essence of his soul’s affection had been mingled with it. Oh! the rare communion which such singular heartiness effecteth! May we continually taste and know the blessedness of it!

# Word Live – 5/20/20

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# Scripture Union – 5/20/20

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# Today in the Word – 5/20/20

# Guard the Gospel

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 1:13–18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3a13%e2%80%9318)

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

### Examples of Disloyalty and Loyalty

15You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

In the early days of the Civil War, Private William Scott of the Union Army was assigned to keep watch at an important bridge guarding the way to the Capitol. Around 2 a.m., an officer found him asleep at his post. The penalty? Death. But when Scott faced the firing squad, he received a last-minute pardon from President Lincoln with a warning about how important it was to remain vigilant.

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2 Timothy 1:14

In today’s reading, the apostle Paul concludes his charge to Timothy with a command to “guard the deposit that was entrusted to you” (v. 14). Paul admonished Timothy to be vigilant in teaching and preaching the gospel that he had received (v. 13). His teaching should be marked by a life that has been transformed by the message—“with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (v. 13). This kind of life is only possible “with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (v. 14).

In order to drive his point home, Paul provided Timothy with two examples. He reminded Timothy of Phygelus and Hermogenes who abandoned Paul and the gospel. We do not know many details about this situation, but the consequences were severe. Paul declared that “everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me” because of their unfaithfulness (v. 15).

In contrast, Onesiphorus displayed courageous faithfulness. In many countries today, identifying as a Christian can be costly. When Paul was arrested by Nero, Onesiphorus had regularly sought him out to bring him refreshment and support. He identified himself with a condemned leader of the church. He was a great help to the church in Ephesus (v. 18).

>> What does it mean for you to be “not ashamed” of the gospel? While you may not face imprisonment for your faith in Christ, you may be quiet about your faith fearing ridicule from friends or family members. Like Timothy, we can use this reminder to be bold in our convictions.

### Pray with Us

What a wonderful example Paul gives us when he describes the faithfulness of Onesiphorus! As we reflect on 2 Timothy 1, ask God to teach you how to make disciples and how to be a faithful disciple.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/20/20

# The Smiling Jesus



**[Read:](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)** [**[Hebrews 1:8–12](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%201.8%E2%80%9312)

8But about the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;  
    a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.  
9You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;  
    therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions  
    by anointing you with the oil of joy.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1%3A8%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29973a)]

10He also says,

“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,  
    and the heavens are the work of your hands.  
11They will perish, but you remain;  
    they will all wear out like a garment.  
12You will roll them up like a robe;  
    like a garment they will be changed.  
But you remain the same,  
    and your years will never end.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1%3A8%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29976b)]

#### Footnotes:

1. [Hebrews 1:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1%3A8%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-29973) Psalm 45:6,7
2. [Hebrews 1:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1%3A8%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-29976) Psalm 102:25-27

God . . . has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. [Hebrews 1:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%201.9)

If you were to play the part of Jesus in a movie, how would you approach the role? That was the challenge faced by Bruce Marchiano, who played Jesus in the 1993 Visual Bible movie Matthew. Knowing that millions of viewers would draw conclusions about Jesus based on his work, the weight of getting Christ “right” felt overwhelming. He fell to his knees in prayer and begged Jesus for—well, for Jesus.

Bruce gained insight from the first chapter of Hebrews, where the writer tells us how God the Father set the Son apart by anointing Him “with the oil of joy” (1:9). This kind of joy is one of celebration—a gladness of connection to the Father expressed wholeheartedly. Such joy ruled in Jesus’ heart throughout His life. As [Hebrews 12:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2012.2) describes it, “For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Taking his cue from this scriptural expression, Bruce offered a uniquely joy-filled portrayal of his Savior. As a result, he became known as “the smiling Jesus.” We too can dare to fall to our knees and “beg Jesus for Jesus.” May He so fill us with His character that people around us see the expression of His love in us!

By:  [Elisa Morgan](https://odb.org/author/elisamorgan/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What are your perceptions of Jesus and how might they need to change? How can you represent Him as you show His heart to the world?

Dear Jesus, we beg You for You. May Your heart be what others see in us today. May we radiate Your joy in all we say and do.

#### Insight

The letter to the Hebrews contains some of the most revealing Christology (the study of the person and work of Christ) in the New Testament. In [Hebrews 1:8–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%201.8%E2%80%9312), God speaks about the role of the Son—understood to be the Messiah. This Son will have a just kingdom that lasts forever (v. 8), and because of the Son’s love for righteousness and hatred of wickedness, God anointed Him with “the oil of joy” (v. 9).

The oil of joy is a way to describe what Jesus faced while on earth. Yet joy is used of Jesus again in chapter 12. There the author says that it was because of the joy before Him (perhaps this anointing of the oil of joy?) that He endured the cross. Neither His ministry nor the cross were the joy; it was what followed that was so extraordinary that Jesus willingly suffered.

# God Calling – 5/20/20

# Win Me – Win All

You will conquer.  The conquering spirit is never crushed.  Keep a brave and trusting heart. Face all your difficulties in the spirit of Conquest.

Rise to greater heights than you have known before. Remember where I am is Victory. Forces of evil, within and without you, flee at My Presence.

Win Me and all is won.  All.

Only be thou strong and very courageous. Joshua 1:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/21/20

# Having God’s “Unreasonable” Faith



Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. —[Matthew 6:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A33)

When we look at these words of Jesus, we immediately find them to be the most revolutionary that human ears have ever heard. “…seek first the kingdom of God….” Even the most spiritually-minded of us argue the exact opposite, saying, “But I must live; I must make a certain amount of money; I must be clothed; I must be fed.” The great concern of our lives is not the kingdom of God but how we are going to take care of ourselves to live. Jesus reversed the order by telling us to get the right relationship with God first, maintaining it as the primary concern of our lives, and never to place our concern on taking care of the other things of life.

