# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/10/20

# Fellowship in the Gospel



…fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ… —[1 Thessalonians 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Thessalonians+3%3A2)

After sanctification, it is difficult to state what your purpose in life is, because God has moved you into His purpose through the Holy Spirit. He is using you now for His purposes throughout the world as He used His Son for the purpose of our salvation. If you seek great things for yourself, thinking, “God has called me for this and for that,” you barricade God from using you. As long as you maintain your own personal interests and ambitions, you cannot be completely aligned or identified with God’s interests. This can only be accomplished by giving up all of your personal plans once and for all, and by allowing God to take you directly into His purpose for the world. Your understanding of your ways must also be surrendered, because they are now the ways of the Lord.

I must learn that the purpose of my life belongs to God, not me. God is using me from His great personal perspective, and all He asks of me is that I trust Him. I should never say, “Lord, this causes me such heartache.” To talk that way makes me a stumbling block. When I stop telling God what I want, He can freely work His will in me without any hindrance. He can crush me, exalt me, or do anything else He chooses. He simply asks me to have absolute faith in Him and His goodness. Self-pity is of the devil, and if I wallow in it I cannot be used by God for His purpose in the world. Doing this creates for me my own cozy “world within the world,” and God will not be allowed to move me from it because of my fear of being “frost-bitten.”

**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 – 11/10/20

**Fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.**—[COL. 1:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.10)

I beseech you, . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.—As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.—In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.—I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

[Rom. 12:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1). -[Rom. 6:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.19). -[Gal. 6:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.15).[John 15:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.8). -[John 15:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.16).

“The eternal God is thy refuge.” [Deuteronomy 33:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.27)

The word refuge may be translated “mansion,” or “abiding- place,” which gives the thought that God is our abode, our home. There is a fulness and sweetness in the metaphor, for dear to our hearts is our home, although it be the humblest cottage, or the scantiest garret; and dearer far is our blessed God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. It is at home that we feel safe: we shut the world out and dwell in quiet security. So when we are with our God we “fear no evil.” He is our shelter and retreat, our abiding refuge. At home, we take our rest; it is there we find repose after the fatigue and toil of the day. And so our hearts find rest in God, when, wearied with life’s conflict, we turn to him, and our soul dwells at ease. At home, also, we let our hearts loose; we are not afraid of being misunderstood, nor of our words being misconstrued. So when we are with God we can commune freely with him, laying open all our hidden desires; for if the “secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,” the secrets of them that fear him ought to be, and must be, with their Lord. Home, too, is the place of our truest and purest happiness: and it is in God that our hearts find their deepest delight. We have joy in him which far surpasses all other joy. It is also for home that we work and labour. The thought of it gives strength to bear the daily burden, and quickens the fingers to perform the task; and in this sense we may also say that God is our home. Love to him strengthens us. We think of him in the person of his dear Son; and a glimpse of the suffering face of the Redeemer constrains us to labour in his cause. We feel that we must work, for we have brethren yet to be saved, and we have our Father’s heart to make glad by bringing home his wandering sons; we would fill with holy mirth the sacred family among whom we dwell. Happy are those who have thus the God of Jacob for their refuge!

# Word Live – 11/10/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/10/20

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# Today in the Word – 11/10/20

# An Unlikely Convert

**Read:** [**Acts 9:1-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a1-31)

### **Saul’s Conversion**

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

5“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

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

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

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

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

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

17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

### Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” 22Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

23After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, 24but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. 25But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

26When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3A1-31+&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-27246a" \o "See footnote a)] but they tried to kill him. 30When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 9:29](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3A1-31+&version=NIV#en-NIV-27246) That is, Jews who had adopted the Greek language and culture

It used to be common for high school yearbooks to designate someone from the graduating class as “Most Likely to Succeed.” If Saul of Tarsus had attended high school, he might have been chosen for that honor. But I think he would also have been considered the “Least Likely to Follow Jesus.”

This man is my chosen instrument. Acts 9:15

We can certainly all agree that Saul (later known to the church as Paul) was an unlikely convert. A fierce enemy of the faith, his plan was to arrest Christians in Damascus and then bring them to Jerusalem for trial. His targets were probably believers from Jerusalem who had fled because of persecution. But Saul’s campaign of terror was cut short by a blinding light from heaven and a challenge from Jesus (vv. 4–5).

Saul wasn’t persuaded by argument but through a personal confrontation by the living Christ! Once in Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias to pray that Saul’s sight would be restored and to baptize him. The result was dramatic. Saul did not waste any time but immediately began to tell others in the synagogues of Damascus “that Jesus is the Son of God” (v. 20).

When Saul returned to Jerusalem, the believers were wary of him. After all, he was well known for persecuting the church. It took Barnabas, who may have known Saul before, to introduce him and persuade believers that his conversion was genuine. Just as he had in Damascus, Saul immediately began telling others about Jesus. His boldness sparked a hostile reaction among Greek-speaking Jews. When the believers learned that they planned to kill Saul, they sent him to Tarsus by way of Caesarea.

**Apply the Word**

Newcomers often need help to find their place in the church. Is God calling you to be a Barnabas to someone in your church this week? If you can’t think of anyone, ask your pastor for someone who could use a welcoming friend. Start by asking what led them to the Lord or to your church.

### **Pray with Us**

Jesus, we thank you for the radical transformation of Saul, the persecutor of Christians, into Paul, a fiery apostle. This is such an encouragement to us, that you will never leave us where we are, but mold us into true disciples.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/10/20

# The Triumph of Forgiveness

**Read:** [**Psalm 32:1–7**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032.1%E2%80%937)

#### **Of David. A maskil.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+32%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-14357a" \o "See footnote a)]**

1Blessed is the one  
    whose transgressions are forgiven,  
    whose sins are covered.  
2Blessed is the one  
    whose sin the Lord does not count against them  
    and in whose spirit is no deceit.

3When I kept silent,  
    my bones wasted away  
    through my groaning all day long.  
4For day and night  
    your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
    as in the heat of summer.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+32%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14360b)]

5Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
    and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, “I will confess  
    my transgressions to the Lord.”  
And you forgave  
    the guilt of my sin.

6Therefore let all the faithful pray to you  
    while you may be found;  
surely the rising of the mighty waters  
    will not reach them.  
7You are my hiding place;  
    you will protect me from trouble  
    and surround me with songs of deliverance.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 32:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+32%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-14357) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
2. [Psalm 32:4](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+32%3A1%E2%80%937&version=NIV#en-NIV-14360) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 5 and 7.

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. [Psalm 32:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032.1)

Mack, having struggled with drug abuse and sexual sin, was desperate. Relationships he valued were in disarray, and his conscience was beating him up. In his misery, he found himself unannounced at a church asking to speak with a pastor. There he found relief in sharing his complicated story and in hearing about God’s mercy and forgiveness.

[Psalm 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032) is believed to have been composed by David after his sexual sin. He compounded his wrongdoing by devising a sinister strategy that resulted in the death of the woman’s husband (see [2 Samuel 11–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2011%E2%80%9312)). While these ugly incidents were behind him, the effects of his actions remained. [Psalm 32:3–4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032.3%E2%80%934) describes the deep struggles he experienced before he acknowledged the ugliness of his deeds; the gnawing effects of unconfessed sin were undeniable. What brought relief? Relief began with confession to God and accepting the forgiveness He offers (v. 5).

What a great place for us to start—at the place of God’s mercy—when we say or do things that cause hurt and harm to ourselves and others. The guilt of our sin need not be permanent. There’s One whose arms are open wide to receive us when we acknowledge our wrongs and seek His forgiveness. We can join the chorus of those who sing, “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered” (v. 1).

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you run when you find yourself burdened by something you’ve done or said? When someone comes to you who’s struggling with guilt, how do you advise them?

Father, forgive me for the times when temptation has won in my life. Help me always to run to You for forgiveness and to seek the forgiveness of others when needed.

