# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/2/21

# Obedience or Independence?



If you love Me, keep My commandments. —[John 14:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+14%3A15)

Our Lord never insists on obedience. He stresses very definitely what we ought to do, but He never forces us to do it. We have to obey Him out of a oneness of spirit with Him. That is why whenever our Lord talked about discipleship, He prefaced it with an “If,” meaning, “You do not need to do this unless you desire to do so.” “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself…” ([Luke 9:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+9:23)). In other words, “To be My disciple, let him give up his right to himself to Me.” Our Lord is not talking about our eternal position, but about our being of value to Him in this life here and now. That is why He sounds so stern (see [Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26)). Never try to make sense from these words by separating them from the One who spoke them.

The Lord does not give me rules, but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says without hesitation. If I hesitate, it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely, myself. Jesus Christ will not force me to obey Him, but I must. And as soon as I obey Him, I fulfill my spiritual destiny. My personal life may be crowded with small, petty happenings, altogether insignificant. But if I obey Jesus Christ in the seemingly random circumstances of life, they become pinholes through which I see the face of God. Then, when I stand face to face with God, I will discover that through my obedience thousands were blessed. When God’s redemption brings a human soul to the point of obedience, it always produces. If I obey Jesus Christ, the redemption of God will flow through me to the lives of others, because behind the deed of obedience is the reality of Almighty God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 11/2/21

**Ever follow that which is good.**—[I THES. 5:15.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.15)

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; . . . but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.—Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

[I Pet. 2:21-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.21). -[Heb. 12:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.3).[Heb. 12:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.1).[Phi. 4:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.8).

“I am the Lord, I change not.” [Malachi 3:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.6)

It is well for us that, amidst all the variableness of life, there is One whom change cannot affect; One whose heart can never alter, and on whose brow mutability can make no furrows. All things else have changed—all things are changing. The sun itself grows dim with age; the world is waxing old; the folding up of the worn-out vesture has commenced; the heavens and earth must soon pass away; they shall perish, they shall wax old as doth a garment; but there is One who only hath immortality, of whose years there is no end, and in whose person there is no change. The delight which the mariner feels, when, after having been tossed about for many a day, he steps again upon the solid shore, is the satisfaction of a Christian when, amidst all the changes of this troublous life, he rests the foot of his faith upon this truth—“I am the Lord, I change not.”

The stability which the anchor gives the ship when it has at last obtained a hold-fast, is like that which the Christian’s hope affords him when it fixes itself upon this glorious truth. With God “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Whatever his attributes were of old, they are now; his power, his wisdom, his justice, his truth, are alike unchanged. He has ever been the refuge of his people, their stronghold in the day of trouble, and he is their sure Helper still. He is unchanged in his love. He has loved his people with “an everlasting love”; he loves them now as much as ever he did, and when all earthly things shall have melted in the last conflagration, his love will still wear the dew of its youth. Precious is the assurance that he changes not! The wheel of providence revolves, but its axle is eternal love.

“Death and change are busy ever,

Man decays, and ages move;

But his mercy waneth never;

God is wisdom, God is love.”

# Word Live – 11/2/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/2/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/2/21

# God's Judgment

**Read:** [**Micah 1:3–9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3a3%e2%80%939)

### **Judgment Against Samaria and Jerusalem**

3Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place;  
    he comes down and treads on the heights of the earth.  
4The mountains melt beneath him  
    and the valleys split apart,  
like wax before the fire,  
    like water rushing down a slope.  
5All this is because of Jacob’s transgression,  
    because of the sins of the people of Israel.  
What is Jacob’s transgression?  
    Is it not Samaria?  
What is Judah’s high place?  
    Is it not Jerusalem?

6“Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble,  
    a place for planting vineyards.  
I will pour her stones into the valley  
    and lay bare her foundations.  
7All her idols will be broken to pieces;  
    all her temple gifts will be burned with fire;  
    I will destroy all her images.  
Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes,  
    as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used.”

### **Weeping and Mourning**

8Because of this I will weep and wail;  
    I will go about barefoot and naked.  
I will howl like a jackal  
    and moan like an owl.  
9For Samaria’s plague is incurable;  
    it has spread to Judah.  
It has reached the very gate of my people,  
    even to Jerusalem itself.

If you enjoy watching television courtroom dramas like Matlock or reading the latest John Grisham novel, you know that (at least in fictional stories) things typically turn out well and justice wins! In real life, sadly, that isn’t always the case. The Civil Rights era, for example, was filled with injustice everywhere—especially in the courts.

God is a righteous judge. Psalm 7:11

The first chapter of Micah presents a sort of courtroom drama, in which God acts as the plaintiff’s attorney, the judge, the jury, and the witness. The witness is terrifying—God Himself descends from the heavens: “The mountains melt beneath him, and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like waters rushing down a slope” (v. 4).

The charges were serious—God’s people had broken the covenant He made with them, worshiping other gods. God’s judgment is always just, of that we can be sure (Ps. 7:11). Nevertheless, this judgment was fierce—God would destroy Samaria (the capital city of Israel), together with its idols. The prophet’s response was harrowing—he will “weep and wail” and “go about barefoot and naked” (Mic. 1:8).

There are three players in this short passage: the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem who are on trial for idolatry; God who oversees and participates in the entire court process; and the prophet Micah who stands in the gallery lamenting the judgment that God pours out.

As we read Micah 1:2–9, it is helpful to place ourselves into this courtroom drama. Of course, we cannot assume the role of God in this story or any story for that matter. The question before us, then, is whether we play the role of the prophet Micah or the cities of Jerusalem and Samaria. Micah’s example challenges us to turn our hearts toward the true God and worship Him alone.

>> Biblical values, not our cultural or personal opinions, should shape our sense of justice. We must love what God loves and hate what He hates.

### **Pray with Us**

Teach us to love what is good and to hate what is evil. Purge the habitual sins and idolatry that we have tolerated in our lives. Move us to weep with Micah rather than join others in sin.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/2/21

# Reaching Others for Jesus

**Read:** [**Matthew 28:16–20**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.16%E2%80%9320)

### **The Great Commission**

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

Go and make disciples of all nations. [Matthew 28:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.19)

A decade ago, they didn’t know the name of Jesus. Hidden in the mountains of Mindanao in the Philippines, the Banwaon people had little contact with the outside world. A trip for supplies could take two days, requiring an arduous hike over rugged terrain. The world took no notice of them.

Then a mission group reached out, shuttling people in and out of the region via helicopter. This gained the Banwaon access to needed supplies, crucial medical help, and an awareness of the larger world. It also introduced them to Jesus. Now, instead of singing to the spirits, they chant their traditional tribal songs with new words that praise the one true God. Mission aviation established the critical link.

When Jesus returned to His heavenly Father, He gave His disciples these instructions: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” ([Matthew 28:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.19)). That command still stands.

Unreached people groups aren’t limited to exotic locales we haven’t heard of. Often, they live among us. Reaching the Banwaon people took creativity and resourcefulness, and it inspires us to find creative ways to overcome the barriers in our communities. That might include an “inaccessible” group you haven’t even considered—someone right in your neighborhood. How might God use you to reach others for Jesus?

By:  [Tim Gustafson](https://odb.org/author/timgustafson/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who are the hardest-to-reach people in your community? In what ways can you tell them about Jesus?

Father, please use me as You see fit in order that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ might turn to You in faith.

Read [Evangelism: Reaching Out Through Relationships](https://DiscoverySeries.org/Q0913).

#### **Insight**

[Matthew 28:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2028.17) says, “When they saw [Jesus], they worshiped him; but some doubted.” Theologian D.A. Carson comments: “If the ‘some’ refers not to the Eleven but to other followers, the move from unbelief and fear to faith and joy was for them a ‘hesitant’ one.” This seems to suggest that Matthew presents worship and doubt in contrast to each other. By positioning some as worshiping while others doubted, Matthew may be suggesting that these two responses are incompatible, at least in a specific moment. Worship may help rid us of doubt, and doubt may inhibit our worship. Doubt may plague us from time to time, but worship can shift our focus.