“…do not worry about your life…” ([Matthew 6:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:25)). Our Lord pointed out that from His standpoint it is absolutely unreasonable for us to be anxious, worrying about how we will live. Jesus did not say that the person who takes no thought for anything in his life is blessed— no, that person is a fool. But Jesus did teach that His disciple must make his relationship with God the dominating focus of his life, and to be cautiously carefree about everything else in comparison to that. In essence, Jesus was saying, “Don’t make food and drink the controlling factor of your life, but be focused absolutely on God.” Some people are careless about what they eat and drink, and they suffer for it; they are careless about what they wear, having no business looking the way they do; they are careless with their earthly matters, and God holds them responsible. Jesus is saying that the greatest concern of life is to place our relationship with God first, and everything else second.

It is one of the most difficult, yet critical, disciplines of the Christian life to allow the Holy Spirit to bring us into absolute harmony with the teaching of Jesus in these verses.

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

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

# CCEL – 5/21/20

My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—[EPH. 6:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html#Eph.6.10)

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.—I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.—The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.—We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

The joy of the Lord is your strength.—Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.

[II Cor. 12:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.12.html#iiCor.12.9). -[Psa. 71:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.71.html#Ps.71.16). -[Rom. 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.1.html#Rom.1.16).[Phi. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html#Phil.4.13). -[Col. 1:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html#Col.1.29). -[II Cor. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html#iiCor.4.7).[Neh. 8:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.8.html#Neh.8.10). -[Col. 1:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html#Col.1.11).

“If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” [1 Peter 2:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html#iPet.2.3)

If:—then, this is not a matter to be taken for granted concerning every one of the human race. “If:”—then there is a possibility and a probability that some may not have tasted that the Lord is gracious. “If:”—then this is not a general but a special mercy; and it is needful to enquire whether we know the grace of God by inward experience. There is no spiritual favour which may not be a matter for heart-searching.

But while this should be a matter of earnest and prayerful inquiry, no one ought to be content whilst there is any such thing as an “if” about his having tasted that the Lord is gracious. A jealous and holy distrust of self may give rise to the question even in the believer’s heart, but the continuance of such a doubt would be an evil indeed. We must not rest without a desperate struggle to clasp the Saviour in the arms of faith, and say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.” Do not rest, O believer, till thou hast a full assurance of thine interest in Jesus. Let nothing satisfy thee till, by the infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with thy spirit, thou art certified that thou art a child of God. Oh, trifle not here; let no “perhaps” and “peradventure” and “if” and “maybe” satisfy thy soul. Build on eternal verities, and verily build upon them. Get the sure mercies of David, and surely get them. Let thine anchor be cast into that which is within the veil, and see to it that thy soul be linked to the anchor by a cable that will not break. Advance beyond these dreary “ifs;” abide no more in the wilderness of doubts and fears; cross the Jordan of distrust, and enter the Canaan of peace, where the Canaanite still lingers, but where the land ceaseth not to flow with milk and honey.

# Word Live – 5/21/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/21/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/21/20

# Stay the Course

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

### The Appeal Renewed

2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 3Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor’s crown except by competing according to the rules. 6The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

In 2011, Rob Sloan was accused of cheating and asked to return his bronze medal for the Kielder Marathon. While he appeared to finish in third place, a witness accused the runner of leaving the race, taking a bus to the finish line, and then re-entering the course near the end. While Sloan denied the accusation, it cast doubt on his success and his character.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

In today’s reading, Paul advises Timothy: “Don’t take shortcuts in ministry!” He encourages Timothy to do the hard work of mentoring and training leaders, so they could, in turn, train others. This kind of hands-on mentoring can be time consuming and challenging, especially when false teachers are trying to influence people as well. But there are no shortcuts for this kind of work.

Paul then gives Timothy an unlikely invitation: to “join with me in suffering” (v. 3). The New Testament does not promise that being a Christian will make life easy. In fact, the opposite is true. Jesus warned His disciples, “Remember what I told you . . . if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (John 15:20). Paul understood this dynamic well. He also knew his suffering was not in vain and wanted to inform Timothy of what to expect.

To help Timothy think through this teaching, Paul uses three analogies. First, a soldier does not get distracted by the crowds. Instead, he single-mindedly works to please his commanding officer (v. 4). Similarly, an athlete endures grueling training in order to receive the prize. Finally, a farmer works diligently in order to receive the benefit of crops (v. 6). Paul’s point? Timothy’s suffering and work was not in vain, but focused on the certain hope of God’s approval.

>> Are you struggling to stay the course? Sometimes we simply need the reminder to keep our eyes on the end goal. Charles Spurgeon once quipped, “By perseverance the snail reached the ark.” While not glamorous, faithfulness in ministry is a key to success.

### Pray with Us

Our reading today celebrates steadfastness in faith and in ministry. Let’s ask the Lord to give us insight into the three analogies Paul is using: a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/21/20

# The Knife Angel

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 2:1–4**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.1%E2%80%934)

### The Mountain of the Lord

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

2In the last days

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

3Many peoples will come and say,

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

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. [Isaiah 2:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%202.4)

When knife crime rose across the United Kingdom, the British Ironwork Centre came up with an idea. Working with local police forces, the Centre built and placed two hundred deposit boxes around the country and ran an amnesty campaign. One hundred thousand knives were anonymously surrendered, some still with blood on their blades. These were then shipped to artist Alfie Bradley, who blunted them, inscribed some with the names of young knife-crime victims, plus messages of regret from ex-offenders. All 100,000 weapons were then welded together to create the Knife Angel—a twenty-seven-foot-high angelic sculpture with shimmering steel wings.

When I stood before the Knife Angel, I wondered how many thousands of wounds had been prevented by its existence. I thought too of Isaiah’s vision of the new heavens and earth ([Isaiah 65:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2065.17)), a place where children won’t die young (v. 20) or grow up in crime-breeding poverty (vv. 22–23), a place where knife crime is no more because all swords have been reshaped and given more creative purposes (2:4).

That new world isn’t yet here, but we are to pray and serve until its arrival ([Matthew 6:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%206.10)). In its own way, the Knife Angel gives us a glimpse of God’s promised future. Swords become plow shares. Weapons become artworks. What other redemptive projects can we conjure up to glimpse that future a little more?