#### **Insight**

The book of Psalms contains various types of songs, including worship, thanksgiving, creation history, and salvation history. One common type is the lament psalm, where the singer grieves over something. In many of David’s songs of lament, he mourns that his life is under attack, first by Saul and then later by Absalom. In [Psalm 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032), however, David isn’t lamenting the attacks of others but rather his own sinfulness and failures. Though the Scriptures don’t tell us specifically, many scholars connect [Psalm 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032) with [Psalm 51](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2051) and David’s repentance following his sin with Bathsheba. Nevertheless, this lament quickly shifts to a song of praise and thanksgiving for God’s forgiveness, kindness, and restoration. While it’s appropriate to grieve over our spiritual failures, it’s also appropriate to celebrate God’s great mercy. David does both in [Psalm 32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2032).

# God Calling – 11/10/20

# New Forces

Remember that life's difficulties and troubles are not intended to arrest your progress, but to increase your speed.  You must call new forces, new powers into action.

Whatever it is must be surmounted, overcome.  Remember this.

It is as a race. Nothing must daunt you. Do not let a difficulty conquer you.  You must conquer it.

My strength will be there awaiting you.  Bring all your thought, all your power, into action.  Nothing is too small to be faced and overcome.  To push small difficulties aside is to be preparing big troubles.

Rise to conquer.  It is the path of victory I would have you tread.  There can be no failure with Me.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding Joy ..."

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles  Psalm 34:6

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/11/20

# The Supreme Climb



He said, "Take now your son…" —[Genesis 22:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+22%3A2)

God’s command is, “Take now,” not later. It is incredible how we debate! We know something is right, but we try to find excuses for not doing it immediately. If we are to climb to the height God reveals, it can never be done later— it must be done now. And the sacrifice must be worked through our will before we actually perform it.

“So Abraham rose early in the morning…and went to the place of which God had told him” ([Genesis 22:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22:3)). Oh, the wonderful simplicity of Abraham! When God spoke, he did not “confer with flesh and blood” ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)). Beware when you want to “confer with flesh and blood” or even your own thoughts, insights, or understandings— anything that is not based on your personal relationship with God. These are all things that compete with and hinder obedience to God.

Abraham did not choose what the sacrifice would be. Always guard against self-chosen service for God. Self-sacrifice may be a disease that impairs your service. If God has made your cup sweet, drink it with grace; or even if He has made it bitter, drink it in communion with Him. If the providential will of God means a hard and difficult time for you, go through it. But never decide the place of your own martyrdom, as if to say, “I will only go to there, but no farther.” God chose the test for Abraham, and Abraham neither delayed nor protested, but steadily obeyed. If you are not living in touch with God, it is easy to blame Him or pass judgment on Him. You must go through the trial before you have any right to pronounce a verdict, because by going through the trial you learn to know God better. God is working in us to reach His highest goals until His purpose and our purpose become one.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are only what we are in the dark; all the rest is reputation. What God looks at is what we are in the dark—the imaginations of our minds; the thoughts of our heart; the habits of our bodies; these are the things that mark us in God’s sight.  The Love of God—The Ministry of the Unnoticed, 669 L

# CCEL – 11/11/20

**He led them on safely.**—[PSA. 78:53.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.78.html" \l "Ps.78.53)

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.—In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.—So didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.—O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

[Prov. 8:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.8.html" \l "Prov.8.20).[Exo. 23:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.23.html" \l "Exod.23.20). -[Isa. 63:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.9).[Psa. 44:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.44.html" \l "Ps.44.3). -[Isa. 63:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.14).[Psa. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.5.html" \l "Ps.5.8). -[Psa. 43:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.43.html" \l "Ps.43.3).

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” [Deuteronomy 33:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.27)

God—the eternal God—is himself our support at all times, and especially when we are sinking in deep trouble. There are seasons when the Christian sinks very low in humiliation. Under a deep sense of his great sinfulness, he is humbled before God till he scarcely knows how to pray, because he appears, in his own sight, so worthless. Well, child of God, remember that when thou art at thy worst and lowest, yet “underneath” thee “are everlasting arms.” Sin may drag thee ever so low, but Christ’s great atonement is still under all. You may have descended into the deeps, but you cannot have fallen so low as “the uttermost;” and to the uttermost he saves. Again, the Christian sometimes sinks very deeply in sore trial from without. Every earthly prop is cut away. What then? Still underneath him are “the everlasting arms.” He cannot fall so deep in distress and affliction but what the covenant grace of an ever-faithful God will still encircle him. The Christian may be sinking under trouble from within through fierce conflict, but even then he cannot be brought so low as to be beyond the reach of the “everlasting arms”—they are underneath him; and, while thus sustained, all Satan’s efforts to harm him avail nothing.

This assurance of support is a comfort to any weary but earnest worker in the service of God. It implies a promise of strength for each day, grace for each need, and power for each duty. And, further, when death comes, the promise shall still hold good. When we stand in the midst of Jordan, we shall be able to say with David, “I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” We shall descend into the grave, but we shall go no lower, for the eternal arms prevent our further fall. All through life, and at its close, we shall be upheld by the “everlasting arms”—arms that neither flag nor lose their strength, for “the everlasting God fainteth not, neither is weary.”

# Word Live – 11/11/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/11/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/11/20

# To the Gentiles

**Read:** [**Acts 9:32–10:48**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a32%e2%80%9310%3a48)

### **Aeneas and Dorcas**

32As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord’s people who lived in Lydda. 33There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. 35All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

36In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. 37About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!”

39Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

40Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

### **Cornelius Calls for Peter**

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

7When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

### **Peter’s Vision**

9About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

14“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

15The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

16This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. 18They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a32%e2%80%9310%3a48#fen-NIV-27279a)] men are looking for you. 20So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

21Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

22The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

### **Peter at Cornelius’s House**

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

27While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

30Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ 33So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

34Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

39“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46For they heard them speaking in tongues[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a32%e2%80%9310%3a48#fen-NIV-27306b)] and praising God.

Then Peter said, 47“Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 10:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a32%e2%80%9310%3a48#en-NIV-27279) One early manuscript two; other manuscripts do not have the number.
2. [Acts 10:46](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3a32%e2%80%9310%3a48#en-NIV-27306) Or other languages

While Saul traveled toward Caesarea, Peter was on the move, preaching the gospel and performing miracles at Lydda and Joppa (modern Jaffa). While there, a “devout and God-fearing” man from Caesarea named Cornelius, a Gentile and a Roman officer, had a vision of an angel urging him to send for Peter (10:2–6). “God-fearer” was a label given to Gentiles who followed some of the customs of the law but were not full converts to the Jewish faith.

God does not show favoritism. Acts 10:34

Peter also had a vision in which a voice from heaven ordered him to eat foods that the Mosaic law had forbidden. Its meaning wasn’t really about food, but people. Peter summarized it this way: “I should not call anyone impure or unclean” (10:28). The vision and the arrival of the three servants of Cornelius showed Peter that God was willing to include Gentiles in the promises of the gospel. God confirmed this for Peter by the same kind of signs in the house of Cornelius that the church had experienced on the day of Pentecost. These signs weren’t just for Peter’s benefit but would later be cited as proof of God’s acceptance of the Gentiles when he returned to Jerusalem.

You may wonder, Shouldn’t Peter have already known that the gospel would include the Gentiles? After all, Jesus had commanded His followers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). But like Christ’s teaching about the resurrection, it took time for the church to grasp the full significance of what Jesus had commanded. Peter would eventually discover that he needed to have this important lesson reinforced by a blunt reminder from the apostle Paul (Gal. 2:1–16).

**Apply the Word**

Let’s be honest. Is there someone you think would never become a believer? Our study in Acts should remind you that we mustn’t be so sure! We can be too quick to write off people whom God is calling, simply because they are different from us.