# God Calling – 11/2/21

# Spend

Give, give, give.  Keep ever an empty vessel for Me to fill.

In future use all for Me, and give all you cannot use.

How poor die those who leave wealth!  Wealth is to use, to spend, for Me.

Use as you go. Delight to use.

For the love of money is the root of all evil.  1 Timothy 6:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/3/21

# A Bondservant of Jesus



I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me… —[Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+2%3A20)

These words mean the breaking and collapse of my independence brought about by my own hands, and the surrendering of my life to the supremacy of the Lord Jesus. No one can do this for me, I must do it myself. God may bring me up to this point three hundred and sixty-five times a year, but He cannot push me through it. It means breaking the hard outer layer of my individual independence from God, and the liberating of myself and my nature into oneness with Him; not following my own ideas, but choosing absolute loyalty to Jesus. Once I am at that point, there is no possibility of misunderstanding. Very few of us know anything about loyalty to Christ or understand what He meant when He said, “…for My sake” ([Matthew 5:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:11)). That is what makes a strong saint.

Has that breaking of my independence come? All the rest is religious fraud. The one point to decide is— will I give up? Will I surrender to Jesus Christ, placing no conditions whatsoever as to how the brokenness will come? I must be broken from my own understanding of myself. When I reach that point, immediately the reality of the supernatural identification with Jesus Christ takes place. And the witness of the Spirit of God is unmistakable— “I have been crucified with Christ….”

The passion of Christianity comes from deliberately signing away my own rights and becoming a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Until I do that, I will not begin to be a saint.

One student a year who hears God’s call would be sufficient for God to have called the Bible Training College into existence. This college has no value as an organization, not even academically. Its sole value for existence is for God to help Himself to lives. Will we allow Him to help Himself to us, or are we more concerned with our own ideas of what we are going to be?

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We are not to preach the doing of good things; good deeds are not to be preached, they are to be performed. So Send I You, 1330 L

# CCEL – 11/3/21

**The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.**—[HOS. 14:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.14.html" \l "Hos.14.9)

Unto you . . . which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, . . . a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.—The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.—Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.—The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.—If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.—Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.—Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

[I Pet. 2:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.7),[8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.8). -[Prov. 10:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.10.html" \l "Prov.10.29).[Matt. 11:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.11.html" \l "Matt.11.15). -[Psa. 107:43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.107.html" \l "Ps.107.43). -[Matt. 6:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.22). -[John 7:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.7.html" \l "John.7.17). -[Matt. 13:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.13.html" \l "Matt.13.12).[John 8:47](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.47). -[John 5:40](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.5.html" \l "John.5.40). -[John 10:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.27).

### “Behold, he prayeth.“ [Acts 9:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.9.html" \l "Acts.9.11)

Prayers are instantly noticed in heaven. The moment Saul began to pray the Lord heard him. Here is comfort for the distressed but praying soul. Oftentimes a poor broken-hearted one bends his knee, but can only utter his wailing in the language of sighs and tears; yet that groan has made all the harps of heaven thrill with music; that tear has been caught by God and treasured in the lachrymatory of heaven. “Thou puttest my tears into thy bottle,” implies that they are caught as they flow. The suppliant, whose fears prevent his words, will be well understood by the Most High. He may only look up with misty eye; but “prayer is the falling of a tear.” Tears are the diamonds of heaven; sighs are a part of the music of Jehovah’s court, and are numbered with “the sublimest strains that reach the majesty on high.” Think not that your prayer, however weak or trembling, will be disregarded. Jacob’s ladder is lofty, but our prayers shall lean upon the Angel of the covenant and so climb its starry rounds. Our God not only hears prayer but also loves to hear it. “He forgetteth not the cry of the humble.” True, He regards not high looks and lofty words; He cares not for the pomp and pageantry of kings; He listens not to the swell of martial music; He regards not the triumph and pride of man; but wherever there is a heart big with sorrow, or a lip quivering with agony, or a deep groan, or a penitential sigh, the heart of Jehovah is open; He marks it down in the registry of His memory; He puts our prayers, like rose leaves, between the pages of His book of remembrance, and when the volume is opened at last, there shall be a precious fragrance springing up therefrom.

“Faith asks no signal from the skies,

To show that prayers accepted rise,

Our Priest is in His holy place,

And answers from the throne of grace.”

# Word Live – 11/3/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/3/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/3/21

# Hidden Idols

**Read:** [**Micah 1:10–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3a10%e2%80%9316)

10Tell it not in Gath[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22590a)];  
    weep not at all.  
In Beth Ophrah[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22590b)]  
    roll in the dust.  
11Pass by naked and in shame,  
    you who live in Shaphir.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22591c)]  
Those who live in Zaanan[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22591d)]  
    will not come out.  
Beth Ezel is in mourning;  
    it no longer protects you.  
12Those who live in Maroth[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22592e)] writhe in pain,  
    waiting for relief,  
because disaster has come from the Lord,  
    even to the gate of Jerusalem.  
13You who live in Lachish,  
    harness fast horses to the chariot.  
You are where the sin of Daughter Zion began,  
    for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.  
14Therefore you will give parting gifts  
    to Moresheth Gath.  
The town of Akzib[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22594f)] will prove deceptive  
    to the kings of Israel.  
15I will bring a conqueror against you  
    who live in Mareshah.[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22595g)]  
The nobles of Israel  
    will flee to Adullam.  
16Shave your head in mourning  
    for the children in whom you delight;  
make yourself as bald as the vulture,  
    for they will go from you into exile.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Micah 1:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22590) Gath sounds like the Hebrew for tell.
2. [Micah 1:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22590) Beth Ophrah means house of dust.
3. [Micah 1:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22591) Shaphir means pleasant.
4. [Micah 1:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22591) Zaanan sounds like the Hebrew for come out.
5. [Micah 1:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22592) Maroth sounds like the Hebrew for bitter.
6. [Micah 1:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22594) Akzib means deception.
7. [Micah 1:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+1%3A10%E2%80%9316+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22595) Mareshah sounds like the Hebrew for conqueror.

During high school, I dated a young woman whose parents had immigrated to the United States from Vietnam. The first time I visited their home I was surprised to see a shrine in their living room. It is easy for Western Christians to skim by Bible passages forbidding the worship of false gods because we believe that simply couldn’t be true of us.

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14

However, Jesus makes clear that the most important commandment is to love God with the totality of our being (Matt. 22:36–40). Anything less than this breaks the first of the Ten Commandments—to have no god before the Lord (Ex. 20:3)— and also Jesus’ summation of the commandments. Idolatry, then, occurs when we put anything other than God in the place of God.

Social media and money are two clear examples of things we sometimes worship other than the Lord. How often do we think our security is in our paycheck, our bank account, or our retirement funds? Those things are all fine and good, but they present an enormous temptation to trust in money rather than the Lord for our future and that of our children. Should God provide for us in this way, we have to thank Him. However, we must also remember our Lord’s warning: “Woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort” (Luke 6:24).

As financial stability threatens our full trust in the Lord for the present and future, social media tempts us to find fulfillment in the form of likes, shares, and retweets. The desire to please humans is strong, and social media has given modern-day humans access to approval from others like never before. Rather than seek approval and contentment from others, though, the Bible is clear that these come only from God Himself. To look for it anywhere else is idolatrous.

>> Reflect today on where you put your hope, security, and value. While we might not have an altar to a false god in our homes, we can sometimes put our trust in things other than God.

### **Pray with Us**

Whether our trust wrongly lies in our resources, our own competence, or our families, forgive us, Lord. You alone are unfailingly dependable; You alone have the wisdom and power to always come through.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/3/21

# Comfort Shared

### Today's Devotional **Read:** [**2 Corinthians 1:3–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.3%E2%80%938)

### **Praise to the God of All Comfort**

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

8We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1%3A3%E2%80%938&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28809a)] about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [2 Corinthians 1:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1%3A3%E2%80%938&version=NIV#en-NIV-28809) The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 8:1; 13:11.

