# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/17/20

# The Eternal Goal



By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing…I will bless you… —[Genesis 22:16-17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+22%3A16-17)

Abraham, at this point, has reached where he is in touch with the very nature of God. He now understands the reality of God.

My goal is God Himself…

At any cost, dear Lord, by any road.

“At any cost…by any road” means submitting to God’s way of bringing us to the goal.

There is no possibility of questioning God when He speaks, if He speaks to His own nature in me. Prompt obedience is the only result. When Jesus says, “Come,” I simply come; when He says, “Let go,” I let go; when He says, “Trust God in this matter,” I trust. This work of obedience is the evidence that the nature of God is in me.

God’s revelation of Himself to me is influenced by my character, not by God’s character.

’Tis because I am ordinary, Thy ways so often look ordinary to me.

It is through the discipline of obedience that I get to the place where Abraham was and I see who God is. God will never be real to me until I come face to face with Him in Jesus Christ. Then I will know and can boldly proclaim, “In all the world, my God, there is none but Thee, there is none but Thee.”

The promises of God are of no value to us until, through obedience, we come to understand the nature of God. We may read some things in the Bible every day for a year and they may mean nothing to us. Then, because we have been obedient to God in some small detail, we suddenly see what God means and His nature is instantly opened up to us. “All the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen…” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Our “Yes” must be born of obedience; when by obedience we ratify a promise of God by saying, “Amen,” or, “So be it.” That promise becomes ours.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The main characteristic which is the proof of the indwelling Spirit is an amazing tenderness in personal dealing, and a blazing truthfulness with regard to God’s Word. Disciples Indeed, 386 R

# CCEL – 11/17/20

**Thy thoughts are very deep.**—[PSA. 92:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.92.html" \l "Ps.92.5)

We . . . do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.—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.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!—My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.—Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

[Col. 1:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.9). -[Eph. 3:17-19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html" \l "Eph.3.17).[Rom. 11:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.33). -[Isa. 55:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.8). -[Psa. 40:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.40.html" \l "Ps.40.5).

“To whom be glory forever. Amen” **[Romans 11:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.36)**

“To whom be glory forever.” This should be the single desire of the Christian. All other wishes must be subservient and tributary to this one. The Christian may wish for prosperity in his business, but only so far as it may help him to promote this—“To him be glory forever.” He may desire to attain more gifts and more graces, but it should only be that “To him may be glory forever.” You are not acting as you ought to do when you are moved by any other motive than a single eye to your Lord’s glory. As a Christian, you are “of God, and through God,” then live “to God.” Let nothing ever set your heart beating so mightily as love to him. Let this ambition fire your soul; be this the foundation of every enterprise upon which you enter, and this your sustaining motive whenever your zeal would grow chill; make God your only object. Depend upon it, where self begins sorrow begins; but if God be my supreme delight and only object,

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“To me 'tis equal whether love ordain

My life or death—appoint me ease or pain.”

Let your desire for God’s glory be a growing desire. You blessed him in your youth, do not be content with such praises as you gave him then. Has God prospered you in business? Give him more as he has given you more. Has God given you experience? Praise him by stronger faith than you exercised at first. Does your knowledge grow? Then sing more sweetly. Do you enjoy happier times than you once had? Have you been restored from sickness, and has your sorrow been turned into peace and joy? Then give him more music; put more coals and more sweet frankincense into the censer of your praise. Practically in your life give him honour, putting the “Amen” to this doxology to your great and gracious Lord, by your own individual service and increasing holiness.

# Word Live – 11/17/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/17/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/17/20

# The Power of the Gospel

**Read:** [**Acts 16:1–40**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+16%3a1%e2%80%9340)

### **Timothy Joins Paul and Silas**

16 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

### **Paul’s Vision of the Man of Macedonia**

6Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

### **Lydia’s Conversion in Philippi**

11From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+16%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27496a)] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. 15When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

### **Paul and Silas in Prison**

16Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” 18She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

19When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

22The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. 27The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

29The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

31They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” 32Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” 36The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

37But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

38The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 16:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+16%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27496) The text and meaning of the Greek for the leading city of that district are uncertain.