### **Pray with Us**

Is there a “Cornelius” in your life? Someone, you think will never come to Christ? God overcomes all the unlikely scenarios to bring people to Himself. Praise Him today and ask for courage and insight in sharing the gospel.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/11/20

# Returning Home

**Read:** [**Zechariah 10:6–12**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%2010.6%E2%80%9312)

6“I will strengthen Judah  
    and save the tribes of Joseph.  
I will restore them  
    because I have compassion on them.  
They will be as though  
    I had not rejected them,  
for I am the Lord their God  
    and I will answer them.  
7The Ephraimites will become like warriors,  
    and their hearts will be glad as with wine.  
Their children will see it and be joyful;  
    their hearts will rejoice in the Lord.  
8I will signal for them  
    and gather them in.  
Surely I will redeem them;  
    they will be as numerous as before.  
9Though I scatter them among the peoples,  
    yet in distant lands they will remember me.  
They and their children will survive,  
    and they will return.  
10I will bring them back from Egypt  
    and gather them from Assyria.  
I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon,  
    and there will not be room enough for them.  
11They will pass through the sea of trouble;  
    the surging sea will be subdued  
    and all the depths of the Nile will dry up.  
Assyria’s pride will be brought down  
    and Egypt’s scepter will pass away.  
12I will strengthen them in the Lord  
    and in his name they will live securely,”  
declares the Lord.

In distant lands they will remember me . . . and they will return. [Zechariah 10:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%2010.9)

Walter Dixon had five days to honeymoon before he shipped off to the Korean War. Less than a year later, troops found Dixon’s jacket on the battlefield, with letters from his wife stuffed in the pockets. Military officials informed his young wife that her husband had been killed in action. Actually, Dixon was alive and spent the next 2.5 years as a POW. Every waking hour, he plotted to get home. Dixon escaped five times but was always recaptured. Finally, he was set free. You can imagine the shock when he returned home!

God’s people knew what it was to be captured, moved far away, and to long for home. Due to their rebellion against God, they were exiles. They woke each morning yearning to return, but they had no way to rescue themselves. Thankfully, God promised He’d not forgotten them. “I will restore them because I have compassion on them” ([Zechariah 10:6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%2010.6)). He would meet the people’s relentless ache for home, not because of their perseverance, but because of His mercy: “I will signal for them . . . and they will return” (vv. 8–9).

Our sense of exile may come because of our bad decisions or because of hardships beyond our control. Either way, God hasn’t forgotten us. He knows our desire and will call to us. And if we’ll answer, we’ll find ourselves returning to Him—returning home.

By:  [Winn Collier](https://odb.org/author/wcollier/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you sense exile in your life? How are you hearing God calling you, showing you how to return home?

God, I feel far away from You. I know You’re near, but I feel so distant. Would You help me to hear Your call? Would You bring me home?

#### **Insight**

For a relatively short Old Testament book, Zechariah is quoted extensively in the New Testament. There are at least seventy-one quotations, with thirty-one found in Revelation. Twenty-seven are found in the Gospels (fourteen in Matthew, seven in Mark, three each in Luke and John), with many occurring in the accounts of the last week of Jesus’ ministry. [Zechariah 9–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Zech%209%E2%80%9314) speaks of a human king (9:9–10) and a divine king (14:1–17). It also points to a figure whose suffering brings redemption (12:10–13). With the incarnation of Jesus these images are brought together into one person. As the son of David, Jesus could claim the human throne. As God in human form, Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the heavenly king who comes to earth, including suffering for the sins of the world and bringing forgiveness. When He comes again, He’ll bring His kingdom to earth.

# God Calling – 11/11/20

# Heaven's Colors

Looking back you will see that every step was planned.  Leave all to Me.  Each stone in the mosaic fits into the perfect pattern, designed by the Master Artist.

It is all so wonderful!

But the colors are of Heaven's hues, so that your eyes could not bear to gaze on the whole, until you are beyond the veil.

So, stone by stone, you see, and trust the pattern to the Designer.

When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.  Proverbs 4:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/12/20

# The Changed Life



If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. —[2 Corinthians 5:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+5%3A17)

What understanding do you have of the salvation of your soul? The work of salvation means that in your real life things are dramatically changed. You no longer look at things in the same way. Your desires are new and the old things have lost their power to attract you. One of the tests for determining if the work of salvation in your life is genuine is— has God changed the things that really matter to you? If you still yearn for the old things, it is absurd to talk about being born from above— you are deceiving yourself. If you are born again, the Spirit of God makes the change very evident in your real life and thought. And when a crisis comes, you are the most amazed person on earth at the wonderful difference there is in you. There is no possibility of imagining that you did it. It is this complete and amazing change that is the very evidence that you are saved.

What difference has my salvation and sanctification made? For instance, can I stand in the light of [1 Corinthians 13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+13) , or do I squirm and evade the issue? True salvation, worked out in me by the Holy Spirit, frees me completely. And as long as I “walk in the light as He is in the light” ([1 John 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1:7)), God sees nothing to rebuke because His life is working itself into every detailed part of my being, not on the conscious level, but even deeper than my consciousness.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 11/12/20

**Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of.**—[II COR. 7:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.7.html" \l "iiCor.7.10)

Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.—If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.

Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.—He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

[Matt. 26:75](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html" \l "Matt.26.75). -[I John 1:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.9). -[I John 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.7).[Psa. 40:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.12).[Hos. 12:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.12.html" \l "Hos.12.6).[Psa. 51:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.17). -[Psa. 147:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.147.html" \l "Ps.147.3). -[Mic. 6:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.6.html" \l "Mic.6.8).

“The trial of your faith.” [1 Peter 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.7)

Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith, and it is likely to remain dwarfish so long as it is without trials. Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her: tempests are her trainers, and lightnings are her illuminators. When a calm reigns on the sea, spread the sails as you will, the ship moves not to its harbour; for on a slumbering ocean the keel sleeps too. Let the winds rush howling forth, and let the waters lift up themselves, then, though the vessel may rock, and her deck may be washed with waves, and her mast may creak under the pressure of the full and swelling sail, it is then that she makes headway towards her desired haven. No flowers wear so lovely a blue as those which grow at the foot of the frozen glacier; no stars gleam so brightly as those which glisten in the polar sky; no water tastes so sweet as that which springs amid the desert sand; and no faith is so precious as that which lives and triumphs in adversity. Tried faith brings experience. You could not have believed your own weakness had you not been compelled to pass through the rivers; and you would never have known God’s strength had you not been supported amid the water-floods. Faith increases in solidity, assurance, and intensity, the more it is exercised with tribulation. Faith is precious, and its trial is precious too.

Let not this, however, discourage those who are young in faith. You will have trials enough without seeking them: the full portion will be measured out to you in due season. Meanwhile, if you cannot yet claim the result of long experience, thank God for what grace you have; praise him for that degree of holy confidence whereunto you have attained: walk according to that rule, and you shall yet have more and more of the blessing of God, till your faith shall remove mountains and conquer impossibilities.

# Word Live – 11/12/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/12/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/12/20

# God's Growth Strategy

**Read:** [**Acts 11:1-30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+11%3a1-30)

### **Peter Explains His Actions**

11 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

4Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

8“I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

9“The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ 10This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11“Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

15“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+11%3a1-30#fen-NIV-27324a)] water, but you will be baptized with[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+11%3a1-30#fen-NIV-27324b)] the Holy Spirit.’ 17So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

18When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

### **The Church in Antioch**

19Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

25Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

27During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 11:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+11%3a1-30#en-NIV-27324) Or in
2. [Acts 11:16](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+11%3a1-30#en-NIV-27324) Or in

Every child has heard their parent say, “How many times do I have to tell you?” The answer to this rhetorical question is always the same: More than once! Perhaps this is why we find repetition in Scripture. Today’s passage is no exception. Luke has already described these events. Why does he choose to repeat them again here? One reason is that they have historical significance. Luke is simply describing what Peter said to those who questioned him. Another reason is to emphasize their importance. The spread of the gospel to the Gentiles was a significant development in the church’s mission. One that some had difficulty accepting.

Who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way? Acts 11:17

Luke’s account of Peter’s meeting with the apostles emphasizes two important facts. First, it was God who initiated the mission to the Gentiles (v. 12). Peter did not hesitate to enter the home of Cornelius because he knew God had worked on both sides to make the connection. It was clearly the leading of the Spirit.