We can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. [2 Corinthians 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.4)

When my daughter Hayley came to visit me, I saw her three-year-old son, Callum, wearing a strange piece of clothing. Called a ScratchMeNot, it’s a long-sleeved top with mittens attached to the sleeves. My grandson Callum suffers from chronic eczema, a skin disease that makes his skin itch, making it rough and sore. “The ScratchMeNot prevents Callum from scratching and injuring his skin,” Hayley explained.

Seven months later, Hayley’s skin flared up, and she couldn’t stop scratching. “I now understand what Callum endures,” Hayley confessed to me. “Maybe I should wear a ScratchMeNot!”

Hayley’s situation reminded me of [2 Corinthians 1:3–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.3%E2%80%935), in which Paul says that our God is “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.”

Sometimes God allows us to go through trying times such as an illness, loss, or crisis. He teaches us through our suffering to appreciate the greatest suffering that Christ went through on our behalf on the cross. In turn, when we rely on Him for comfort and strength, we’re able to comfort and encourage others in their suffering. Let’s reflect on whom we can extend comfort to because of what God has brought us through.

By:  [Goh Bee Lee ( ゲスト寄稿者 )](https://odb.org/author/gohbeelee/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Whom has God helped you to comfort through your own experiences of suffering? What can you do to help them appreciate Christ’s suffering on the cross through their pain?

God, help me to experience Your comfort in my sufferings and to become a source of comfort to others.

Read more about [comforting others](https://discoveryseries.org/courses/when-you-dont-know-what-to-say/).

#### **Insight**

The Greek word for “comfort” in [2 Corinthians 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.3) (paraklesis) means “coming alongside to help or encourage.” Jesus is our parakletos or advocate ([1 John 2:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%202.1)). The Holy Spirit is another parakletos ([John 14:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.16%E2%80%9317), [26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2014.26); [15:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2015.26); [16:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2016.7)). This word is so rich in meaning that Bible translations and paraphrases use various words to translate it: “Helper” (esv), “Counselor” ([2 Corinthians 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%201.3), Paul says that God is the parakletos par excellence—“the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.” It’s of great comfort to us that every person of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are with us in our pain. In directing us to look at the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3), Paul reminds us that coming alongside to help each other is a family duty and privilege (v. 4).By: [**K. T. Sim**](https://odb.org/author/ktsim/)

# God Calling – 11/3/21

# No Limit

Unlimited supply, that is My Law. Oh! the unlimited Supply, and oh! the poor, blocked channels!  Will you feel this, that there is no limit to My Power?

But man asks, and blasphemes in asking, such poor mean things.  Do you not see how you wrong Me?  I desire to give you a gift, and if you are content with the poor, and the mean, and the sordid, then you are insulting Me, the Giver.

"Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."  How I can fulfill the promise is My Work, not yours, to consider ... Have a big Faith, and expect big things, and you will get big things.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. James 4:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/4/21

# The Authority of Truth



Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. —[James 4:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=James+4%3A8)

It is essential that you give people the opportunity to act on the truth of God. The responsibility must be left with the individual— you cannot act for him. It must be his own deliberate act, but the evangelical message should always lead him to action. Refusing to act leaves a person paralyzed, exactly where he was previously. But once he acts, he is never the same. It is the apparent folly of the truth that stands in the way of hundreds who have been convicted by the Spirit of God. Once I press myself into action, I immediately begin to live. Anything less is merely existing. The moments I truly live are the moments when I act with my entire will.

When a truth of God is brought home to your soul, never allow it to pass without acting on it internally in your will, not necessarily externally in your physical life. Record it with ink and with blood— work it into your life. The weakest saint who transacts business with Jesus Christ is liberated the second he acts and God’s almighty power is available on his behalf. We come up to the truth of God, confess we are wrong, but go back again. Then we approach it again and turn back, until we finally learn we have no business going back. When we are confronted with such a word of truth from our redeeming Lord, we must move directly to transact business with Him. “Come to Me…” ([Matthew 11:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:28)). His word come means “to act.” Yet the last thing we want to do is come. But everyone who does come knows that, at that very moment, the supernatural power of the life of God invades him. The dominating power of the world, the flesh, and the devil is now paralyzed; not by your act, but because your act has joined you to God and tapped you in to His redemptive power.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading.  My Utmost for His Highest, March 19, 761 L

# CCEL – 11/4/21

**Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.**—[I PET. 1:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.6)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.—The exhortation . . . speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.—Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

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.—For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.—God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.

[I Pet. 4:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.12). -[Heb. 12:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.5). -[Heb. 12:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.11).[Heb. 4:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.15). -[Heb. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.18). -[I Cor. 10:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.13).

“For my strength is made perfect in weakness.” [2 Corinthians 12:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.12.html" \l "iiCor.12.9)

A primary qualification for serving God with any amount of success, and for doing God’s work well and triumphantly, is a sense of our own weakness. When God’s warrior marches forth to battle, strong in his own might, when he boasts, “I know that I shall conquer, my own right arm and my conquering sword shall get unto me the victory,” defeat is not far distant. God will not go forth with that man who marches in his own strength. He who reckoneth on victory thus has reckoned wrongly, for “it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” They who go forth to fight, boasting of their prowess, shall return with their gay banners trailed in the dust, and their armour stained with disgrace. Those who serve God must serve him in his own way, and in his strength, or he will never accept their service. That which man doth, unaided by divine strength, God can never own. The mere fruits of the earth he casteth away; he will only reap that corn, the seed of which was sown from heaven, watered by grace, and ripened by the sun of divine love. God will empty out all that thou hast before he will put his own into thee; he will first clean out thy granaries before he will fill them with the finest of the wheat. The river of God is full of water; but not one drop of it flows from earthly springs. God will have no strength used in his battles but the strength which he himself imparts. Are you mourning over your own weakness? Take courage, for there must be a consciousness of weakness before the Lord will give thee victory. Your emptiness is but the preparation for your being filled, and your casting down is but the making ready for your lifting up.

“When I am weak then am I strong,

Grace is my shield and Christ my song.”

# Word Live – 11/4/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/4/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/4/21

# Woe to Oppressors!

**Read:** [**Micah 2:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+2%3a1%e2%80%935)

### **Human Plans and God’s Plans**

2 Woe to those who plan iniquity,  
    to those who plot evil on their beds!  
At morning’s light they carry it out  
    because it is in their power to do it.  
2They covet fields and seize them,  
    and houses, and take them.  
They defraud people of their homes,  
    they rob them of their inheritance.

3Therefore, the Lord says:

“I am planning disaster against this people,  
    from which you cannot save yourselves.  
You will no longer walk proudly,  
    for it will be a time of calamity.  
4In that day people will ridicule you;  
    they will taunt you with this mournful song:  
‘We are utterly ruined;  
    my people’s possession is divided up.  
He takes it from me!  
    He assigns our fields to traitors.’”

5Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the Lord  
    to divide the land by lot.

The writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once observed, “A goal without a plan is just a wish.” A righteous society doesn’t just happen. It requires planning and effort by those in charge. Oddly enough, an unrighteous society happens the same way. The powerful fail to love their neighbors because they never intended to do so. Instead, as Micah observed, they planned their sinful actions, even while lying in their beds (v. 1).

Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! Micah 2:1

In Micah’s time and place, the powerful were taking advantage of others for their own gain. Rather than protect the powerless—typically identified in the Old Testament as the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed—the powerful in Micah’s day trampled them even further underfoot. What’s worse, these wicked people didn’t simply stumble upon taking advantage of others, they stayed up late figuring out ways to enrich themselves at the expense of others.

Micah has strong words for these people—the Lord is “planning disaster...from which you cannot save yourselves” (v. 3), which ends with the once-powerful, once-wealthy elite being homeless. The Lord’s punishment will match the crime when He enacts justice on behalf of His people.