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

#### Reflect & Pray

What inspires you to combat evil? How can you work for peace in your community?

Jesus, we can’t wait until the world is at peace under Your reign. Move us by Your Spirit to help see Your kingdom come in our communities.

#### Insight

Against the backdrop of gross injustice, moral failure, and spiritual unfaithfulness, Isaiah warned a guilty Judah of God’s judgment ([Isaiah 1–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%201%E2%80%9312)) through the Babylonian exile (39:6–7). Isaiah also prophesied of God’s grace (chs. 40–55) and a future restoration for Judah (chs. 11, 56–66). In [Isaiah 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2012), we’re given a glimpse of Judah’s glorious future. Jerusalem will become the world’s most important city and in the midst of the city will be a magnificent temple. World peace will become a reality. Instead of fighting the Jews, the gentile nations will stream to Jerusalem to seek God. God’s people will be “a light for the Gentiles, that [His] salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (49:6). Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah (735–725 BC), prophesied a similar vision in [Micah 4:1–3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Micah%204.1%E2%80%933).

# God Calling – 5/21/20

# Fling It At My Feet

To see Me you must bring Me your cares and show Me your heart of Trust.  Then, as you leave your cares, you become conscious of My Presence.

This consciousness persisted in brings its reward of Me.  Through a mist of care no man may see My Face.  Only when the burden is flung at My Feet do you pass on to consciousness and spiritual sight.

Remember, obedience, obedience, obedience – the straight and narrow way into the Kingdom.

Not of you must it be said, even in lovingly tender reproach – “Why call ye Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say.”

Character is chiseled into Beauty by the daily discipline and daily duties done.  For in many ways, My disciples must work out their own salvation, though this is not possible without My strength and Help, and without converse with Me.

Even for the Spiritual Life the training is different for different spirits.  The man who would fain live a life of prayer and meditation is thrust into the busy ways of life, and the busy man is bidden to rest and wait patiently for Me.  O joy, O rest, and in the busy ways be ever at peace.

“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”  Mark 4:19

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/22/20

# The Explanation For Our Difficulties



…that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us… —[John 17:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+17%3A21)

If you are going through a time of isolation, seemingly all alone, read [John 17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17) . It will explain exactly why you are where you are— because Jesus has prayed that you “may be one” with the Father as He is. Are you helping God to answer that prayer, or do you have some other goal for your life? Since you became a disciple, you cannot be as independent as you used to be.

God reveals in John 17 that His purpose is not just to answer our prayers, but that through prayer we might come to discern His mind. Yet there is one prayer which God must answer, and that is the prayer of Jesus— “…that they may be one just as We are one…” ([John 17:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:22)). Are we as close to Jesus Christ as that?

God is not concerned about our plans; He doesn’t ask, “Do you want to go through this loss of a loved one, this difficulty, or this defeat?” No, He allows these things for His own purpose. The things we are going through are either making us sweeter, better, and nobler men and women, or they are making us more critical and fault-finding, and more insistent on our own way. The things that happen either make us evil, or they make us more saintly, depending entirely on our relationship with God and its level of intimacy. If we will pray, regarding our own lives, “Your will be done” ([Matthew 26:42](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26:42)), then we will be encouraged and comforted by John 17, knowing that our Father is working according to His own wisdom, accomplishing what is best. When we understand God’s purpose, we will not become small-minded and cynical. Jesus prayed nothing less for us than absolute oneness with Himself, just as He was one with the Father. Some of us are far from this oneness; yet God will not leave us alone until we are one with Him— because Jesus prayed, “…that they all may be one….”

###### Wisdom From Oswald Chambers

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

# CCEL – 5/22/20

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.—[JOHN 14:27.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html#John.14.27)

The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.—Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches. and knoweth not who shall gather them.—What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

Martha, Martha, thou are careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—I would have you without carefulness.

These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.—The Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.—The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

[I John 2:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html#iJohn.2.17). -[Psa. 39:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.39.html#Ps.39.6). -[Rom. 6:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html#Rom.6.21).[Luke 10:41,42](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.10.html#Luke.10.41). -[I Cor.7:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.7.html#iCor.7.32).[John 16:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html#John.16.33). -[II Thes. 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.3.html#iiThess.3.16). -[Num. 6:24-26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.6.html#Num.6.24).

“He led them forth by the right way.” [Psalm 107:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.107.html#Ps.107.7)

Changeful experience often leads the anxious believer to inquire “Why is it thus with me?” I looked for light, but lo, darkness came; for peace, but behold, trouble. I said in my heart, my mountain standeth firm; I shall never be moved. Lord, thou dost hide thy face, and I am troubled. It was but yesterday that I could read my title clear; today my evidences are bedimmed, and my hopes are clouded. Yesterday, I could climb to Pisgah’s top, and view the landscape o'er, and rejoice with confidence in my future inheritance; today, my spirit has no hopes, but many fears; no joys, but much distress. Is this part of God’s plan with me? Can this be the way in which God would bring me to heaven? Yes, it is even so. The eclipse of your faith, the darkness of your mind, the fainting of your hope, all these things are but parts of God’s method of making you ripe for the great inheritance upon which you shall soon enter. These trials are for the testing and strengthening of your faith—they are waves that wash you further upon the rock—they are winds which waft your ship the more swiftly towards the desired haven. According to David’s words, so it might be said of you, “So he bringeth them to their desired haven.” By honour and dishonour, by evil report and by good report, by plenty and by poverty, by joy and by distress, by persecution and by peace, by all these things is the life of your souls maintained, and by each of these are you helped on your way. Oh, think not, believer, that your sorrows are out of God’s plan; they are necessary parts of it. “We must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom.” Learn, then, even to “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

“O let my trembling soul be still,

And wait thy wise, thy holy will!

I cannot, Lord, thy purpose see,

Yet all is well since ruled by thee.”