Second, the apostles and the rest of the believers in Judea rejoiced over this development (v. 18). God used Peter to open the door, but he was not the only one God used to reach out to the Gentiles. Some from Cyprus and Cyrene proclaimed the gospel to Greeks in Antioch. Located in Syria, Antioch was one of the largest cities in the Roman empire. So many responded to the gospel that the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate. Satisfied that what was taking place was a work of God, Barnabas promptly went to Tarsus to find Saul and bring him to Antioch. The two of them spent a year there teaching these new believers.

**Apply the Word**

Christians need other Christians to grow in faith and practice. Who is the Barnabas or Saul in your life? Not only do we need the challenge and encouragement of other believers in our lives, but we might be that person for someone else. Whom can you serve today?

### **Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, your plan for bringing the gospel to the Gentiles was fulfilled wondrously in Acts. We pray for an open heart and spiritual insight to bring the gospel to those who don’t know you.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/12/20

# The Long Way

**Read:** [**Exodus 13:17–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013.17%E2%80%9318)

### **Crossing the Sea**

17When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” 18So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+13%3A17%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1886a)] The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Exodus 13:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+13%3A17%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-1886) Or the Sea of Reeds

God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. [Exodus 13:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013.17)

As his peers were promoted one by one, Benjamin couldn’t help but feel a little envious. “How come you’re not a manager yet? You deserve it,” friends told him. But Ben decided to leave his career to God. “If this is God’s plan for me, I’ll just do my job well,” he replied.

Several years later, Ben was finally promoted. By then, his added experience enabled him to do his job confidently and won him the respect of subordinates. Some of his peers, meanwhile, were still struggling with their supervisory responsibilities, as they had been promoted before they were ready. Ben realized God had taken him the “long way around” so that he would be better prepared for his role.

When God led the Israelites out of Egypt ([Exodus 13:17–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013.17%E2%80%9318)), He chose a longer way because the “shortcut” to Canaan was fraught with risk. The longer journey, note Bible commentators, also gave them more time to strengthen themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually for subsequent battles.

The shortest way isn’t always the best. Sometimes God lets us take the longer route in life, whether it’s in our career or other endeavors, so that we’ll be better prepared for the journey ahead. When things don’t seem to happen quickly enough, we can trust in God—the One who leads and guides us.

By:  [Leslie Koh](https://odb.org/author/lesliekoh/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How might God be strengthening you by letting you take the “longer way” in life? How can you remind yourself to keep trusting Him?

Loving God, You know how I feel when things don’t seem to happen quickly enough. Grant me the patience to trust in You and in Your sovereign plan and purpose.

#### **Insight**

After more than four hundred years of slavery in Egypt, the march to the Promised Land for the children of Israel begins in [Exodus 13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013). In this act of departure, both a prophecy and a request are fulfilled. The prophecy was delivered by God to Abraham at the establishment of His covenant with the patriarch. In [Genesis 15:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2015.13), God warns that “for four hundred years” Abraham’s descendants would be “strangers in a country not their own and . . . enslaved and mistreated there”—but God would deliver them from that oppression. That deliverance is realized here in [Exodus 13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013). In [Genesis 50:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2050.25), Joseph requested that his remains be taken to the land of promise and be buried there. [Exodus 13:19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2013.19) tells us that this request hadn’t been forgotten by his people. [Joshua 24:32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Josh%2024.32) records the burial.

# God Calling – 11/12/20

# The Voiceless Cry

Jesus, hear us, and let our cry come unto Thee.

That voiceless cry, that comes from anguished hearts, is heard above all the music of Heaven.

It is not the arguments of theologians that solve the problems of a questioning heart, but the cry of that heart to Me, and the certainty that I have heard.

Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.  Psalm 17:1

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/13/20

# Faith or Experience?



…the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. —[Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+2%3A20)

We should battle through our moods, feelings, and emotions into absolute devotion to the Lord Jesus. We must break out of our own little world of experience into abandoned devotion to Him. Think who the New Testament says Jesus Christ is, and then think of the despicable meagerness of the miserable faith we exhibit by saying, “I haven’t had this experience or that experience”! Think what faith in Jesus Christ claims and provides— He can present us faultless before the throne of God, inexpressibly pure, absolutely righteous, and profoundly justified. Stand in absolute adoring faith “in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God— and righteousness and sanctification and redemption…” ([1 Corinthians 1:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1:30)). How dare we talk of making a sacrifice for the Son of God! We are saved from hell and total destruction, and then we talk about making sacrifices!

We must continually focus and firmly place our faith in Jesus Christ— not a “prayer meeting” Jesus Christ, or a “book” Jesus Christ, but the New Testament Jesus Christ, who is God Incarnate, and who ought to strike us dead at His feet. Our faith must be in the One from whom our salvation springs. Jesus Christ wants our absolute, unrestrained devotion to Himself. We can never experience Jesus Christ, or selfishly bind Him in the confines of our own hearts. Our faith must be built on strong determined confidence in Him.

It is because of our trusting in experience that we see the steadfast impatience of the Holy Spirit against unbelief. All of our fears are sinful, and we create our own fears by refusing to nourish ourselves in our faith. How can anyone who is identified with Jesus Christ suffer from doubt or fear! Our lives should be an absolute hymn of praise resulting from perfect, irrepressible, triumphant belief.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are in danger of being stern where God is tender, and of being tender where God is stern.  The Love of God—The Message of Invincible Consolation, 673 L

# CCEL – 11/13/20

**Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.**—[EPH. 5:25,26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.25)

Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.—Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—Thy word hath quickened me.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

[Eph. 5:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.2).[I Pet. 1:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.23). -[John 17:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.17). -[John 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.3.html" \l "John.3.5). -[Tit. 3:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.5). -[Psa. 119:50](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.50).[Psa. 19:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.19.html" \l "Ps.19.7).

“The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.” [John 15:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.4)

How did you begin to bear fruit? It was when you came to Jesus and cast yourselves on his great atonement, and rested on his finished righteousness. Ah! what fruit you had then! Do you remember those early days? Then indeed the vine flourished, the tender grape appeared, the pomegranates budded forth, and the beds of spices gave forth their smell. Have you declined since then? If you have, we charge you to remember that time of love, and repent, and do thy first works. Be most in those engagements which you have experimentally proved to draw you nearest to Christ, because it is from him that all your fruits proceed. Any holy exercise which will bring you to him will help you to bear fruit. The sun is, no doubt, a great worker in fruit-creating among the trees of the orchard: and Jesus is still more so among the trees of his garden of grace. When have you been the most fruitless? Has not it been when you have lived farthest from the Lord Jesus Christ, when you have slackened in prayer, when you have departed from the simplicity of your faith, when your graces have engrossed your attention instead of your Lord, when you have said, “My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved”; and have forgotten where your strength dwells—has not it been then that your fruit has ceased? Some of us have been taught that we have nothing out of Christ, by terrible abasements of heart before the Lord; and when we have seen the utter barrenness and death of all creature power, we have cried in anguish, “From him all my fruit must be found, for no fruit can ever come from me.” We are taught, by past experience, that the more simply we depend upon the grace of God in Christ, and wait upon the Holy Spirit, the more we shall bring forth fruit unto God. Oh! to trust Jesus for fruit as well as for life.

# Word Live – 11/13/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/13/20

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# Today in the Word – 11/13/20

# Rescued by God

**Read:** [**Acts 12:1–25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+12%3a1%e2%80%9325)

### **Peter’s Miraculous Escape From Prison**

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

8Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. 9Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

12When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. 13Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, “Peter is at the door!”

15“You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “It must be his angel.”

16But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,” he said, and then he left for another place.

18In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

### **Herod’s Death**

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. 20He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king’s country for their food supply.

21On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 23Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

24But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

### **Barnabas and Saul Sent Off**

25When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#fen-NIV-27363a)] Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 12:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+12%3a1%e2%80%9325#en-NIV-27363) Some manuscripts to

Do you enjoy surprises? Perhaps a refund you didn’t expect or friends who surprised you with a party. Surprises can delight or dismay us. But for God, there are no surprises at all. The early church could take comfort in knowing that nothing was beyond His control, not even the persecution they were enduring.