In the West, Micah’s mini-sermon serves a dual purpose. First, God’s fierce judgment warns us to steward well the power and wealth He has given us. Second, this mini-sermon encourages the oppressed. Like God assured Moses long before Micah, He hears, He sees, He knows, and He remembers (see Ex. 2:23–25). God does not turn away from oppression in this world. His eyes are open, and one day He will make all things right. Even though it seems like the powerful have free reign over the powerless, they do not. Take hope in this assurance!

>> It is important to consider where we stand on these issues. Do we love our neighbors well? If we put ourselves first and worry only about our own needs, we are not following Christ’s example.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord God, we may not consider ourselves wealthy or powerful, but show us the areas where we hold sway. We submit all our resources to Your purposes; teach us to use them in defense of the weak, for Your honor and glory.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/4/21

# Rainy Days

 **Read:** [**Proverbs 11:23–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.23%E2%80%9326)

23The desire of the righteous ends only in good,  
    but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

24One person gives freely, yet gains even more;  
    another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

25A generous person will prosper;  
    whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

26People curse the one who hoards grain,  
    but they pray God’s blessing on the one who is willing to sell.

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. [Proverbs 11:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.25)

When small businesses in Tennessee were abruptly shuttered in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19, shop owners worried about how to care for their employees, how to pay their rent, and how to simply survive the crisis. In response to their concerns, the pastor of a church near Nashville started an initiative to supply cash to struggling business owners.

“We don’t feel like we can sit on a rainy-day fund when somebody else is going through a rainy day,” the pastor explained, as he encouraged other churches in the area to join the effort.

A rainy-day fund is money that’s put aside in case normal income is decreased for a time while regular operations need to continue. While it’s natural for us to look out for ourselves first, Scripture encourages us to always look beyond our own needs, to find ways to serve others, and to practice generosity. [Proverbs 11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011) reminds us, “One person gives freely, yet gains even more,” “a generous person will prosper,” and “whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” (vv. 24–25).

Is the sun shining extra bright in your life today? Look around to see if there’s torrential rain in someone else’s world. The blessings God has graciously given you are multiplied when you freely share them with others. Being generous and open-handed is a wonderful way to give hope to others and to remind hurting people that God loves them.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When has someone been open-handed with their time or resources with you? How could you do the same for someone in need today?

Gracious God, help me to be tenderhearted toward the needs of others and show me how I can share Your love and generosity with them.

#### **Insight**

[Proverbs 11:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2011.25) declares that “a generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” The apostle Paul echoes this thought to the believers in Jesus in Corinth. He writes to encourage them to fulfill their promise to provide a generous gift for the needy church in Jerusalem: “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously” ([2 Corinthians 9:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%209.6)). He goes on to say, “Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (vv. 10–11). Our generosity points back to God, who provides all good things ([James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.17)).

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

# God Calling – 11/4/21

# I Am Beside You

**In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.  Psalm 16:11**

Do not seek to realize this fullness of Joy as the result of effort.  This cannot be, any more than Joy in a human friend's presence would come as the result of trying to force yourself to like to have that friend with you.

Call often My Name, "Jesus."

The calling of My Name does not really summon Me.  I am beside you.  But it removes, as it were, the scales from your eyes and you see Me.

It is, as it were, the pressure of a loved one's hand, that brings an answering pressure, and a thrill of Joy follows, a real, and a joyful sense of nearness.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.  Psalm 51:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/5/21

# Partakers of His Suffering



…but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings… —[1 Peter 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Peter+4%3A13)

If you are going to be used by God, He will take you through a number of experiences that are not meant for you personally at all. They are designed to make you useful in His hands, and to enable you to understand what takes place in the lives of others. Because of this process, you will never be surprised by what comes your way. You say, “Oh, I can’t deal with that person.” Why can’t you? God gave you sufficient opportunities to learn from Him about that problem; but you turned away, not heeding the lesson, because it seemed foolish to spend your time that way.

The sufferings of Christ were not those of ordinary people. He suffered “according to the will of God” ([1 Peter 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+4:19)), having a different point of view of suffering from ours. It is only through our relationship with Jesus Christ that we can understand what God is after in His dealings with us. When it comes to suffering, it is part of our Christian culture to want to know God’s purpose beforehand. In the history of the Christian church, the tendency has been to avoid being identified with the sufferings of Jesus Christ. People have sought to carry out God’s orders through a shortcut of their own. God’s way is always the way of suffering— the way of the “long road home.”

Are we partakers of Christ’s sufferings? Are we prepared for God to stamp out our personal ambitions? Are we prepared for God to destroy our individual decisions by supernaturally transforming them? It will mean not knowing why God is taking us that way, because knowing would make us spiritually proud. We never realize at the time what God is putting us through— we go through it more or less without understanding. Then suddenly we come to a place of enlightenment, and realize— “God has strengthened me and I didn’t even know it!”

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Awe is the condition of a man’s spirit realizing Who God is and what He has done for him personally. Our Lord emphasizes the attitude of a child; no attitude can express such solemn awe and familiarity as that of a child.  Not Knowing Whither, 882 L

# CCEL – 11/5/21

**Take thou also unto thee principal spices, and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment.**—[EXO. 30:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.30.html" \l "Exod.30.23),[25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.30.html" \l "Exod.30.25)

Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.—One Spirit.—Diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.—God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.—God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Of his fulness have all we received.—As the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.—He which . . . hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

[Exo. 30:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.30.html" \l "Exod.30.32). -[Eph. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.4). -[I Cor. 12:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.12.html" \l "iCor.12.4).[Psa. 45:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.45.html" \l "Ps.45.7). -[Acts 10:38](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.10.html" \l "Acts.10.38). -[John 3:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.34).[John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16). -[I John 2:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.27). -[II Cor. 1:21,22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.21).[Gal. 5:22,23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22).

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” [Isaiah 54:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.54.html" \l "Isa.54.17)

This day is notable in English history for two great deliverances wrought by God for us. On this day the plot of the Papists to destroy our Houses of Parliament was discovered, 1605.

“While for our princes they prepare

In caverns deep a burning snare,

He shot from heaven a piercing ray,

And the dark treachery brought to day.”And secondly—today is the anniversary of the landing of King William III, at Torbay, by which the hope of Popish ascendancy was quashed, and religious liberty was secured, 1688.

This day ought to be celebrated, not by the saturnalia of striplings, but by the songs of saints. Our Puritan forefathers most devoutly made it a special time of thanksgiving. There is extant a record of the annual sermons preached by Matthew Henry on this day. Our Protestant feeling, and our love of liberty, should make us regard its anniversary with holy gratitude. Let our hearts and lips exclaim, “We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which thou didst in their day, and in the old time before them.” Thou hast made this nation the home of the gospel; and when the foe has risen against her, thou hast shielded her. Help us to offer repeated songs for repeated deliverances. Grant us more and more a hatred of Antichrist, and hasten on the day of her entire extinction. Till then and ever, we believe the promise, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” Should it not be laid upon the heart of every lover of the gospel of Jesus on this day to plead for the overturning of false doctrines and the extension of divine truth? Would it not be well to search our own hearts, and turn out any of the Popish lumber of self-righteousness which may lie concealed therein?

# Word Live – 11/5/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/5/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/5/21

# Wind and Lies

**Read:** [**Micah 2:6–11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+2%3a6%e2%80%9311)

### **False Prophets**

6“Do not prophesy,” their prophets say.  
    “Do not prophesy about these things;  
    disgrace will not overtake us.”  
7You descendants of Jacob, should it be said,  
    “Does the Lord become[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+2%3A6%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22603a)] impatient?  
    Does he do such things?”

“Do not my words do good  
    to the one whose ways are upright?  
8Lately my people have risen up  
    like an enemy.  
You strip off the rich robe  
    from those who pass by without a care,  
    like men returning from battle.  
9You drive the women of my people  
    from their pleasant homes.  
You take away my blessing  
    from their children forever.  
10Get up, go away!  
    For this is not your resting place,  
because it is defiled,  
    it is ruined, beyond all remedy.  
11If a liar and deceiver comes and says,  
    ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,’  
    that would be just the prophet for this people!