# Word Live – 5/22/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/22/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/22/20

# Remember Jesus Christ!

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 2:8–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2%3a8%e2%80%9313)

8Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. 10Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

11Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,  
    we will also live with him;  
12if we endure,  
    we will also reign with him.  
If we disown him,  
    he will also disown us;  
13if we are faithless,  
    he remains faithful,  
    for he cannot disown himself.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik party’s aim was to impose atheism on the country. Party leader Nikolai Bukharin was sent to Kiev to speak to a huge crowd, presenting argument after argument for atheism. At the end of his speech Bukharin turned to a local leader to dismiss the crowd. This local leader happened to be the parish priest who concluded by saying, “Christ is Risen!” And with one voice, the crowd thundered back, “He is Risen Indeed!”

If we died with him; we will also live with him. 2 Timothy 2:11

In the face of a hostile government outside the church and false teachers inside, Paul exhorts Timothy to “[r]emember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David” (v. 8). In the Old Testament, God had promised to raise up a descendant from David, son of Jesse, who would reign forever (Isa. 11:1–2). Paul encouraged Timothy to remember that God had kept His promise in Jesus, whom He vindicated by raising Him from the dead. Timothy had grounds for hope even in the face of suffering.

Paul rejoiced that even though he was in chains for preaching the gospel, “God’s word is not chained” (v. 9). The gospel can prosper and flourish even when its messengers are persecuted. Ironically, at times that persecution opens new avenues for the gospel to penetrate. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul rejoiced because his imprisonment had “served to advance the gospel” (Phil. 1:12). Paul concludes by reciting part of a baptismal hymn, celebrating our union with Christ in His death and resurrection (v. 11). Our union with Christ means that we might suffer as He did. However, through Him, we can be certain of a future resurrection. We can persevere in the faith, knowing that God will be faithful in all things (v. 13).

>> Paul’s command to “[r]emember Jesus Christ” applies to you and me as well (v. 8). Every day we are immersed in a culture that assumes this life is all there is and that our faith in Christ is irrelevant. During difficult times, we must remember Jesus Christ!

### Pray with Us

“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David” (2 Tim. 2:8). Paul’s words to Timothy certainly apply to us as well, teaching us how to live in the light of Christ. Praise God for His eternal Word!

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/22/20

# Take Your Tears to God

 **Read:** [**Lamentations 3:49–66**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.49%E2%80%9366)

49My eyes will flow unceasingly,  
    without relief,  
50until the Lord looks down  
    from heaven and sees.  
51What I see brings grief to my soul  
    because of all the women of my city.

52Those who were my enemies without cause  
    hunted me like a bird.  
53They tried to end my life in a pit  
    and threw stones at me;  
54the waters closed over my head,  
    and I thought I was about to perish.

55I called on your name, Lord,  
    from the depths of the pit.  
56You heard my plea: “Do not close your ears  
    to my cry for relief.”  
57You came near when I called you,  
    and you said, “Do not fear.”

58You, Lord, took up my case;  
    you redeemed my life.  
59Lord, you have seen the wrong done to me.  
    Uphold my cause!  
60You have seen the depth of their vengeance,  
    all their plots against me.

61Lord, you have heard their insults,  
    all their plots against me—  
62what my enemies whisper and mutter  
    against me all day long.  
63Look at them! Sitting or standing,  
    they mock me in their songs.

64Pay them back what they deserve, Lord,  
    for what their hands have done.  
65Put a veil over their hearts,  
    and may your curse be on them!  
66Pursue them in anger and destroy them  
    from under the heavens of the Lord.

My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief, until the Lord looks down from heaven and sees. [Lamentations 3:49–50](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%203.49%E2%80%9350)

Last summer, an orca named Talequah gave birth. Talequah’s pod of killer whales was endangered, and her newborn was their hope for the future. But the calf lived for less than an hour. In a show of grief that was watched by people around the world, Talequah pushed her dead calf through the cold waters of the Pacific Ocean for seventeen days before letting her go.

Sometimes believers in Jesus have a hard time knowing what to do with grief. Perhaps we fear that our sorrow might look like a lack of hope. But the Bible gives us many examples of humans crying out to God in grief. Lament and hope can both be part of a faithful response.

Lamentations is a book of five poems that express the sorrow of people who have lost their home. They’ve been hunted by enemies and were near death (3:52–54), and they weep and call on God to bring justice (v. 64). They cry out to God not because they have lost hope, but because they believe God is listening. And when they call, God does come near (v. 57).

It’s not wrong to lament the broken things in our world or in your life. God is always listening, and you can be sure that God will look down from heaven and see you.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How can you practice bringing all your emotions to God? When have you felt God draw near to you in your sadness?

Loving God, help us to remember that it’s right to lament wrongness before we can begin to change it.

To learn more about what Lamentations says about pain, visit [christianuniversity.org/OT221.](https://christianuniversity.org/OT221.)

#### Insight

The book of Lamentations gives us a poet’s picture of the aftermath of war. Jerusalem had been invaded by Babylonian warlords in 586 bc ([Jeremiah 52](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%2052)). The God of gods had turned His chosen people over to their enemies, as He had threatened to do from the beginning if they persistently turned their backs on Him and forgot their mission to be a light to other nations ([Deuteronomy 28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2028)).

The fluid emotions of the poet reflect a nation that now had nowhere to turn but to memories of their past and to hope in the everlasting God who, for this seemingly endless moment, seemed so far away ([Lamentations 5:19–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Lam%205.19%E2%80%9322)).

# God Calling – 5/22/20

# Command Your Lord

Lord, I claim Thy help.

Yes!  Claim, be constantly claiming.  There is a trust that waits long, and a trust that brooks no delay – that once convinced of the right of a course, once sure of God’s guidance, says with all the persistence of a child, “Now.”  “Make no long tarrying, oh, my God.”

You are no longer servants but friends.  A friend can command his friend – can know that all the friend, the true friend, has is his by right.  That does not mean an idle living at the expense of a friend, but claiming the friend’s means:  name, time, all that he has, when your supply is exhausted.

Friendship – true friendship, implies the right to appropriate.  And in God’s service is perfect freedom.  Heirs of God – you are joint heirs with Me in the inheritance.  We share the Father’s property. You have the same right to use and claim I have.  Use your right.  A beggar supplicates.  A son, a daughter, appropriates.