But the word of God continued to spread and flourish. Acts 12:24

In Acts 12, the church experienced two surprises that demonstrated God’s intervention and provision. The first was Peter’s deliverance from prison, which even had elements of humor. While the church prayed, Peter was asleep, seeming untroubled by his predicament. In fact, he slept so soundly that the angel struck him on the side to wake him up (v. 7). Peter then followed the angel’s instruction, passing by two guarded gates until they came to the third, which opened on its own accord. Perhaps because he was dazed with sleep, Peter realized that a miracle had taken place only after he had walked a full block!

The second was Peter’s surprise arrival at their prayer meeting. Despite their earnest prayers, the church was stunned when Peter showed up at the door. They refused to believe the servant who brought the news. Then, the servant girl was so excited that she forgot to unlock the door and let Peter in! The place where they were meeting was also the house where John Mark (the author of the Gospel of Mark) and his mother stayed (v. 12). A fourth-century tradition also identified this as the location of the Last Supper. James and the other disciples were elsewhere, probably hiding (v. 17). The details given in this narrative of Peter’s escape suggest that Luke had heard about the event from someone who was an eyewitness.

**Apply the Word**

The answers to our prayers are not always as miraculous as this, but we are often just as surprised. Are you sometimes nervous about asking God to answer your prayers? Do not be afraid. Your heavenly Father knows what you need even before you ask (Matt. 6:8).

### **Pray with Us**

As we read Acts 12 today, we enjoy the lighter mood of the narrative and the elements of humor and irony in Scripture. Lord, thank you for revealing real, even flawed, people in your Word, as well as their emotions and feelings.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/13/20

# When God Speaks

**Read:** [**Isaiah 55:10–13**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.10%E2%80%9313)

10As the rain and the snow  
    come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
    without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
    so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
11so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
    It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
    and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.  
12You will go out in joy  
    and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
    will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
    will clap their hands.  
13Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
    and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the Lord’s renown,  
    for an everlasting sign,  
    that will endure forever.”

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty. [Isaiah 55:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.11)

Lily, a Bible translator, was flying home to her country when she was detained at the airport. Her mobile phone was searched, and when the officials found an audio copy of the New Testament on it, they confiscated the phone and questioned her for two hours. At one point they asked her to play the Scripture app, which happened to be set at [Matthew 7:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.1%E2%80%932): “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Hearing these words in his own language, one of the officers turned pale. Later, she was released and no further action was taken.

We don’t know what happened in that official’s heart at the airport, but we know that the “word that goes out from [God’s] mouth” accomplishes what He desires ([Isaiah 55:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055.11)). Isaiah prophesied these words of hope to God’s people in exile, assuring them that even as the rain and snow make the earth bud and grow, so too what goes “out from [His] mouth” achieves His purposes (vv. 10–11).

We can read this passage to bolster our confidence in God. When we’re facing unyielding circumstances, such as Lily with the airport officials, may we trust that God is working—even when we don’t see the final outcome.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When was the last time you saw God at work? How have you received God’s love through the words He's declared?

Heavenly Father, thank You for what You’ve revealed, which brings me hope, peace, and love. Help me to grow in my love for You.

#### **Insight**

This text in [Isaiah 55](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2055) is a powerful reminder of one of the most important elements of our relationship with God—the element of mystery. We sometimes make the mistake of attempting to somehow categorize or distill the God of the universe into some small, understandable package. Any god who can be so reduced, however, is not the God of the Bible—nor the God we so desperately need. This issue seems to have been behind J. B. Phillips’ writing of the powerful little book Your God Is Too Small. Our God is too great, vast, and incomprehensible to be minimalized or neatly packaged. His ways and thoughts are beyond us (vv. 8–13), which means that we in our finiteness must learn to accept the mysteries of His greatness.

# God Calling – 11/13/20

# Every Problem Solved

Man has such strange ideas of the meaning of My invitation "Come unto Me."  Too often has it been interpreted as an urge to pay a duty owed to a Creator or a debt owed to a Savior.

The "Come unto Me" holds in it a wealth of meaning far surpassing even that.  "Come unto Me" for the solution of every problem, for the calming of every fear, for all you need - physical, mental, spiritual.

Sick, come to Me for health.  Homeless, ask Me for a home. Friendless, claim a friend.  Hopeless, a refuge.

"Come unto Me" for everything.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before ye ask him.  Matthew 6:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/14/20

# Discovering Divine Design



As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me… —[Genesis 24:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+24%3A27)

We should be so one with God that we don’t need to ask continually for guidance. Sanctification means that we are made the children of God. A child’s life is normally obedient, until he chooses disobedience. But as soon as he chooses to disobey, an inherent inner conflict is produced. On the spiritual level, inner conflict is the warning of the Spirit of God. When He warns us in this way, we must stop at once and be renewed in the spirit of our mind to discern God’s will (see [Romans 12:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12:2)). If we are born again by the Spirit of God, our devotion to Him is hindered, or even stopped, by continually asking Him to guide us here and there. “…the Lord led me…” and on looking back we see the presence of an amazing design. If we are born of God we will see His guiding hand and give Him the credit.

We can all see God in exceptional things, but it requires the growth of spiritual discipline to see God in every detail. Never believe that the so-called random events of life are anything less than God’s appointed order. Be ready to discover His divine designs anywhere and everywhere.

Beware of being obsessed with consistency to your own convictions instead of being devoted to God. If you are a saint and say, “I will never do this or that,” in all probability this will be exactly what God will require of you. There was never a more inconsistent being on this earth than our Lord, but He was never inconsistent with His Father. The important consistency in a saint is not to a principle but to the divine life. It is the divine life that continually makes more and more discoveries about the divine mind. It is easier to be an excessive fanatic than it is to be consistently faithful, because God causes an amazing humbling of our religious conceit when we are faithful to Him.

**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, 1459 R

# CCEL – 11/14/20

**Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.**—[PSA. 40:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.17)

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.—In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.—Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker?

I am with thee to deliver thee.—Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.—Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

[Psa. 37:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.37.html" \l "Ps.37.23). -[Prov. 14:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.14.html" \l "Prov.14.26). -[Isa. 51:12,13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.51.html" \l "Isa.51.12).[Jer. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.1.html" \l "Jer.1.8). -[Deut. 31:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.31.html" \l "Deut.31.6).[Psa. 59:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.59.html" \l "Ps.59.16). -[Psa. 32:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.32.html" \l "Ps.32.7).

“I will cut off them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham.” [Zephaniah 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zeph.1.html" \l "Zeph.1.5)

Such persons thought themselves safe because they were with both parties: they went with the followers of Jehovah, and bowed at the same time to Malcham. But duplicity is abominable with God, and hypocrisy his soul hateth. The idolater who distinctly gives himself to his false god, has one sin less than he who brings his polluted and detestable sacrifice unto the temple of the Lord, while his heart is with the world and the sins thereof. To hold with the hare and run with the hounds, is a dastard’s policy. In the common matters of daily life, a double- minded man is despised, but in religion he is loathsome to the last degree. The penalty pronounced in the verse before us is terrible, but it is well deserved; for how should divine justice spare the sinner, who knows the right, approves it, and professes to follow it, and all the while loves the evil, and gives it dominion in his heart?

My soul, search thyself this morning, and see whether thou art guilty of double-dealing. Thou professest to be a follower of Jesus—dost thou truly love him? Is thy heart right with God? Art thou of the family of old Father Honest, or art thou a relative of Mr. By-ends? A name to live is of little value if I be indeed dead in trespasses and sins. To have one foot on the land of truth, and another on the sea of falsehood, will involve a terrible fall and a total ruin. Christ will be all or nothing. God fills the whole universe, and hence there is no room for another god; if, then, he reigns in my heart, there will be no space for another reigning power. Do I rest alone on Jesus crucified, and live alone for him? Is it my desire to do so? Is my heart set upon so doing? If so, blessed be the mighty grace which has led me to salvation; and if not so, O Lord, pardon my sad offence, and unite my heart to fear thy name.