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Micah 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+2%3A6%E2%80%9311+&version=NIV#en-NIV-22603) Or Is the Spirit of the Lord

When a teenage son wanted to borrow the family car, he asked his dad first. But when his dad said, “No,” he immediately went and asked his mom. Of course, he didn’t mention that his dad had already said “no,” because he wanted a positive response. He was hoping for the answer that he wanted to hear.

Do not my words do good to the one whose ways are upright? Micah 2:7

Micah was facing something similar here in chapter 2: “Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us” (v. 6). Micah had delivered a faithful word from the Lord to his audience—because of their worship of false gods and mistreatment of others, destruction was coming. This, however, was not the word they wanted to hear, and so they ran off, looking for a better word from another source.

Micah cuts right to the heart of the problem: “If a liar and deceiver comes and says, ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer, that would be just the prophet for this people!’” (v. 11). Micah was not saying what the people wanted to hear; he was telling the truth.

Micah’s word for the oppressors in Israel and Judah is strong—certain judgment is coming. No amount of theological gamesmanship can change that, and the positive preacher that the leadership wants is nothing more than a windbag full of falsities.

Micah’s response may seem harsh, but there is great comfort in it. Sometimes our children, or others, come to us looking for someone to “utter wind and lies” to them. They want us to sympathize with their predicament and to utter words that will affirm their behavior. But if we put a positive spin on behavior that is clearly wrong, it is not loving or right. God’s truth is needed and necessary, and delivering it is an act of love.

>> We can be like that, preferring those who teach what we want to hear. We must be careful not to rely on “wind and lies” that are not true, even if they make us feel better in the moment.

### **Pray with Us**

Impart to us Your hatred for lies—even those that seem beautiful and reassuring. Make Your truth our guide as we wade through the world’s deceptions. Teach us to treasure the realities You have ordained.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/5/21

# Finding Joy in the Meaningless

 **Read:** [**Ecclesiastes 2:1–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%202.1%E2%80%9311)

### **Pleasures Are Meaningless**

2 I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be meaningless. 2“Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?” 3I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

4I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+2%3A1%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#fen-NIV-17342a)] as well—the delights of a man’s heart. 9I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;  
    I refused my heart no pleasure.  
My heart took delight in all my labor,  
    and this was the reward for all my toil.  
11Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done  
    and what I had toiled to achieve,  
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;  
    nothing was gained under the sun.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Ecclesiastes 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+2%3A1%E2%80%9311&version=NIV#en-NIV-17342) The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind. [Ecclesiastes 2:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%202.11)

In 2010, James Ward, the creator of the blog “I Like Boring Things,” launched a conference called the “Boring Conference.” It’s a one-day celebration of the mundane, the ordinary, and the overlooked. In the past, speakers have addressed seemingly meaningless topics like sneezing, sounds that vending machines make, and inkjet printers of 1999. Ward knows the topics may be boring, but the speakers can take a mundane subject and make it interesting, meaningful, and even joyful.

Several millennia ago, Solomon, the wisest of kings, launched his own search for joy in the meaningless and mundane. He pursued work, bought flocks, built wealth, acquired singers, and constructed buildings ([Ecclesiastes 2:4–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles%202.4%E2%80%939)). Some of these pursuits were honorable and some were not. Ultimately, in his pursuit of meaning, the king found nothing but boredom (v. 11). Solomon maintained a worldview that didn’t press beyond the limits of human experience to include God. Ultimately, however, he realized that he’d find joy in the mundane only when he remembered and worshiped God (12:1–7).

When we find ourselves in the whirlwind of tedium, let’s launch our own daily mini-conference, as we “remember [our] Creator” (v. 1)—the God who fills the mundane with meaning. As we remember and worship Him, we’ll find wonder in the ordinary, gratitude in the mundane, and joy in the seemingly meaningless things of life.

By:  [Marvin Williams](https://odb.org/author/marvinwilliams/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why is it so hard to find meaning in things that can never satisfy? How do you need to reprioritize your commitment to and worship of God so you can find your meaning in Him?

God, take the unremarkable moments of my life and infuse them with Your joy and wonder.

#### **Insight**

The book of Ecclesiastes was most likely written by Solomon; the author is said to be the son of David (1:1) and king of Israel (v. 12). This is significant because as king, Solomon had access to everything he needed to conduct his “experiment” of finding meaning by pursuing the things that humans desire the most (2:1–11). Additionally, throughout this search for meaning and despite indulging in worldly pleasures, he notes that he was still being guided by wisdom (vv. 3, 9). We’re told he was the wisest person to have ever lived (see [1 Kings 3:11–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%203.11%E2%80%9312)).

By: [**Julie Schwab**](https://odb.org/author/jschwab95/)

# God Calling – 11/5/21

# Second Advent

**Jesus, Comforter of all the sorrowing, help us to bring Thy comfort into every heart and life to which Thou art longing to express that comfort through us.  Use us, Lord.  The years may be many or few.  Place us where we can best serve Thee, and influence most for Thee.**

The world would be brought to Me so soon, so soon, if only all who acknowledged Me as Lord, as Christ, gave themselves unreservedly to be used by Me.

I could use each human body as mightily as I used My own human body as a channel for Divine Love and Power.

I do not delay My second coming.  My followers delay it.

If each lived for Me, by Me, in Me, allowing Me to live in him, to use him to express the Divine through him, as I expressed it when on earth, then long ago the world would have been drawn to Me, and I should have come to claim My own.

So seek, My children, to live, knowing no other desire but to express Me, and to show My Love to your world.

He must increase, but I must decrease.  John 3:30

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/6/21

# Intimate Theology



Do you believe this? —[John 11:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+11%3A26)

Martha believed in the power available to Jesus Christ; she believed that if He had been there He could have healed her brother; she also believed that Jesus had a special intimacy with God, and that whatever He asked of God, God would do. But— she needed a closer personal intimacy with Jesus. Martha’s theology had its fulfillment in the future. But Jesus continued to attract and draw her in until her belief became an intimate possession. It then slowly emerged into a personal inheritance— “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ…” ([John 11:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+11:27)).

Is the Lord dealing with you in the same way? Is Jesus teaching you to have a personal intimacy with Himself? Allow Him to drive His question home to you— “Do you believe this?” Are you facing an area of doubt in your life? Have you come, like Martha, to a crossroads of overwhelming circumstances where your theology is about to become a very personal belief? This happens only when a personal problem brings the awareness of our personal need.

To believe is to commit. In the area of intellectual learning I commit myself mentally, and reject anything not related to that belief. In the realm of personal belief I commit myself morally to my convictions and refuse to compromise. But in intimate personal belief I commit myself spiritually to Jesus Christ and make a determination to be dominated by Him alone.

Then, when I stand face to face with Jesus Christ and He says to me, “Do you believe this?” I find that faith is as natural as breathing. And I am staggered when I think how foolish I have been in not trusting Him earlier.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The great word of Jesus to His disciples is Abandon. When God has brought us into the relationship of disciples, we have to venture on His word; trust entirely to Him and watch that when He brings us to the venture, we take it.  
Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

# CCEL – 11/6/21

**When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**—[COL. 3:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.4)

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

[John 11:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.11.html" \l "John.11.25). -[I John 5:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.11).[I Thes. 4:16-18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.4.html" \l "iThess.4.16). -[I John 3:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.2). -[I Cor. 15:43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.43).[John 14:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.3).