Small wonder when I see My children sitting before My House supplicating and waiting – that I leave them there until they realize how foolish such action, when they have only to walk into their Home and take.

This cannot be the attitude of all.  There must be first a definite realization of Sonship.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall receive them.  Mark 11:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/23/20

# Our Careful Unbelief



…do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. —[Matthew 6:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A25)

Jesus summed up commonsense carefulness in the life of a disciple as unbelief. If we have received the Spirit of God, He will squeeze right through our lives, as if to ask, “Now where do I come into this relationship, this vacation you have planned, or these new books you want to read?” And He always presses the point until we learn to make Him our first consideration. Whenever we put other things first, there is confusion.

“…do not worry about your life….” Don’t take the pressure of your provision upon yourself. It is not only wrong to worry, it is unbelief; worrying means we do not believe that God can look after the practical details of our lives, and it is never anything but those details that worry us. Have you ever noticed what Jesus said would choke the Word He puts in us? Is it the devil? No— “the cares of this world” ([Matthew 13:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:22)). It is always our little worries. We say, “I will not trust when I cannot see”— and that is where unbelief begins. The only cure for unbelief is obedience to the Spirit.

The greatest word of Jesus to His disciples is abandon.

**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 – 5/23/20

Thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord.—[EXO. 28:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.28.html" \l "Exod.28.12)

Jesus . . . because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.—Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.

Seeing . . . that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him: and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

[Heb. 7:24,25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.24). -[Jude 24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.24).[Heb. 4:14-16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.14).[Deut. 33:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.12).

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.” **[Psalm 138:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.138.html" \l "Ps.138.8)**

Most manifestly the confidence which the Psalmist here expressed was a divine confidence. He did not say, “Ihave grace enough to perfect that which concerneth me—my faith is so steady that it will not stagger—my love is so warm that it will never grow cold—my resolution is so firm that nothing can move it”; no, his dependence was on the Lord alone. If we indulge in any confidence which is not grounded on the Rock of Ages, our confidence is worse than a dream, it will fall upon us, and cover us with its ruins, to our sorrow and confusion. All that Nature spins time will unravel, to the eternal confusion of all who are clothed therein. The Psalmist was wise, he rested upon nothing short of the Lord's work. It is the Lord who has begun the good work within us; it is he who has carried it on; and if he does not finish it, it never will be complete. If there be one stitch in the celestial garment of our righteousness which we are to insert ourselves, then we are lost; but this is our confidence, the Lord who began will perfect. He has done it all, must do it all, and will do it all. Our confidence must not be in what we have done, nor in what we have resolved to do, but entirely in what the Lord will do. Unbelief insinuates—“You will never be able to stand. Look at the evil of your heart, you can never conquer sin; remember the sinful pleasures and temptations of the world that beset you, you will be certainly allured by them and led astray.” Ah! yes, we should indeed perish if left to our own strength. If we had alone to navigate our frail vessels over so rough a sea, we might well give up the voyage in despair; but, thanks be to God, he will perfect that which concerneth us, and bring us to the desired haven. We can never be too confident when we confide in him alone, and never too much concerned to have such a trust.

# Word Live – 5/23/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/23/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/23/20

# An Approved Worker

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 2:14–21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2%3a14%e2%80%9321)

### Dealing With False Teachers

14Keep reminding God’s people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 19Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

20In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. 21Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

My son, who is in the fifth grade, just graduated from his school’s D.A.R.E. program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). This is a police-led program designed to prevent kids from using or abusing drugs and alcohol by describing the physical, social, and mental consequences.

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. John 10:14

In today’s reading, Paul vividly describes the consequences of having false teachers in the church. Their “quarreling about words” was not just distracting but also destructive. It “ruins those who listen” (v. 14), makes those who engage in it “more and more ungodly” (v. 16), and causes the church to be unhealthy (v. 17). Paul names two ringleaders who were causing much of the damage, Hymenaeus and Philetus (v. 17). They had been teaching that the final resurrection had already happened (v. 18). By doing this, they were denying the future physical resurrection of believers and undermining the faith.

In contrast, Paul paints a picture of what a faithful minister of the gospel looks like. Instead of looking for the approval of people, the faithful minister will seek the approval of God (v. 15). Instead of quarreling about words, he “correctly handles the word of truth” (v. 15). Because of this, he can appear before God unashamed (v. 15).

Despite the damage done by false teachers, God promises to protect and preserve His church (v. 19). In the ancient world a seal was used to indicate ownership. Paul reminds Timothy that God has sealed us with the inscription, “the Lord knows those who are his” (v. 19). God is not confused by false teachers, and He knows His true children intimately. These are the ones who confess the name of the Lord and turn away from ungodliness (v. 19).

>> It is easy to look at the state of the church today and worry about its survival. Remember that despite persecution, false teaching, and internal conflict, the church has endured for almost 2,000 years! God promises that a “solid foundation stands firm” (v. 19).

### Pray with Us

Paul’s description of false teachers in the church is a sobering reminder for us today to pray for our churches, pastors, Bible teachers, and ministry leaders. But be encouraged that “God’s solid foundation stands firm” (2 Tim. 2:19).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/23/20

# Keepers of the Light



**[Read:](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)** [**[John 8:12–16](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.12%E2%80%9316)

### Dispute Over Jesus’ Testimony

12When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

13The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

14Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.

For God . . . made his light shine in our hearts. [2 Corinthians 4:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%204.6)

They call them “Keepers of the Light.”

At the lighthouse on the cape of Hatteras Island just off the North Carolina coast of the United States, there’s a memorial to those who’ve tended the light stations there since 1803. Shortly after the existing structure was moved inland because of shoreline erosion, the names of the keepers were etched on the old foundation stones and arranged into an amphitheater shape facing the new site. That way—as a placard explains—today’s visitors can follow in the historical keepers’ footsteps and “watch over” the lighthouse as well.

Jesus is the ultimate light-giver. He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” ([John 8:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%208.12)). That’s a radical thing for anyone to claim. But Jesus said it to affirm His relationship with His heavenly Father, the Creator of light and life who sent Him.