Adam and Eve, David and Jonathan, James, and John are a few of the famous pairs you will meet in the Bible. In today’s passage, we are introduced to Timothy, who would later become Paul’s protégé in ministry. Paul would later say of Timothy, “I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare” (Phil. 2:20).

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

Timothy joined the ministry team when Paul visited Lystra. Since Timothy was of Jewish descent through his mother but had a Gentile father, Paul arranged for him to be circumcised for the sake of the mission (v. 3). The Holy Spirit guided Paul and his companions during their journey and eventually directed them to enter Macedonia (vv. 6–10). The text doesn’t reveal what means God used to redirect Paul along the way, except for the vision in verse 9. In Philippi, the apostle followed his usual pattern of proclaiming the gospel to the Jews first. Instead of a synagogue, Paul found a group of devout women meeting for prayer. Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, was the first to believe their message. She was a wealthy businesswoman who invited Paul and his companions to stay in her home.

Their next conversion came as a result of what others would have considered a setback, if not a travesty of justice. Paul and Silas were arrested, flogged, and thrown in prison, contrary to Roman law (v. 37). Their misfortune turned into an opportunity for the gospel as the jailer and his household were converted. When the magistrates learned of their mistake, they tried to send the two away quietly. But Paul demanded that the magistrates escort them from the prison, which amounted to a public apology from them.

**Apply the Word**

The gospel’s power does not depend on you! What you experience as a setback in your life could be God’s open door for the gospel to move forward. Ask God to help you recognize the difference and to accept and even welcome His working in your life.

### **Pray with Us**

When we encounter difficulties and opposition, is it a setback or an open door from God? Father, help us see and understand the difference and act according to the guidance of your Spirit.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/17/20

# If Only We Could . . .

 **Read:** [**Psalm 28**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2028)

#### **Of David.**

1To you, Lord, I call;  
    you are my Rock,  
    do not turn a deaf ear to me.  
For if you remain silent,  
    I will be like those who go down to the pit.  
2Hear my cry for mercy  
    as I call to you for help,  
as I lift up my hands  
    toward your Most Holy Place.

3Do not drag me away with the wicked,  
    with those who do evil,  
who speak cordially with their neighbors  
    but harbor malice in their hearts.  
4Repay them for their deeds  
    and for their evil work;  
repay them for what their hands have done  
    and bring back on them what they deserve.

5Because they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord  
    and what his hands have done,  
he will tear them down  
    and never build them up again.

6Praise be to the Lord,  
    for he has heard my cry for mercy.  
7The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
    my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.  
My heart leaps for joy,  
    and with my song I praise him.

8The Lord is the strength of his people,  
    a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.  
9Save your people and bless your inheritance;  
    be their shepherd and carry them forever.

The Lord is the strength of his people. [Psalm 28:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2028.8)

The weeping Alaskan cedar tree whipped from side to side in the storm’s strong winds. Regie loved the tree that had not only provided shelter from the summer sun but also given her family privacy. Now the fierce storm was tearing the roots from the ground. Quickly, Regie, with her fifteen-year-old son in tow, ran to try to rescue the tree. With her hands and ninety-pound frame firmly planted against it, she and her son tried to keep it from falling over. But they weren’t strong enough.

God was King David’s strength when he called out to Him in another kind of storm ([Psalm 28:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2028.8)). Some commentators say he wrote this during a time when his world was falling apart. His own son rose in rebellion against him and tried to take the throne ([2 Samuel 15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Sam%2015)). He felt so vulnerable and weak that he feared God might remain silent, and he would die ([Psalm 28:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2028.1)). “Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help,” he said to God (v. 2). God gave David strength to go on, even though his relationship with his son never mended.

How we long to prevent bad things from happening! If only we could. But in our weakness, God promises we can always call to Him to be our Rock (vv. 1–2). When we don’t have the strength, He’s our shepherd and will carry us forever (vv. 8–9).

By:  [Anne Cetas](https://odb.org/author/annecetas/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When have you felt vulnerable and unable to fix a situation? How did you see God come through for you?