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.” [Isaiah 44:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.44.html" \l "Isa.44.3)

When a believer has fallen into a low, sad state of feeling, he often tries to lift himself out of it by chastening himself with dark and doleful fears. Such is not the way to rise from the dust, but to continue in it. As well chain the eagle’s wing to make it mount, as doubt in order to increase our grace. It is not the law, but the gospel which saves the seeking soul at first; and it is not a legal bondage, but gospel liberty which can restore the fainting believer afterwards. Slavish fear brings not back the backslider to God, but the sweet wooings of love allure him to Jesus’ bosom. Are you this morning thirsting for the living God, and unhappy because you cannot find him to the delight of your heart? Have you lost the joy of religion, and is this your prayer, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation”? Are you conscious also that you are barren, like the dry ground; that you are not bringing forth the fruit unto God which he has a right to expect of you; that you are not so useful in the Church, or in the world, as your heart desires to be? Then here is exactly the promise which you need, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.” You shall receive the grace you so much require, and you shall have it to the utmost reach of your needs. Water refreshes the thirsty: you shall be refreshed; your desires shall be gratified. Water quickens sleeping vegetable life: your life shall be quickened by fresh grace. Water swells the buds and makes the fruits ripen; you shall have fructifying grace: you shall be made fruitful in the ways of God. Whatever good quality there is in divine grace, you shall enjoy it to the full. All the riches of divine grace you shall receive in plenty; you shall be as it were drenched with it: and as sometimes the meadows become flooded by the bursting rivers, and the fields are turned into pools, so shall you be—the thirsty land shall be springs of water.

# Word Live – 11/6/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/6/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/6/21

# The Lord Will Lead

**Read:** [**Micah 2:12–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+2%3a12%e2%80%9313)

### **Deliverance Promised**

12“I will surely gather all of you, Jacob;  
    I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel.  
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen,  
    like a flock in its pasture;  
    the place will throng with people.  
13The One who breaks open the way will go up before them;  
    they will break through the gate and go out.  
Their King will pass through before them,  
    the Lord at their head.”

Many elementary school teachers will admit that they really do not enjoy field trips where children visit a zoo or a museum. For the teachers, even with the help of willing parents, it can be difficult to control their young charges outside of the controlled environment of the classroom. Children are so excited to explore that they aren’t always mindful of their leader.

Along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. Isaiah 42:16

In the first bit of hope in Micah’s message to the people of Israel, God promises that He will one day “bring together the remnant of Israel” (v. 12). When God brings them together, they will be like “sheep in a pen” and “a flock in its pasture.” These images, foreign to those of us who grew up in an urban context, bring to mind security and provision. God will give this remnant a place to live and eat, and He will encircle them with a protective fence. After all the destruction God’s people will face, He will return them to peace and meet their needs.

What’s more, God says that He will gather together this remnant, that He will “go up before them,” and that He will be “at their head” as their leader (v. 13). Israel’s religious and political leaders have failed to protect and provide for them, but now God Himself will protect and sustain them. Israel’s leaders have led them into sin and rebellion, but God will lead them in living in a right relationship with Him. In the New Testament, we learn the name of the Shepherd who will fulfill this promise. It is Jesus (John 10:11–16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).

>> Perhaps you have found yourself rebelling against God like the leaders of Israel. Will you trust Jesus and return to Him today? Or maybe you are more like the people of Israel who have suffered under ungodly leaders. Look to Christ as your Shepherd.

### **Pray with Us**

We who have rebelled humble ourselves and ask You to restore our love and trust in You. We who suffer under ungodly leaders ask for courage to confront, or wisdom to leave. Lead us both back into righteousness.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/6/21

# A Glossary for Grief

 **Read:** [**Luke 23:44–46**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.44%E2%80%9346)

### **The Death of Jesus**

44It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A44%E2%80%9346&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25982a)] When he had said this, he breathed his last.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [Luke 23:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3A44%E2%80%9346&version=NIV#en-NIV-25982) Psalm 31:5

Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” [Luke 23:46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.46)

When Hugh and DeeDee released their only child to heaven, they struggled with what to call themselves in the aftermath. There's no specific word in the English language to describe a parent who has lost a child. A wife without her husband is a widow. A husband without his wife is a widower. A child bereft of parents is an orphan. A parent whose child has died is an undefined hollow of hurt.

Miscarriage. Sudden infant death. Suicide. Illness. Accident. Death steals a child from this world and then robs the surviving parents of an expressed identity.

Yet God Himself understands such devastating grief as His only Son, Jesus, called to Him while dying on the cross, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” ([Luke 23:46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.46)). God was Father before Jesus’ earthly birth and remained Father when Jesus released His final breath. God continued as Father when the still body of His Son was laid in a tomb. God lives on today as Father of a risen Son who brings every parent the hope that a child can live again.

What do you call a heavenly Father who sacrifices His Son for the universe? For you and for me? Father. Still, Father. When there are no words in the glossary of grief to describe the pain of loss, God is our Father and calls us His children ([1 John 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20John%203.1)).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How does it shape your heart to realize that God remains your Father and calls you His child—always? How might this thought comfort you?

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for being my Father and claiming me as Your child.

Read [Life After Loss](https://DiscoverySeries.org/CB131).

#### **Insight**

Jesus uttered seven sayings from the cross, which were directed both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal statements were addressed to the people at the cross, including His words of comfort to His mother ([John 19:26–27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.26%E2%80%9327)) and His words of assurance to the dying thief ([Luke 23:43](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.43)). At least four of the sayings were vertical in nature, serving as prayers. Jesus prayed for mercy for His killers (v. 34), expressed His sense of personal abandonment by the Father ([Matthew 27:46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2027.46)), declared that He’d completed the sin-bearing task ([John 19:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.30)), and dismissed His spirit back to the Father ([Luke 23:46](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2023.46)). The seventh statement, “I am thirsty” ([John 19:28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.28)), has been interpreted both horizontally and vertically. While some view the words as a request to people for a drink (horizontal), others view it vertically as Jesus requesting from the Father the cup He’d sought to escape in the garden of Gethsemane ([Matthew 26:39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2026.39)).

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

# God Calling – 11/6/21

# God in Action

Power is not such an overwhelming force as it sounds, a something you call to your aid, to intervene in crises.  No!  Power is just God in action.

Therefore whenever a servant of Mine, however weak he humanly may be, allows God to work through him, then all he does is powerful.

Carry this thought with you through the days in which you seem to accomplish little.  Try to see it is not you, but the Divine Spirit in you.  All you have to do, as I have told you before, is to turn self out.  A very powerful axe in a Master Hand accomplishes much.  The same in the hand of a weak child, nothing.  So see that it is not the instrument, but the Master Hand that wields the instrument, that tells.

Remember no day is lost on which some Spiritual Truth becomes clearer.  No day is lost which you have given to Me to use.  My use of it may not have been apparent to you.  Leave that to Me.  Dwell in Me, and I in you, so shall ye bear much fruit. The fruit is not the work of the branches, though proudly the branches may bear it.  It is the work of the Vine, that sends its life-giving sap through those branches.  I am the Vine and ye are the branches.

And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt.  Deuteronomy 4:37

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/7/21

# The Undetected Sacredness of Circumstances



We know that all things work together for good to those who love God… —[Romans 8:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+8%3A28)

The circumstances of a saint’s life are ordained of God. In the life of a saint there is no such thing as chance. God by His providence brings you into circumstances that you can’t understand at all, but the Spirit of God understands. God brings you to places, among people, and into certain conditions to accomplish a definite purpose through the intercession of the Spirit in you. Never put yourself in front of your circumstances and say, “I’m going to be my own providence here; I will watch this closely, or protect myself from that.” All your circumstances are in the hand of God, and therefore you don’t ever have to think they are unnatural or unique. Your part in intercessory prayer is not to agonize over how to intercede, but to use the everyday circumstances and people God puts around you by His providence to bring them before His throne, and to allow the Spirit in you the opportunity to intercede for them. In this way God is going to touch the whole world with His saints.

Am I making the Holy Spirit’s work difficult by being vague and unsure, or by trying to do His work for Him? I must do the human side of intercession— utilizing the circumstances in which I find myself and the people who surround me. I must keep my conscious life as a sacred place for the Holy Spirit. Then as I lift different ones to God through prayer, the Holy Spirit intercedes for them.