# Word Live – 11/14/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/14/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/14/20

# Opposition and Opportunity

**Read:** [**Acts 13:1–52**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352)

13 1Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

### **On Cyprus**

4The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

6They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, 7who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. 8But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. 9Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

### **In Pisidian Antioch**

13From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. 14From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

16Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: “Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! 17The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; 18for about forty years he endured their conduct[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27381a)] in the wilderness; 19and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. 20All this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. 22After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’

23“From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. 24Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. 25As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’

26“Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. 30But God raised him from the dead, 31and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

32“We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“‘You are my son;  
    today I have become your father.’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27396b)]

34God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

“‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27397c)]

35So it is also stated elsewhere:

“‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27398d)]

36“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

38“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

41“‘Look, you scoffers,  
    wonder and perish,  
for I am going to do something in your days  
    that you would never believe,  
    even if someone told you.’[[e](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27404e)]”

42As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

46Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

“‘I have made you[[f](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27410f)] a light for the Gentiles,  
    that you[[g](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27410g)] may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’[[h](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#fen-NIV-27410h)]”

48When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

49The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. 52And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 13:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27381) Some manuscripts he cared for them
2. [Acts 13:33](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27396) Psalm 2:7
3. [Acts 13:34](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27397) Isaiah 55:3
4. [Acts 13:35](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27398) Psalm 16:10 (see Septuagint)
5. [Acts 13:41](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27404) Hab. 1:5
6. [Acts 13:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27410) The Greek is singular.
7. [Acts 13:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27410) The Greek is singular.
8. [Acts 13:47](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3a1%e2%80%9352#en-NIV-27410) Isaiah 49:6

There are many ways to share the gospel. Some people use small booklets or pamphlets. Others memorize an outline and use questions as a discussion starter. Some people take a longer approach and develop a friendship that leads to spiritual conversations.

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. Acts 13:49

In today’s reading, we have a snapshot of how Saul (now called Paul) preached. The Holy Spirit directed the church at Antioch to set apart Paul and Barnabas “for the work to which I have called them” (v. 2). Luke doesn’t describe in detail how this call came, except to say that the Holy Spirit spoke to the church’s prophets and teachers while they were worshiping. John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, also accompanied them as a servant or assistant (v. 5).

In Salamis, the chief town of Cyprus, they began by visiting the Jewish synagogues. In Paphos, the island’s official capital, they encountered a magician and false teacher named Bar-Jesus (perhaps meaning “son of Joshua”) or Elymas (which may have meant “wise” or “learned”). Elymas acted as a kind of court magician and seems to have felt threatened when the proconsul invited Paul and Barnabas to speak. When the magician argued against the gospel, Paul denounced him, saying that the Lord would make him temporarily blind.

A more detailed account of Paul’s message is in verses 13–41. Like Stephen in his message before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7, the apostle began with a short summary of Jewish history, tracing God’s dealing with the nation of Israel from the Exodus to Jesus.

**Apply the Word**

Paul called his listeners to respond by placing their faith in Jesus: “Through him, everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses” (v. 39). For an extra challenge today, try writing an outline of Paul’s message in your own words.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, help us submit to the transforming work of your Spirit. Show us how to overcome opposition and use every opportunity to spread the good news. May the apostle Paul’s zeal for the gospel serve as an inspiration to us today.

BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/14/20

# Inside the Fire

**Read:** [**Daniel 3:12–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%203.12%E2%80%9318)

12But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

13Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? 15Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

16Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+3%3A12%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#fen-NIV-21825a)] from Your Majesty’s hand. 18But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Daniel 3:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+3%3A12%E2%80%9318&version=NIV#en-NIV-21825) Or If the God we serve is able to deliver us, then he will deliver us from the blazing furnace and

I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed. [Daniel 3:25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%203.25)

A wildfire in Andilla, Spain, scorched nearly 50,000 acres of woodland. However, in the middle of the devastation, a group of nearly 1,000 bright green cypress trees remained standing. The trees’ ability to retain water had allowed them to safely endure the fire.

During King Nebuchadnezzar’s reign in Babylon, a small cluster of friends survived the flames of the king’s wrath. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship a statue Nebuchadnezzar had created, and they told him, “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it” ([Daniel 3:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%203.17)). Infuriated, the monarch cranked up the heat seven times hotter than normal (v. 19).

The soldiers who carried out the king’s orders and tossed the friends into the blaze were burned up, yet onlookers watched Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walk around inside the flames “unbound and unharmed.” Someone else was in the furnace as well—a fourth man who looked “like a son of the gods” (v. 25). Many scholars believe this was a preincarnate appearance of Jesus.

Jesus is with us when we face intimidation and trials. In the moments when we’re urged to give in to pressure, we don’t have to be afraid. We may not always know how or when God will help us, but we know He’s with us. He’ll give us the strength to stay faithful to Him through every “fire” we endure.

By:  [Jennifer Benson Schuldt](https://odb.org/author/jenniferbschuldt/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Why is the supernatural comfort of God’s presence encouraging to you? How can you support others who may be facing opposition?

Dear God, fill me with Your Spirit so that I can persevere when I feel pressured to give in. I want to honor You by standing strong.

To learn more about the book of Daniel and its prophecies, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/OT313](https://ChristianUniversity.org/OT313).

#### **Insight**

Understanding more about the furnace described in [Daniel 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Dan%203) helps us grasp the miracle that took place. It’s likely the furnace was used to smelt or extract metals from ore. The ore would be dropped into a top opening of the furnace—likely where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown in. An opening in the side of the furnace at ground level may have been where the fire would be fed. This is probably where Nebuchadnezzar watched.

Having the furnace “heated seven times hotter” (v. 19) was an idiom for having it heated as hot as possible; some guess this to be up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. This would explain why the soldiers who threw the three men into the furnace were killed instantly (v. 22).

# God Calling – 11/14/20

# Devious Ways

Life is not easy, My children.  Man has made of it not what My Father meant it to be.

Ways that were meant to be straight paths have been made by man into ways devious and evil, filled with obstacles and stones of difficulty.

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known:  I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight.  Isaiah 42:16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/15/20

# “What Is That to You?”



Peter…said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "…what is that to you? You follow Me." —[John 21:21-22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+21%3A21-22)

One of the hardest lessons to learn comes from our stubborn refusal to refrain from interfering in other people’s lives. It takes a long time to realize the danger of being an amateur providence, that is, interfering with God’s plan for others. You see someone suffering and say, “He will not suffer, and I will make sure that he doesn’t.” You put your hand right in front of God’s permissive will to stop it, and then God says, “What is that to you?” Is there stagnation in your spiritual life? Don’t allow it to continue, but get into God’s presence and find out the reason for it. You will possibly find it is because you have been interfering in the life of another— proposing things you had no right to propose, or advising when you had no right to advise. When you do have to give advice to another person, God will advise through you with the direct understanding of His Spirit. Your part is to maintain the right relationship with God so that His discernment can come through you continually for the purpose of blessing someone else.

Most of us live only within the level of consciousness— consciously serving and consciously devoted to God. This shows immaturity and the fact that we’re not yet living the real Christian life. Maturity is produced in the life of a child of God on the unconscious level, until we become so totally surrendered to God that we are not even aware of being used by Him. When we are consciously aware of being used as broken bread and poured-out wine, we have yet another level to reach— a level where all awareness of ourselves and of what God is doing through us is completely eliminated. A saint is never consciously a saint— a saint is consciously dependent on God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The place for the comforter is not that of one who preaches, but of the comrade who says nothing, but prays to God about the matter. The biggest thing you can do for those who are suffering is not to talk platitudes, not to ask questions, but to get into contact with God, and the “greater works” will be done by prayer (see John 14:12–13).  Baffled to Fight Better, 56 R

# CCEL – 11/15/20

**God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**—[I COR. 1:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.9)

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.—God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.—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.

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.—And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.

[Heb. 10:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.23). -[II Cor. 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16). -[I John 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.3). -[I Pet. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.13).[Eph. 3:17-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html#Eph.3.17).[I John 4:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.15). -[I John 3:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.24).