It seems there’s always something for which I need extra strength from You, O God. Help me to remember that without You I can do nothing.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2028) is referred to as an imprecatory psalm—one that calls down wrath or curses on a person or people who are doing wrong. The imprecations in verses 4–5 give us a picture of God’s hatred of sin. In view of his painful circumstances, David cries out to God, his Rock (v. 1). As commentator John Phillips wrote about this name for God, “There is something permanent, massive, and immutable about a rock. In the Old Testament the figure of a rock is never used of a man, only of God. God is as changeless as creation’s rocks.” As David’s world shook, he cast himself on the Rock. God heard his cry, and David responded with praise (vv. 6–7).

# God Calling – 11/17/20

# Quiet Lives

**"Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter into the joy of thy Lord."  Matthew 25:21**

These words are whispered in the ears of many whom the world would pass by unrecognizing.  Not to the great, and the world-famed, are these words said so often, but to the quiet followers who serve Me unobtrusively, yet faithfully, who bear their cross bravely, with a smiling face to the world.  Thank Me for the quiet lives.

These words speak not only of the passing into that fuller Spirit Life.  Duty faithfully done for Me does mean entrance into a Life of Joy - My Joy, the Joy of your Lord.  The world may never see it, the humble, patient, quiet service, but I see it, and My reward is not earth's fame, earth's wealth, earth's pleasures, but the Joy Divine.

Whether here, or there, in the earth-world, or in the spirit-world, this is My reward. Joy.  The Joy that carries an exquisite thrill in the midst of pain and poverty and suffering.  That Joy of which I said no man could take it from you.  Earth has no pleasure, no reward, that can give man that Joy.  It is known only to My lovers and My friends.

This Joy may come, not as the reward of activity in My service.  It may be the reward of patient suffering, bravely borne.

Suffering, borne with Me, must in time bring Joy, as does all real contact with Me.  So live with Me in that Kingdom of Joy , My Kingdom, the Gateway into which may be service, it may be suffering.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.  Isaiah 12:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/18/20

# Winning into Freedom



If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. —[John 8:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+8%3A36)

If there is even a trace of individual self-satisfaction left in us, it always says, “I can’t surrender,” or “I can’t be free.” But the spiritual part of our being never says “I can’t”; it simply soaks up everything around it. Our spirit hungers for more and more. It is the way we are built. We are designed with a great capacity for God, but sin, our own individuality, and wrong thinking keep us from getting to Him. God delivers us from sin— we have to deliver ourselves from our individuality. This means offering our natural life to God and sacrificing it to Him, so He may transform it into spiritual life through our obedience.

God pays no attention to our natural individuality in the development of our spiritual life. His plan runs right through our natural life. We must see to it that we aid and assist God, and not stand against Him by saying, “I can’t do that.” God will not discipline us; we must discipline ourselves. God will not bring our “arguments…and every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” ([2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10:5)) — we have to do it. Don’t say, “Oh, Lord, I suffer from wandering thoughts.” Don’t suffer from wandering thoughts. Stop listening to the tyranny of your individual natural life and win freedom into the spiritual life.

“If the Son makes you free….” Do not substitute Savior for Son in this passage. The Savior has set us free from sin, but this is the freedom that comes from being set free from myself by the Son. It is what Paul meant in [Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2:20) when he said, “I have been crucified with Christ….” His individuality had been broken and his spirit had been united with his Lord; not just merged into Him, but made one with Him. “…you shall be free indeed”— free to the very core of your being; free from the inside to the outside. We tend to rely on our own energy, instead of being energized by the power that comes from identification with Jesus.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 11/18/20

**He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.**—[ISA. 27:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.27.html" \l "Isa.27.8)

Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great.—I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: . . . I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.—He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.

Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

[II Sam. 24:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.24.html" \l "iiSam.24.14). -[Jer. 30:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.30.html" \l "Jer.30.11). -[Psa. 103:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.9),[14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.14). -[Mal. 3:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.17).[I Cor. 10:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.13). -[Luke 22:31,32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html" \l "Luke.22.31).[Isa. 25:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.25.html" \l "Isa.25.4).