When we look to Jesus for salvation and follow His teaching, we’re restored in relationship with God, and He gives us new power and purpose. His transforming life and love—“the light of all mankind” (1:4)—shines in us and through us and out to a dark and sometimes dangerous world.

As believers in Jesus, we become “keepers of the light.” May others see His light shine from us and discover the life and hope He alone can give!

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

#### Reflect & Pray

In what practical ways can you shine Jesus’ light? Where is God calling you to be obedient to Him today?

Jesus, I praise You for Your light and love. Help me to shine for You.

#### Insight

The gospel records fall into two categories: the Synoptic Gospels and the gospel of John. The “Synoptics,” which means “with a common view,” are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Although they offer varying details to help them tell the story of Jesus in a unique way, they still have a common perspective because they often tell the same stories. John’s gospel is very distinct from the Synoptics, containing 92 percent unique material. One distinctive of John’s gospel is the emphasis on themes of light and truth. John expresses the reality that Jesus is the embodiment of truth and light.

# God Calling – 5/23/20

# Little Frets

Your lack of control is not due to the big burdens, but to your permitting the little frets and cares and burdens to accumulate.

If anything vex you deal with that and get that righted with Me before you allow yourself to speak to, or meet anybody, or to undertake any new duty.

Look upon yourself more as performing My errands and coming back quickly to Me to tell Me that message is delivered, that task done.

Then with no feeling of responsibility as to result (your only responsibility was to see the duty done) go out again, rejoicing at still more to do for My Sake.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes. Song of Solomon 2:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/24/20

# The Delight of Despair



When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. —[Revelation 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Revelation+1%3A17)

It may be that, like the apostle John, you know Jesus Christ intimately. Yet when He suddenly appears to you with totally unfamiliar characteristics, the only thing you can do is fall “at His feet as dead.” There are times when God cannot reveal Himself in any other way than in His majesty, and it is the awesomeness of the vision which brings you to the delight of despair. You experience this joy in hopelessness, realizing that if you are ever to be raised up it must be by the hand of God.

“He laid His right hand on me…” ([Revelation 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1:17)). In the midst of the awesomeness, a touch comes, and you know it is the right hand of Jesus Christ. You know it is not the hand of restraint, correction, nor chastisement, but the right hand of the Everlasting Father. Whenever His hand is laid upon you, it gives inexpressible peace and comfort, and the sense that “underneath are the everlasting arms” ([Deuteronomy 33:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+33:27)), full of support, provision, comfort, and strength. And once His touch comes, nothing at all can throw you into fear again. In the midst of all His ascended glory, the Lord Jesus comes to speak to an insignificant disciple, saying, “Do not be afraid” ([Revelation 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1:17)). His tenderness is inexpressibly sweet. Do I know Him like that?

Take a look at some of the things that cause despair. There is despair which has no delight, no limits whatsoever, and no hope of anything brighter. But the delight of despair comes when “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells…” ([Romans 7:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7:18)). I delight in knowing that there is something in me which must fall prostrate before God when He reveals Himself to me, and also in knowing that if I am ever to be raised up it must be by the hand of God. God can do nothing for me until I recognize the limits of what is humanly possible, allowing Him to do the impossible.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/24/20

Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.—[EPH. 4:30.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.30)

The love of the Spirit.—The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.—In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.—After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.—This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.

[Rom. 15:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.15.html" \l "Rom.15.30). -[John 14:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.26). -[Isa. 63:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.9).[I John 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.13). -[Eph. 1:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.13). -[Gal. 5:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.16).[Rom. 8:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.26).

“Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer.” **[Psalm 66:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.66.html" \l "Ps.66.20)**

In looking back upon the character of our prayers, if we do it honestly, we shall be filled with wonder that God has ever answered them. There may be some who think their prayers worthy of acceptance—as the Pharisee did; but the true Christian, in a more enlightened retrospect, weeps over his prayers, and if he could retrace his steps he would desire to pray more earnestly.

Remember, Christian, how cold thy prayers have been. When in thy closet thou shouldst have wrestled as Jacob did; but instead thereof, thy petitions have been faint and few—far removed from that humble, believing, persevering faith, which cries, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” Yet, wonderful to say, God has heard these cold prayers of thine, and not only heard, but answered them. Reflect also, how infrequent have been thy prayers, unless thou hast been in trouble, and then thou hast gone often to the mercy-seat: but when deliverance has come, where has been thy constant supplication? Yet, notwithstanding thou hast ceased to pray as once thou didst, God has not ceased to bless. When thou hast neglected the mercy-seat, God has not deserted it, but the bright light of the Shekinah has always been visible between the wings of the cherubim. Oh! it is marvellous that the Lord should regard those intermittent spasms of importunity which come and go with our necessities. What a God is he thus to hear the prayers of those who come to him when they have pressing wants, but neglect him when they have received a mercy; who approach him when they are forced to come, but who almost forget to address him when mercies are plentiful and sorrows are few. Let his gracious kindness in hearing such prayers touch our hearts, so that we may henceforth be found “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”

# Word Live – 5/24/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/24/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/24/20

# Pursue Peace

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 2:22–26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2%3a22%e2%80%9326)

22Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Most people wish the world could be a more peaceful place, but few know how to achieve that goal. For the Christian, peace is not an abstract concept. It’s linked to our relationship with Jesus Christ. Only through Him can we experience true peace.

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. 2 Timothy 2:22

Seeing that Timothy was at the center of church conflict, Paul urged him to take a different path. He instructs Timothy to “flee the evil desires of youth” (v. 22). When a young person is confronted by someone who disagrees with them, or who attacks them, the natural response is to fight back. It is easy to take things personally and become embroiled in argument. Paul counsels Timothy not to “have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments” and not to be “resentful” in the face of opposition (vv. 23–24).