“The Lord’s portion is his people.” [Deuteronomy 32:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.32.html" \l "Deut.32.9)

How are they his? By his own sovereign choice. He chose them, and set his love upon them. This he did altogether apart from any goodness in them at the time, or any goodness which he foresaw in them. He had mercy on whom he would have mercy, and ordained a chosen company unto eternal life; thus, therefore, are they his by his unconstrained election.

They are not only his by choice, but by purchase. He has bought and paid for them to the utmost farthing, hence about his title there can be no dispute. Not with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord’s portion has been fully redeemed. There is no mortgage on his estate; no suits can be raised by opposing claimants, the price was paid in open court, and the Church is the Lord’s freehold forever. See the blood-mark upon all the chosen, invisible to human eye, but known to Christ, for “the Lord knoweth them that are his”; he forgetteth none of those whom he has redeemed from among men; he counts the sheep for whom he laid down his life, and remembers well the Church for which he gave himself.

They are also his by conquest. What a battle he had in us before we would be won! How long he laid siege to our hearts! How often he sent us terms of capitulation! but we barred our gates, and fenced our walls against him. Do we not remember that glorious hour when he carried our hearts by storm? When he placed his cross against the wall, and scaled our ramparts, planting on our strongholds the blood-red flag of his omnipotent mercy? Yes, we are, indeed, the conquered captives of his omnipotent love. Thus chosen, purchased, and subdued, the rights of our divine possessor are inalienable: we rejoice that we never can be our own; and we desire, day by day, to do his will, and to show forth his glory.

# Word Live – 11/15/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/15/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/15/20

# Dangers, Toils, and Snares

**Read:** [**Acts 14:1–28**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+14%3a1%e2%80%9328)

### **In Iconium**

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. 2But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. 4The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7where they continued to preach the gospel.

### **In Lystra and Derbe**

8In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. 9He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

11When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” 12Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. 13The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

14But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15“Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. 16In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 17Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” 18Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

19Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

### **The Return to Antioch in Syria**

21They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said. 23Paul and Barnabas appointed elders[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+14%3a1%e2%80%9328#fen-NIV-27438a)] for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. 24After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, 25and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

26From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. 27On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 14:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+14%3a1%e2%80%9328#en-NIV-27438) Or Barnabas ordained elders; or Barnabas had elders elected

“Through many dangers, toils, and snares/I have already come;/’Twas grace that brought me safe thus far,/And grace will lead me home.” John Newton penned these words in his famous hymn, “Amazing Grace.” A slave trader who, after his conversion to Christianity, became a pastor, Newton was celebrating God’s gracious leading in his own life and the life of others.

We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22

“Dangers, toils, and snares” perfectly describe what Paul and Barnabas experienced during their return trip to Antioch. But they refused to let these trials stop their mission. Their message to these new disciples was: “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (v. 22). Paul and Barnabas had learned through experience. Nearly everywhere Paul preached, he faced opposition. Even some of his successes posed problems.

In Lystra, after Paul and Barnabas healed a man who had been lame since birth, the people concluded that he and Barnabas must be gods. His opponents came down from Antioch and Iconium winning over the crowd who then tried to stone Paul, leaving him for dead. But none of this discouraged Paul! Rejection and opposition did not cause him to question his message or the God who had commissioned him to deliver it.

Despite the many toils and dangers they faced, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch triumphant. It would have been easy for them to deliver a negative report. After all, they had been opposed at every turn. Instead, they gave a positive report, observing that God had “opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (v. 27). It was true. God had used the opposition Paul and Barnabas faced to direct their efforts.

**Apply the Word**

Not all the obstacles you face are true roadblocks. Many are street signs, placed in your path by God to refine your direction. Every believer faces hardship. We can see trials and rejection as proof that we are being faithful to God’s calling and message.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, today’s Scripture reveals some of the reasons for opposition, rejection, and hardships in our lives. Lord, help us understand which are roadblocks and which are street signs, placed by you to give us direction.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/15/20

# No Impossible Obstacles

**Read:** [**Hebrews 11:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1%E2%80%936)

### **Faith in Action**

11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for.

3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+13%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30178a)] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Hebrews 11:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11%3A1%E2%80%936+%2C+13%E2%80%9316&version=NIV#en-NIV-30178) Gen. 5:24

**Read:** [**Hebrews 11:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1%E2%80%936)[**13–16**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hebrews%2011.13%E2%80%9316)

13All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. [Hebrews 11:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1)

As an adult leader, I arranged a student field trip to an obstacle course. We instructed students to slip into safety gear and scale an eight-foot wall. Those who went first encouraged each climber to trust the harness and keep moving forward without looking down. One of our students stared at the barrier as we secured belts and buckles around her waist. “There’s no way I can do this,” she said. Affirming the strength of her harness, we encouraged her and cheered when she climbed up the wall and stepped onto the high platform.

When we face problems that seem impossible to conquer, fears and insecurities can cause doubts. The assurance of God’s unchanging might, goodness, and faithfulness creates a strong harness of trust. This confident assurance fueled the courage of the Old Testament saints, who demonstrated that faith trumps our need to know every detail of God’s plan ([Hebrews 11:1–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%2011.1%E2%80%9313), [39](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hebrews%2011.39)). With conviction, we seek God earnestly, often standing alone when we trust Him. We can adjust the way we approach our challenges by viewing our circumstances with an eternal perspective—knowing our trials are only temporary (vv. 13–16).

Focusing on the steep climbs in life can prevent us from believing that God will bring us through. But knowing He’s with us, we can harness our uncertainties by faith as we trust God to help us overcome obstacles that once seemed impossible.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you become more courageous in the face of an impossible task?  How do you feel when you’ve accomplished something you didn’t think you could do?

Father, thank You for being the Author and Perfecter of my faith, so that the measure of my faith when I face obstacles is reliant on Your strength, not my own.

#### **Insight**

The book of Hebrews was written with Jewish readers in mind. They saw themselves as physical heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Before hearing about Jesus, they identified with a visible land, city, and temple. Now, they’re facing the fears and unknowns of following Jesus, and some were having second thoughts (10:32–39). So an inspired author used a familiar list of ancestors to remind his readers that they weren’t the first to put their hope in an unseen God (11:1). Emphasizing faith over sight, this letter from beginning to end offers reasons to keep our eyes on Jesus (12:1–3).

# God Calling – 11/15/20

# By My Spirit

Man is apt to think that once in time only was My Miracle-working Power in action.  That is not so.  Wherever man trusts wholly in Me, and leaves to Me the choosing of the very day and hour, then there is My miracle-working Power as manifest, as marvelously manifest today, as ever it was when I was on earth, as ever it was to set My Apostles free, or to work miracles of wonder and healing through them.

Trust in Me. Have a boundless faith in Me, and you will see, and seeing, will give Me all the glory.  Remember, and say often to yourselves, "not by might, nor by Power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

Dwell much in thought upon all I accomplished on earth, and then say to yourselves, "He, our Lord, our Friend, could accomplish this now in our lives."

Apply these miracles to your present day need, and know that your Help and Salvation are sure.

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Mark 16:20

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/16/20

# Still Human!



…whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. —[1 Corinthians 10:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+10%3A31)

In the Scriptures, the great miracle of the incarnation slips into the ordinary life of a child; the great miracle of the transfiguration fades into the demon-possessed valley below; the glory of the resurrection descends into a breakfast on the seashore. This is not an anticlimax, but a great revelation of God.

We have a tendency to look for wonder in our experience, and we mistake heroic actions for real heroes. It’s one thing to go through a crisis grandly, yet quite another to go through every day glorifying God when there is no witness, no limelight, and no one paying even the remotest attention to us. If we are not looking for halos, we at least want something that will make people say, “What a wonderful man of prayer he is!” or, “What a great woman of devotion she is!” If you are properly devoted to the Lord Jesus, you have reached the lofty height where no one would ever notice you personally. All that is noticed is the power of God coming through you all the time.