“A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” **[Song of Solomon 4:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.12)**

In this metaphor, which has reference to the inner life of a believer, we have very plainly the idea of secrecy. It is a spring shut up: just as there were springs in the East, over which an edifice was built, so that none could reach them save those who knew the secret entrance; so is the heart of a believer when it is renewed by grace: there is a mysterious life within which no human skill can touch. It is a secret which no other man knoweth; nay, which the very man who is the possessor of it cannot tell to his neighbour. The text includes not only secrecy, but separation. It is not the common spring, of which every passer-by may drink, it is one kept and preserved from all others; it is a fountain bearing a particular mark—a king’s royal seal, so that all can perceive that it is not a common fountain, but a fountain owned by a proprietor, and placed specially by itself alone. So is it with the spiritual life. The chosen of God were separated in the eternal decree; they were separated by God in the day of redemption; and they are separated by the possession of a life which others have not; and it is impossible for them to feel at home with the world, or to delight in its pleasures. There is also the idea of sacredness. The spring shut up is preserved for the use of some special person: and such is the Christian’s heart. It is a spring kept for Jesus. Every Christian should feel that he has God’s seal upon him—and he should be able to say with Paul, “From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Another idea is prominent—it is that of security. Oh! how sure and safe is the inner life of the believer! If all the powers of earth and hell could combine against it, that immortal principle must still exist, for he who gave it pledged his life for its preservation. And who “is he that shall harm you,” when God is your protector?

# Word Live – 11/18/20

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# Scripture Union – 11/18/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/18/20

# Who Is Your God?

**Read:** [**Acts 17:1–34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334)

### **In Thessalonica**

17 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. 4Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334" \l "fen-NIV-27529a" \o "See footnote a)] 6But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” 8When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

### **In Berea**

10As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

### **In Athens**

16While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” 21(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334#fen-NIV-27552b)] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334#fen-NIV-27552c)]

29“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33At that, Paul left the Council. 34Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 17:5](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-27529) Or the assembly of the people
2. [Acts 17:28](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-27552) From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides
3. [Acts 17:28](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17%3a1%e2%80%9334#en-NIV-27552) From the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus

According to a recent survey by Lifeway Research, 52 percent of American adults believe that Jesus was a great teacher and nothing more. In addition, an increasing number of people believe there are multiple ways to God. This is not a new problem! Every time Paul preached the gospel, he challenged existing ideas about the gods, pointing to the one true God. His message was consistent whether his audience was Jew or Gentile.

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. Acts 17:24

In Thessalonica, Paul and Silas spent three Sabbaths proving that Jesus was the Messiah. They received a positive response, especially among the Greeks and several prominent women in the congregation, which prompted his opponents to round up a mob and make false accusations. In Berea, a city 50 miles west of Thessalonica, people examined the Scriptures “to see if what Paul said was true” (v. 11). But when Paul’s opponents from Thessalonica heard about it, they sent agitators there too. Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea to follow up and went on to Athens.

Idolatry in Athens provoked Paul to preach in the marketplace. When the crowd, including a group of philosophers, heard Paul teach about Christ and the resurrection, they invited him to address the Areopagus, an administrative body that served as a court and exercised authority over religious matters. Paul began with observations about their spiritual practices, “I see that in every way you are very religious” (v. 22). He noted their altar to an unknown god (v. 23) and used that common point to spring into an explanation of the true God and the gospel. He reasoned about God from creation and quoted their philosophers. But central to it all, he preached Christ and warned of the judgment to come.

**Apply the Word**

When we tell others about Jesus, we often begin with what others already know or believe. Consider your audience: Do they know any Scripture? What assumptions do they have about God? Then point them to Christ and the Cross.

### **Pray with Us**

Today’s reading shows Paul’s creativity in preaching the gospel in Athens. What a powerful example for us! Lord, may we also find ways to share the good news with all people, finding unique approaches to their hearts.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/18/20

# False Confidence

 **Read:** [**Philippians 3:2–8**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.2%E2%80%938)

2Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. [Philippians 3:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.8)

A few years ago, my doctor gave me a stern talk about my health. I took his words to heart and began going to the gym and adjusting my diet. Over time, both my cholesterol and my weight went down, and my self-esteem went up. But then something not so good happened: I began noticing other people’s dietary choices and judging them. Isn’t it funny that often when we find a scoring system that grades us well, we use it to lift ourselves up and put others down. It seems to be an innate human tendency to cling to self-made standards in an attempt to justify ourselves—systems of self-justification and guilt-management.