Your intercessions can never be mine, and my intercessions can never be yours, “…but the Spirit Himself makes intercession” in each of our lives ([Romans 8:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8:26)). And without that intercession, the lives of others would be left in poverty and in ruin.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

There is no allowance whatever in the New Testament for the man who says he is saved by grace but who does not produce the graceful goods. Jesus Christ by His Redemption can make our actual life in keeping with our religious profession. Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, 1465 R

# CCEL – 11/7/21

**Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!**—[PSA. 107:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.107.html" \l "Ps.107.8)

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.—How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!

This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.—Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!—The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

[Psa. 34:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.34.html" \l "Ps.34.8). -[Psa. 31:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.31.html" \l "Ps.31.19).[Isa. 43:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.43.html" \l "Isa.43.21). -[Eph. 1:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.5),[12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.12).[Zech. 9:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.9.html" \l "Zech.9.17). -[Psa. 145:9-12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.145.html" \l "Ps.145.9).

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” **[Isaiah 49:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.49.html" \l "Isa.49.16)**

No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word “Behold,” is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.” How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God’s favoured people? The Lord’s loving word of rebuke should make us blush; he cries, “How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How darest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?” O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of his people. He keeps his promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt him. He never faileth; he is never a dry well; he is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert. “Behold,” is a word intended to excite admiration. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. Heaven and earth may well be astonished that rebels should obtain so great a nearness to the heart of infinite love as to be written upon the palms of his hands. “I have graven thee.” It does not say, “Thy name.” The name is there, but that is not all: “I have graven thee.” See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon his own palms?

# Word Live – 11/7/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/7/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/7/21

# God and Others

**Read:** [**Micah 3:1–4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+3%3a1%e2%80%934)

### **Leaders and Prophets Rebuked**

3 Then I said,

“Listen, you leaders of Jacob,  
    you rulers of Israel.  
Should you not embrace justice,  
2    you who hate good and love evil;  
who tear the skin from my people  
    and the flesh from their bones;  
3who eat my people’s flesh,  
    strip off their skin  
    and break their bones in pieces;  
who chop them up like meat for the pan,  
    like flesh for the pot?”

4Then they will cry out to the Lord,  
    but he will not answer them.  
At that time he will hide his face from them  
    because of the evil they have done.

Loving others is easier said than done. But loving our neighbors as ourselves is one of God’s central commands (Lev. 19:17–18). While loving others can be challenging, it’s crucial to our relationship with God. Micah addresses this problem in today’s passage.

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

Having just promised Israel a beautiful, hopeful future, the Lord turns His attention back to Israel’s leaders. He rebukes them for their oppressive treatment of His people, demonstrating that our relationship with God has a direct impact on our relationships with others. We can’t separate one from the other In fact, our treatment of other humans made in God’s image is a direct reflection of our relationship with God. No matter how strong our theology is, our actions toward others tell the truth about what we believe about God and where we stand in our relationship with Him. Israel’s leaders failed in that respect.

This passage provides hope in two areas. First, Micah’s rebuke comforts people who have experienced the evil he describes here. Perhaps you feel cannibalized by people who should have loved and protected you. You can take comfort that God sees and that He will hold the guilty accountable. Second, the Lord’s rebuke gives us a helpful diagnostic tool for our relationship with Him. In the New Testament, we see a clear discussion of this topic: “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:20). If we do not show love to others, it’s a sure sign that we do not love God. Rejoice, though, for recognizing our sinful behavior is the first step toward repentance and a restoration of our relationship with God (and others!).

>> Today’s devotional may challenge or comfort you. Consider what your relationships with others reveal about your relationship with God.

### **Pray with Us**

God, remind us of Your affection for those we despise; Your concern for those who oppress us; Your love for those we consider unremarkable. Teach us to worship You through our care for others.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/7/21

# The Jesus Label

 **Read:** [**Colossians 3:12–17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.12%E2%80%9317)

12Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. [Colossians 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.17)

“Son, I don’t have much to give you. But I do have a good name, so don’t mess it up.” Those wise, weighty words were uttered by Johnnie Bettis as his son Jerome left home for college. Jerome quoted his father in his American Professional Football Hall of Fame acceptance speech. These sage words that Jerome has carried with him throughout his life have been so influential that he closed his riveting speech with similar words to his own son. “Son, there’s not much that I can give you that’s more important than our good name.”

A good name is vital for believers in Jesus. Paul’s words in [Colossians 3:12–17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.12%E2%80%9317) remind us who it is that we represent (v. 17). Character is like the clothing that we wear; and this passage puts the “Jesus label” of clothing on display: “As God’s chosen people . . . clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another. . . . And over all these virtues put on love” (vv. 12–14). These aren’t just our “Sunday clothes.” We’re to wear them everywhere, all the time, as God works in us to reflect Him. When our lives are characterized by these qualities, we demonstrate that we have His name.

May we prayerfully and carefully represent Him as He provides what we need.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

As you evaluate your wardrobe, how “well dressed” are you with Jesus’ character? How can you seek His wisdom, power, and guidance to reflect Him even more clearly?

Father, forgive me when I don’t represent Jesus well. Give me strength and courage to be better dressed for Your glory and Christ’s name’s sake.

Learn more about the importance of [living a life that honors Christ](https://ChristianUniversity.org/Hypocrisy).

#### **Insight**

Gratitude is the single theme that unites verses 15–17 of [Colossians 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203). Without stating specifically what we’re to be thankful for, Paul says that thankfulness to God should characterize our lives. He concludes verse 15 by saying, “And be thankful.” In verse 16, we’re to lift our voices in song with a grateful heart. And in verse 17, we should give thanks to God in whatever we say or do. Each of these admonitions comes from Greek root word charis, which means “grace.” Another form of this word means “properly acknowledging that God’s grace works well.” This suggests that all thankfulness is ultimately rooted in God’s grace to us. The opening verses of this chapter tell us why: we’ve been raised with Jesus, our lives are hidden with Him, and we too will appear with Him when He comes in glory (vv. 1–4). What more reason to be thankful?

# God Calling – 11/7/21

# Self Kills Power

Dwelling with Me, desiring only My Will and to do My work, My Spirit cannot fail to pass through the channel of your life into the lives of others.

Many think it is humility to say they do little, and are of little value to My world.  To think that is pride.

What if the pipe were to say, "I do so little, I wish I could be more use."  The reply would be "It is not you, but the water that passes through you, that saves and blesses.  All you have to do is to see there is nothing to block the way so that the water cannot flow through."

The only block there can be in your channel is self.  Keep that out, and know that My Spirit is flowing through.  Therefore all must be the better for coming in contact with both of you, because you are channels.  See this, and you will think it natural to know they are being helped, not by you, but by My Spirit flowing through you as a channel.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God , whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.  Ephesians 4:30

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/8/21

# The Unrivaled Power of Prayer



We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. —[Romans 8:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+8%3A26)

We realize that we are energized by the Holy Spirit for prayer; and we know what it is to pray in accordance with the Spirit; but we don’t often realize that the Holy Spirit Himself prays prayers in us which we cannot utter ourselves. When we are born again of God and are indwelt by the Spirit of God, He expresses for us the unutterable.

“He,” the Holy Spirit in you, “makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” ([Romans 8:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8:27)). And God searches your heart, not to know what your conscious prayers are, but to find out what the prayer of the Holy Spirit is.

The Spirit of God uses the nature of the believer as a temple in which to offer His prayers of intercession. “…your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit…” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)). When Jesus Christ cleansed the temple, “…He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple” ([Mark 11:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11:16)). The Spirit of God will not allow you to use your body for your own convenience. Jesus ruthlessly cast out everyone who bought and sold in the temple, and said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer…. But you have made it a ‘den of thieves’ ” ([Mark 11:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11:17)).

Have we come to realize that our “body is the temple of the Holy Spirit”? If so, we must be careful to keep it undefiled for Him. We have to remember that our conscious life, even though only a small part of our total person, is to be regarded by us as a “temple of the Holy Spirit.” He will be responsible for the unconscious part which we don’t know, but we must pay careful attention to and guard the conscious part for which we are responsible.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 11/8/21

**Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.**—[I THES. 5:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iThess.5.html" \l "iThess.5.8)

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.—Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

[I Pet 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.13). -[Eph. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.14),[16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.16).[Isa. 25:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.8).[Heb. 11:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.11.html" \l "Heb.11.1).