Instead, Timothy is to “pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace” (v. 22). He is to “be kind to everyone” (v. 24). Instead of taking attacks personally and lashing out, “opponents must be gently instructed” (v. 25). His primary desire should be for the soul of those he is confronting. His prayer should be that “God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth” (v. 25). The situation was too serious to let ego get in the way. These opponents were in danger of being entrapped by the evil one (v. 26). In order to keep this perspective, Timothy should remember that he is the “Lord’s servant” (v. 24). He should not be concerned with justifying himself but with representing the Lord well in the midst of this conflict. He serves a God who “wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

>> Pursuing peace means wanting what is truly best for the other person. Perhaps there is someone in your life about whom you need to change your perspective. Consider, what would God want most for that person? How can you pray or work toward that end?

### Pray with Us

Lord, show us how to “pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace” (2 Tim. 2:22) in all circumstances and with all people, being “kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful” (v. 24).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/24/20

# Talking Tables

 **Read:** [**Acts 2:42–47**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.42%E2%80%9347)

### The Fellowship of the Believers

42They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. [Acts 2:46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.46)

Loneliness is one of the greatest threats to our sense of well-being, affecting our health through our behaviors on social media, food consumption, and the like. One study suggests that nearly two-thirds of all people—regardless of age or gender—feel lonely at least some of the time. One British supermarket has created “talking tables” in their store cafés as a way to foster connection between people. Those looking for human interaction simply seat themselves at a table designated for that purpose, joining others or indicating a desire to be joined. Conversation ensues, providing a sense of connection and community.

The people of the early church were committed to shared connection too. Without each other, they would likely have felt very alone in the practice of their faith, which was still new to the world. Not only did they “[devote] themselves to the apostles’ teaching” to learn what following Jesus meant, they also “[met] together in the temple courts” and “broke bread in their homes” for mutual encouragement and fellowship ([Acts 2:42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.42), [46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.46)).

We need human connection; God designed us that way! Painful seasons of loneliness point to that need. Like the people of the early church, it’s important for us to engage in the human companionship our well-being requires and to offer it to those around us who also need it.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How can you intentionally connect with someone today? How might you be overlooking opportunities for friendship?

Help us, God, to seek connection for our sake and that of others!

#### Insight

[Acts 2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202) describes the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost when God, in fulfillment of prophecies and promises ([Isaiah 32:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2032.15); [Ezekiel 36:26–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2036.26%E2%80%9327); [39:29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezekiel%2039.29); [Joel 2:28–32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Joel%202.28%E2%80%9332); [John 16:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2016.7)), sent the Holy Spirit to indwell those who believed in Jesus ([Acts 2:1–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%202.1%E2%80%934)). Three thousand people (2:41) were added to the one hundred twenty-member congregation (1:15). This first church was a growing, gracious, and generous church. The Greek word for “fellowship” (2:42) is koinōnia and carries the meaning of “participation, sharing.” Believers participated in a shared identity and spirituality—learning spiritual truths, devoting themselves to fellowship, remembering Jesus’ death, depending on God, experiencing His power, and showing extravagant acts of generosity toward the needy (vv. 42–47).

# God Calling – 5/24/20

# Abundance

How unseeing the world goes on!  How unknowing of your heartaches and troubles, your battles won, your conquests, your difficulties.

But be thankful, both of you, that there is One who knows, One who marks every crisis, every effort, every heartache.

For you both, who are not idle hearers, you must know that every troubled soul I tell you of, is one for you to help.  You do not help enough.  As you help, help will flow back and your circle of helpfulness will widen more and more, ever more and more.

Just feel that you are two of My disciples, present at the feeding of the five thousand, and that to you I hand out the food, and you pass it on, and ever more and more.  You can always say with so few loaves and fishes "We have only enough for our own needs."  It was not only My Blessing, but the Passing-on of the disciples that worked the miracle.

Get a feeling of bounteous giving into your beings.  They were "all filled."  There was a supply over.

I give with a large Hand and Heart.  Note the draught of fishes.  The net brake, the boat began to sink with the lavishness of My Gift.  Lose sight of all limitations.

Abundance is God's Supply.  Turn out all limited thoughts.  Receive showers and in your turn - shower.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.  2 Corinthians 3:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 5/25/20

# The Good or The Best?



If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left. —[Genesis 13:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+13%3A9)

As soon as you begin to live the life of faith in God, fascinating and physically gratifying possibilities will open up before you. These things are yours by right, but if you are living the life of faith you will exercise your right to waive your rights, and let God make your choice for you. God sometimes allows you to get into a place of testing where your own welfare would be the appropriate thing to consider, if you were not living the life of faith. But if you are, you will joyfully waive your right and allow God to make your choice for you. This is the discipline God uses to transform the natural into the spiritual through obedience to His voice.

Whenever our right becomes the guiding factor of our lives, it dulls our spiritual insight. The greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but good choices which are not quite good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best. In this passage, it would seem that the wisest thing in the world for Abram to do would be to choose. It was his right, and the people around him would consider him to be a fool for not choosing.

Many of us do not continue to grow spiritually because we prefer to choose on the basis of our rights, instead of relying on God to make the choice for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard which has its eyes focused on God. And God says to us, as He did to Abram, “…walk before Me…” ([Genesis 17:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+17:1)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 5/25/20

How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!—[PSA. 31:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.19)

Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.—Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.—Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

[Isa. 64:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.4). -[I Cor. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html" \l "iCor.2.9). -[Psa. 16:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.11).[Psa. 36:7-9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.36.html" \l "Ps.36.7).[I Tim. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.4.html" \l "iTim.4.8).

How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!—[PSA. 31:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html#Ps.31.19)

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[Isa. 64:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html#Isa.64.4). -[I Cor. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.2.html#iCor.2.9). -[Psa. 16:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html#Ps.16.11).[Psa. 36:7-9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.36.html#Ps.36.7).[I Tim. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.4.html#iTim.4.8).