Paul warned the Philippians about doing such things. Some were putting their confidence in religious performance or cultural conformity, and Paul told them he had more reason to boast of such things: “If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more” (3:4). Yet Paul knew his pedigree and performance was “garbage” compared to “knowing Christ” (v. 8). Only Jesus loves us as we are, rescues us, and gives us the power to become more like Him. No earning required; no scorekeeping possible.

Boasting is bad in itself, but a boast based on false confidence is tragic. The gospel calls us away from misplaced confidence and into communion with a Savior who loves us and gave Himself for us.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What would it look like to trust in God’s grace today? How can you live and work from a place of rest and trust in His love for you?

Dear Jesus, thank You for Your love for me. I set aside the scorecards of self-justification. Those are misguided grounds of confidence.

To learn more about Jesus and His life, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/NT111](https://ChristianUniversity.org/NT111).

#### **Insight**

To call someone a “dog” was a terrible insult for a Jewish person to make, yet Paul applies it to those who rely on religious rules to make themselves righteous ([Philippians 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Phil%203.2)). The rule in view here is circumcision, a physical sign of God’s covenant with His people. God implemented this practice as part of His covenant with Abram (Abraham) to make a great nation of his offspring ([Genesis 17:4–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2017.4%E2%80%9319)). Circumcision was “the sign of the covenant” between God and His people (v. 11), but it was only an outward sign. Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul said that God’s people are to be “circumcised in heart” (see [Deuteronomy 10:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2010.16); [Jeremiah 9:25–26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Jer%209.25%E2%80%9326); [Romans 2:28–29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%202.28%E2%80%9329)). This is what God meant when He told Abram to “keep my covenant” ([Genesis 17:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gen%2017.9)). Paul wrote, “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation” ([Galatians 6:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206.15)) that we become by placing our faith in Christ.

# God Calling – 11/18/20

# Dazzling Glory

**Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.  Isaiah 60:1**

The glory of the Lord is the Beauty of His Character.  It is risen upon you when you realize it, even though on earth you can do so only in part.

The Beauty of the Purity and Love of God is too dazzling for mortals to see in full.

The Glory of the Lord is also risen upon you when you reflect that Glory in your lives, when in Love, Patience, Service, Purity, whatever it may be, you reveal to the world a something of the Father, an assurance that you have been with Me, your Lord and Savior.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.  2 Corinthians 3:18

, and he shall lift you up.  James 4:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/19/20

# “When He Has Come”



When He has come, He will convict the world of sin… —[John 16:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+16%3A8)

Very few of us know anything about conviction of sin. We know the experience of being disturbed because we have done wrong things. But conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit blots out every relationship on earth and makes us aware of only one— “Against You, You only, have I sinned…” ([Psalm 51:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+51:4)). When a person is convicted of sin in this way, he knows with every bit of his conscience that God would not dare to forgive him. If God did forgive him, then this person would have a stronger sense of justice than God. God does forgive, but it cost the breaking of His heart with grief in the death of Christ to enable Him to do so. The great miracle of the grace of God is that He forgives sin, and it is the death of Jesus Christ alone that enables the divine nature to forgive and to remain true to itself in doing so. It is shallow nonsense to say that God forgives us because He is love. Once we have been convicted of sin, we will never say this again. The love of God means Calvary— nothing less! The love of God is spelled out on the Cross and nowhere else. The only basis for which God can forgive me is the Cross of Christ. It is there that His conscience is satisfied.