We want to be able to say, “Oh, I have had a wonderful call from God!” But to do even the most humbling tasks to the glory of God takes the Almighty God Incarnate working in us. To be utterly unnoticeable requires God’s Spirit in us making us absolutely humanly His. The true test of a saint’s life is not successfulness but faithfulness on the human level of life. We tend to set up success in Christian work as our purpose, but our purpose should be to display the glory of God in human life, to live a life “hidden with Christ in God” in our everyday human conditions ([Colossians 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3:3)). Our human relationships are the very conditions in which the ideal life of God should be exhibited.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Much of the misery in our Christian life comes not because the devil tackles us, but because we have never understood the simple laws of our make-up. We have to treat the body as the servant of Jesus Christ: when the body says “Sit,” and He says “Go,” go! When the body says “Eat,” and He says “Fast,” fast! When the body says “Yawn,” and He says “Pray,” pray! Biblical Ethics, 107 R

# CCEL – 11/16/20

**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**—[JOHN 17:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html#John.17.17)

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul: discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.—I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.—If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

[John 15:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.3). -[Col. 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.16).[Psa. 119:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.9).[Prov. 2:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.2.html" \l "Prov.2.10).[Job 23:11,12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.11). -[Psa. 119:99](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.99). -[John 8:31,32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.31).

“The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.” [Lamentations 3:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.24)

It is not “The Lord is partly my portion,” nor “The Lord is in my portion”; but he himself makes up the sum total of my soul’s inheritance. Within the circumference of that circle lies all that we possess or desire. The Lord is my portion. Not his grace merely, nor his love, nor his covenant, but Jehovah himself. He has chosen us for his portion, and we have chosen him for ours. It is true that the Lord must first choose our inheritance for us, or else we shall never choose it for ourselves; but if we are really called according to the purpose of electing love, we can sing—

“Lov'd of my God for him again

With love intense I burn;

Chosen of him ere time began,

I choose him in return.”

The Lord is our all-sufficient portion. God fills himself; and if God is all-sufficient in himself, he must be all- sufficient for us. It is not easy to satisfy man’s desires. When he dreams that he is satisfied, anon he wakes to the perception that there is somewhat yet beyond, and straightway the horse-leech in his heart cries, “Give, give.” But all that we can wish for is to be found in our divine portion, so that we ask, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” Well may we “delight ourselves in the Lord” who makes us to drink of the river of his pleasures. Our faith stretches her wings and mounts like an eagle into the heaven of divine love as to her proper dwelling-place. “The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.” Let us rejoice in the Lord always; let us show to the world that we are a happy and a blessed people, and thus induce them to exclaim, “We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

# Word Live – 11/16/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/16/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/16/20

# Jesus Is Enough

**Read:** [**Acts 15:1–40**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340)

### **The Council at Jerusalem**

15 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. 3The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. 4When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

5Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

6The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 10Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? 11No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

12The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. 14Simon[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27457a)] has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16“‘After this I will return  
    and rebuild David’s fallen tent.  
Its ruins I will rebuild,  
    and I will restore it,  
17that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,  
    even all the Gentiles who bear my name,  
says the Lord, who does these things’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27460b)]—  
18    things known from long ago.[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27461c)]

19“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. 21For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

### **The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers**

22Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. 23With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

30So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. 33After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [34] [[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27477d)] 35But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

### **Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas**

36Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 15:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27457) Greek Simeon, a variant of Simon; that is, Peter
2. [Acts 15:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27460) Amos 9:11,12 (see Septuagint)
3. [Acts 15:18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27461) Some manuscripts things’— / 18the Lord’s work is known to him from long ago
4. [Acts 15:34](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27477) Some manuscripts include here But Silas decided to remain there.

When Bill heard that Jesus died to pay for his sins, it did not make him grateful. Instead, he got angry. “I don’t want Jesus to pay for my sins,” he said. “I want to pay for them myself!” Some people find it hard to accept a gift, especially when that gift is eternal life.

We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are. Acts 15:11

This was true for many who had spent their lives observing the Law of Moses. They were willing to grant that God would accept the Gentiles through Jesus but only if they were circumcised first “according to the custom taught by Moses” (v. 1). They taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Because they claimed to represent the Jerusalem church, the believers in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to meet with the apostles to resolve the dispute. Before rendering a decision, the apostles and elders met to “consider the question” (v. 6). Peter observed that God had already settled the matter when He gave believing Gentiles the gift of the Spirit without requiring them to be circumcised first (v. 8). Paul and Barnabas described how God had validated their ministry to the Gentiles by confirming their message with signs and wonders (v. 12). James, a brother of Jesus and who presided over the meeting, explained that the Scriptures agreed with this (v. 15).

The inclusion of the Gentiles in the gospel was part of God’s plan all along. The letter that the apostles and elders sent back included restrictions involving dietary practices that were sensitive to those who valued the Mosaic Law as well as temptations common to Gentile culture.

**Apply the Word**

Jesus is enough. We are saved not because of what we do, but only because of what Christ has done. The way to become righteous is through faith. No religious rite or human action can substitute for what Christ has already done on our behalf.

### **Pray with Us**

Jesus, thank you for who you are, your victory on the cross, and the sufficiency of your sacrifice for our salvation. We rejoice together with the apostles that we don’t have to follow the Mosaic law in order to attain peace with God.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/16/20

# Borrowed Shoes

**Read:** [**Galatians 5:13–26**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.13%E2%80%9326)

### **Life by the Spirit**

13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29176a)]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29177b)] 15If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29180c)] you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Galatians 5:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29176) In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (sarx) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24; and in 6:8.
2. [Galatians 5:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29177) Lev. 19:18
3. [Galatians 5:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A13%E2%80%9326&version=NIV#en-NIV-29180) Or you do not do what

Serve one another humbly in love. [Galatians 5:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.13)

In the chaos of fleeing his home during the California wildfires of 2018, Gabe, a high school senior, missed the state-qualifying cross-country race for which he’d been training. Missing this meet meant he wouldn’t have the chance to compete at the state meet—the culminating event of his four-year running career. In light of the circumstances, the state athletics board gave Gabe another chance: he’d have to run a qualifying time by himself, on a rival high school’s track, in “street shoes” because his running shoes were in the charred rubble of his home. When he showed up to “race,” Gabe was surprised by his competitors who’d come to supply him with proper shoes and to run alongside him to ensure he kept the pace necessary to be entered in the state meet.

Gabe’s opponents had no obligation to help him. They could have given into their natural desires to look out for themselves ([Galatians 5:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.13)); doing so might have improved their own odds of winning. But Paul urges us to display the fruit of the Spirit in our lives—to “serve one another humbly in love” and to demonstrate “kindness” and “goodness” (vv. 13, 22). When we lean on the Spirit to help us not act on our natural instincts, we’re better able to love those around us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How are you showing the “fruit of the Spirit” in the way you treat others? How can you better love your “neighbor”?

Dear God, my natural desire is to look out for myself. Help me to serve others out of love for You.

#### **Insight**

We’re all born with a sinful nature inherited from Adam ([Psalm 51:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2051.5); [Romans 5:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%205.12), [14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Romans%205.14)), but those who place their trust in Jesus for salvation are “born of the Spirit” ([John 3:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%203.8)) and receive a new nature (1:13; [Titus 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Titus%203.5)). This new “divine nature” ([2 Peter 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Pet%201.4)) is “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” ([Ephesians 4:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.24)). In [Galatians 5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205), Paul warns that our flesh (sinful habits) continues to oppose the indwelling Spirit (v. 17). To “put to death” our earthly nature ([Colossians 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.5)), we must walk and live by the Spirit, keeping in step with Him as He leads and directs us ([Galatians 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%205.16), [18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Galatians%205.18), [25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Galatians%205.25)).

# God Calling – 11/16/20

# Union Is Power

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.  Matthew 18:20

Claim that promise always.  Know it true that when two of My lovers meet I am the Third.  Never limit that promise.

When you two are together in My Name, united by one bond in My Spirit, I am there.  Not only when you meet to greet Me, and to hear My Voice.

Think what this means in Power.  It is again the lesson of the Power that follows two united to serve Me.

 Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.  Exodus 25:8