“Forsake me not, O Lord.” **[Psalm 38:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.38.html" \l "Ps.38.21)**

Frequently we pray that God would not forsake us in the hour of trial and temptation, but we too much forget that we have need to use this prayer at all times. There is no moment of our life, however holy, in which we can do without his constant upholding. Whether in light or in darkness, in communion or in temptation, we alike need the prayer, “Forsake me not, O Lord.” “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.” A little child, while learning to walk, always needs the nurse’s aid. The ship left by the pilot drifts at once from her course. We cannot do without continued aid from above; let it then be your prayer today, “Forsake me not. Father, forsake not thy child, lest he fall by the hand of the enemy. Shepherd, forsake not thy lamb, lest he wander from the safety of the fold. Great Husbandman, forsake not thy plant, lest it wither and die.

‘Forsake me not, O Lord,’ now; and forsake me not at any moment of my life. Forsake me not in my joys, lest they absorb my heart. Forsake me not in my sorrows, lest I murmur against thee. Forsake me not in the day of my repentance, lest I lose the hope of pardon, and fall into despair; and forsake me not in the day of my strongest faith, lest faith degenerate into presumption. Forsake me not, for without thee I am weak, but with thee I am strong. Forsake me not, for my path is dangerous, and full of snares, and I cannot do without thy guidance. The hen forsakes not her brood; do thou then evermore cover me with thy feathers, and permit me under thy wings to find my refuge. ‘Be not far from me, O Lord, for trouble is near, for there is none to help.’ ‘Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!’”

“O ever in our cleansed breast,

Bid thine Eternal Spirit rest;

And make our secret soul to be

A temple pure and worthy thee.”

# Word Live – 5/25/20

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

# Scripture Union – 5/25/20

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

# Today in the Word – 5/25/20

# Signs of the Times

**Read:** [**2 Timothy 3:1–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+3%3a1%e2%80%939)

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

6They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, 7always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. 8Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. 9But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

In A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens describes the main character in this way, “Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!” This long list of colorful adjectives helps us understand what type of character Scrooge was.

The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them. Psalm 11:4

In today’s reading Paul uses eighteen adjectives to describe life in the “last days” (v. 1). For Paul, the “last days” refers to the whole span of church history from the resurrection of Jesus to the Second Coming. These characteristics were true of the false teachers who had been damaging the church. Paul warned Timothy and encouraged him to live in a different way. These people were utterly self-centered. They claimed to know how to be truly godly, but instead were deceptive and destructive. Timothy would do well to “have nothing to do with such people” (v. 5).

These false teachers would “worm their way” into the homes of gullible women (v. 6). These women were likely widows who had considerable resources at their disposal to support the ministry of the false teachers. Paul compares these false teachers to Jannes and Jambres. These are the traditional names of the Egyptian magicians who copied some of the miracles Moses performed in front of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:11). In the same way, these false teachers closely imitated true apostles and teachers. While they might have looked the same on the outside, their message and their lives would lead to destruction. Paul encouraged Timothy that, in the end, “their folly will be clear to everyone” (v. 9). He closes on a note of hope. No matter how dark those “last days” get, we know that the Lord wins!

>> The list of eighteen descriptions can be a helpful checklist by which to measure our own lives (vv. 2–4). Read slowly through this list and ask the Lord if there are areas you need to confess about and ask for God’s help to change.

### Pray with Us

In view of Paul’s description of the “terrible times in the last days” (2 Tim. 3:1), ask the Holy Spirit today to help us examine our own lives and behaviors and reveal to us the areas that need to change.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 5/25/20

# Remembering



**[Read:](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)** [**[John 15:9–17](https://donations.ourdailybread.org/)**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.9%E2%80%9317)

9“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14You are my friends if you do what I command. 15I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17This is my command: Love each other.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. [John 15:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.13)

On Memorial Day, I think of many military veterans but especially my dad and uncles, who served in the military during World War II. They made it home, but in that war hundreds of thousands of families tragically lost loved ones in service to their country. Yet, when asked, my dad and most soldiers from that era would say they were willing to give up their lives to protect their loved ones and stand for what they believed to be right.

When someone dies in defense of their country, [John 15:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.13)—“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”—is often recited during the funeral service to honor their sacrifice. But what were the circumstances behind this verse?

When Jesus spoke those words to His disciples during the Last Supper, He was about to die. And, in fact, one of His small group of disciples, Judas, had already left to betray Him (13:18–30). Yet Christ knew all of this and still chose to sacrifice His life for His friends and enemies.

Jesus was willing and ready to die for those who’d one day believe in Him, even for those who were still His enemies ([Romans 5:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%205.10)). In return, He asks His disciples (then and now) to “love each other” as He has loved them ([John 15:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.12)). His great love compels us to sacrificially love others—friend and foe alike.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

Before we believed in Jesus, we were His enemies. Yet Jesus died for us. How can you honor and remember Jesus for His death on the cross for you? How can you sacrificially love others?

Jesus, we’re so thankful that You were willing to die for us!

#### Insight

John’s gospel has a discernible outline. Between the prologue (1:1–18) and the epilogue (ch. 21), John focuses on Jesus’ ministry in word and deed to the masses (1:19–12:50). In the five chapters known as the Upper Room Discourse (chs. 13–17), Jesus specifically addresses His disciples. These chapters comprise roughly 20 percent of the book and cover a very short amount of time. In this section, we discover core truths for believers in Jesus: lessons regarding servanthood and humility (ch. 13); Jesus as the way to the Father (14:6); the promise, ministry, and work of the Holy Spirit (14:15–31; 16:4–15); the command to love (13:31–35); and the need to abide in the Father’s love (15:9–17). In chapters 18–20 John focuses on Jesus’ death and resurrection.

For a visual overview to the book of John, visit [bit.ly/2MqOeOR.](https://bit.ly/2MqOeOR.)

# God Calling – 5/25/20

# Accomplish Anything

There will be no limit to what you can accomplish.  Realize that.  Never relinquish any task or give up the thought of any task because it seems beyond your power, only if you see it is not My Will for you.  This I command you.

Think of the tiny snowdrop-shoot in the hard ground.  No certainty even that when it has forced its weary way up, sunlight and warmth will greet it.

What a task beyond its power that must seem.  But the inner urge of Life within the seed compelling it, it carries out that task.  The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto this.

And Jesus said unto them ... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ... nothing shall be impossible unto you. Matthew 17:20