“As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord.” **[Colossians 2:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.6)**

The life of faith is represented as receiving—an act which implies the very opposite of anything like merit. It is simply the acceptance of a gift. As the earth drinks in the rain, as the sea receives the streams, as night accepts light from the stars, so we, giving nothing, partake freely of the grace of God. The saints are not, by nature, wells, or streams, they are but cisterns into which the living water flows; they are empty vessels into which God pours his salvation. The idea of receiving implies a sense of realization, making the matter a reality. One cannot very well receive a shadow; we receive that which is substantial: so is it in the life of faith, Christ becomes real to us. While we are without faith, Jesus is a mere name to us—a person who lived a long while ago, so long ago that his life is only a history to us now! By an act of faith Jesus becomes a real person in the consciousness of our heart. But receiving also means grasping or getting possession of. The thing which I receive becomes my own: I appropriate to myself that which is given. When I receive Jesus, he becomes my Saviour, so mine that neither life nor death shall be able to rob me of him. All this is to receive Christ—to take him as God’s free gift; to realize him in my heart, and to appropriate him as mine.

Salvation may be described as the blind receiving sight, the deaf receiving hearing, the dead receiving life; but we have not only received these blessings, we have received Christ Jesus himself. It is true that he gave us life from the dead. He gave us pardon of sin; he gave us imputed righteousness. These are all precious things, but we are not content with them; we have received Christ himself. The Son of God has been poured into us, and we have received him, and appropriated him. What a heartful Jesus must be, for heaven itself cannot contain him!

# Word Live – 11/8/21

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

# Scripture Union – 11/8/21

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

# Today in the Word – 11/8/21

# The Lord Gives Strength

**Read:** [**Micah 3:5–8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+3%3a5%e2%80%938)

5This is what the Lord says:

“As for the prophets  
    who lead my people astray,  
they proclaim ‘peace’  
    if they have something to eat,  
but prepare to wage war against anyone  
    who refuses to feed them.  
6Therefore night will come over you, without visions,  
    and darkness, without divination.  
The sun will set for the prophets,  
    and the day will go dark for them.  
7The seers will be ashamed  
    and the diviners disgraced.  
They will all cover their faces  
    because there is no answer from God.”  
8But as for me, I am filled with power,  
    with the Spirit of the Lord,  
    and with justice and might,  
to declare to Jacob his transgression,  
    to Israel his sin.

In the early sixteenth century a young German monk named Martin Luther changed the world when he preached that salvation came through faith in Christ alone—and nothing else. In stark contrast, another famous preacher, Johannes Tetzel, taught that a person could buy his way into heaven—and he made a hefty profit selling indulgences. In today’s passage, we catch a glimpse of another fierce argument between false and true prophets.

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD. Micah 3:8

At the beginning of this chapter, the Lord rebuked Israel’s political leaders for abusing God’s people: they devoured those they should have protected. In today’s text, God sharply criticizes Israel’s religious leaders for causing God’s people to sin.

Israel’s religious leaders—the very people who should have been modeling living in right relationship with God—were instead using their position to enrich themselves. Their devotion to money meant that they shaped their message according to what would fill their bank accounts (of course, ancient Israelites didn’t have actual bank accounts, but you get the picture). The Lord does not look kindly on the manipulation of His people or the illegitimate use of His name, and He promises that they will be “ashamed...disgraced...[and] cover their faces” (v. 7). God would not allow their enrichment at the expense of others.

In verse 8, Micah contrasts himself to Israel’s religious leaders saying, “But as for me...” The prophet’s words are based on the “power” of God and carry His “justice and might” (v. 8). That’s why he is able to speak hard truths and call God’s people to repentance. We may not be called to the sort of difficult prophetic ministry like Micah’s. But we can consider how faithful we are in representing God to others.

>> Today’s passage is a caution that not every religious leader is upright. We must be careful not to follow anyone blindly, but to compare everything we are being taught against the truth of God’s Word.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, what minor details do we wrongly hold sacred? What untruths have we been taught to embrace? If we are deceived, free us from the sway of ungodly leaders who misrepresent You and Your Word.

## BY Russell L. Meek

# Our Daily Bread – 11/8/21

# Sing Praise to God

 **Read:** [**1 Chronicles 15:29–16:11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2015.29%E2%80%9316.11)

29As the ark of the covenant of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.

### **Ministering Before the Ark**

16 They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God. 2After David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. 3Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each Israelite man and woman.

4He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to extol,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+15%3A29%E2%80%9316%3A11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-10825a)] thank, and praise the Lord, the God of Israel: 5Asaph was the chief, and next to him in rank were Zechariah, then Jaaziel,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+15%3A29%E2%80%9316%3A11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-10826b)] Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals, 6and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.

7That day David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the Lord in this manner:

8Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;  
    make known among the nations what he has done.  
9Sing to him, sing praise to him;  
    tell of all his wonderful acts.  
10Glory in his holy name;  
    let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.  
11Look to the Lord and his strength;  
    seek his face always.

#### **Footnotes**

1. [1 Chronicles 16:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+15%3A29%E2%80%9316%3A11&version=NIV#en-NIV-10825) Or petition; or invoke
2. [1 Chronicles 16:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+15%3A29%E2%80%9316%3A11&version=NIV#en-NIV-10826) See 15:18,20; Hebrew Jeiel, possibly another name for Jaaziel.

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. [1 Chronicles 16:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2016.8)

The heat and humidity of the Midwestern summer closed in on us all week at the discipleship conference, but on the last day we welcomed a front of cooler air. Giving thanks for the break in weather and the amazing work God had done, hundreds joined voices to worship God. Many felt liberated to sing wholeheartedly before God, offering hearts, souls, bodies, and minds to Him. As I think back to that day decades later, I’m reminded of the pure wonder and joy of praising God.

King David knew how to wholeheartedly worship God. He rejoiced when the ark of the covenant, which signified God’s presence, was placed in Jerusalem—by dancing, leaping, and celebrating ([1 Chronicles 15:29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2015.29)). Even though his wife Michal observed his abandon and “despised him in her heart” (v. 29), David didn’t let her criticism stop him from worshiping the one true God. Even if he appeared undignified, he wanted to give thanks to God for choosing him to lead the nation (see [2 Samuel 6:21–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%206.21%E2%80%9322)).

David “appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the Lord in this manner: Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts” ([1 Chronicles 16:7–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2016.7%E2%80%939)). May we too give ourselves fully to worshiping God by pouring out our praise and adoration.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you felt free to worship God wholeheartedly? What led you to that sense of freedom and release?

Creator God, we proclaim Your name above all others. You’re worthy to be praised! We worship You!

Watch [“A Song That Never Ends”](https://YouTube.com/watch?v=8nRFWxeDix4).

#### **Insight**

The ark of the covenant was the most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle. The ark the craftsman Bezalel made was an oblong chest (measuring about 45 x 27 x 27 inches) made of acacia wood overlaid on the inside and outside with gold (see [Exodus 31:1–5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2031.1%E2%80%935); [37:1–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exodus%2037.1%E2%80%939)). Inside the ark were the tablets containing the Law given to Moses (25:16), a pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod ([Numbers 17:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Num%2017.10)). The lid of the ark was called the mercy seat, a slab of gold that fit over the top of the chest and featured two cherubim.

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

# God Calling – 11/8/21

# Wipe The Slate

**But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark ...   Philippians 3:13,14**

Forget the past. Remember only its glad days. Wipe the slate of your remembrance with Love, which will erase all that is not confirmed in Love.  You must forget your failures, your failures and those of others.  Wipe them out of the book of your remembrance.

I did not die upon the Cross for man to bear the burdens of his sins himself.  "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

If you forget not the sins of others, and I bear them, then you add to My sorrows.

And when ye stand praying forgive, if you have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.  Mark 11:25