Forgiveness doesn’t merely mean that I am saved from hell and have been made ready for heaven (no one would accept forgiveness on that level). Forgiveness means that I am forgiven into a newly created relationship which identifies me with God in Christ. The miracle of redemption is that God turns me, the unholy one, into the standard of Himself, the Holy One. He does this by putting into me a new nature, the nature of Jesus Christ.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The root of faith is the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest snares is the idea that God is sure to lead us to success. My Utmost for His Highest, March 19, 761 L

# CCEL – 11/19/20

**By their fruits ye shall know them.**—[MATT. 7:20.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.7.html" \l "Matt.7.20)

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.—Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.—Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.—A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

[I John 3:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html#iJohn.3.7). -[Jas. 3:11-13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.3.html" \l "Jas.3.11). -[I Pet. 2:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.12).[Matt. 12:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.12.html" \l "Matt.12.33). -[Matt. 12:35](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.12.html" \l "Matt.12.35).[Isa. 5:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.5.html" \l "Isa.5.4).

“Avoid foolish questions.” Titus 3:9

Our days are few, and are far better spent in doing good, than in disputing over matters which are, at best, of minor importance. The old schoolmen did a world of mischief by their incessant discussion of subjects of no practical importance; and our Churches suffer much from petty wars over abstruse points and unimportant questions. After everything has been said that can be said, neither party is any the wiser, and therefore the discussion no more promotes knowledge than love, and it is foolish to sow in so barren a field. Questions upon points wherein Scripture is silent; upon mysteries which belong to God alone; upon prophecies of doubtful interpretation; and upon mere modes of observing human ceremonials, are all foolish, and wise men avoid them. Our business is neither to ask nor answer foolish questions, but to avoid them altogether; and if we observe the apostle’s precept ([Titus 3:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.3.html" \l "Titus.3.8)) to be careful to maintain good works, we shall find ourselves far too much occupied with profitable business to take much interest in unworthy, contentious, and needless strivings.

There are, however, some questions which are the reverse of foolish, which we must not avoid, but fairly and honestly meet, such as these: Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I renewed in the spirit of my mind? Am I walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit? Am I growing in grace? Does my conversation adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour? Am I looking for the coming of the Lord, and watching as a servant should do who expects his master? What more can I do for Jesus? Such enquiries as these urgently demand our attention; and if we have been at all given to cavilling, let us now turn our critical abilities to a service so much more profitable. Let us be peace-makers, and endeavour to lead others both by our precept and example, to “avoid foolish questions.”

# Word Live – 11/19/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/19/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/19/20

# The Power of Weakness

**Read:** [**Acts 18:1–22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a1%e2%80%9322)

### **In Corinth**

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. 4Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

7Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

9One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 11So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

12While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. 13“This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

14Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. 15But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” 16So he drove them off. 17Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

### **Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos**

18Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. 19They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. 21But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22When he landed at Caesarea, he went up

Are you comfortable talking to others about what you believe? According to Barna Research, the primary reason some people are unwilling to talk about matters of faith is that religious conversations can create tension and cause arguments. Paul also found this to be true but that did not keep him from telling others about Jesus.

I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 1 Corinthians 2:3

The city of Corinth was the next stop on Paul’s itinerary. Corinth was an important commercial center of its time, also famous for its loose morals. Once there, the apostle met Aquilla and Priscilla, both Jewish Christians from Rome. Aquilla shared Paul’s trade as a tentmaker, as well as his faith. We know from 1 Corinthians 9:12 that Paul worked to support himself while at Corinth so that he would not “hinder the gospel of Christ.” Corinth had a long tradition of public speaking, where paid professionals practiced rhetoric for pay. Paul worked so that the Corinthians would not misunderstand his motives.

Paul’s teaching in the synagogue created so much opposition that Paul “shook out his clothes in protest” and told them that he was turning to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). This act was a familiar ritual that signified rejection, like saying, “I am washing my hands of you.”

Paul seems to have been intimidated by the opposition he encountered. But God did not want him to stop. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, assuring him of His presence and telling him to “keep on speaking” (v. 9). Paul would later write to the Corinthians and remind them how he had come to them “in weakness with great fear and trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3).

**Apply the Word**

Just because you experience fear, it does not mean that you are unqualified to tell others about Jesus. Perhaps you can team up with someone. You may also want to strengthen your evangelism skills by reading a helpful book such as How to Give Away Your Faith by Paul Little. Take small steps and learn how to share your faith.

### **Pray with Us**

Paul’s example in today’s Scripture helps us overcome discouragement and fear. Thank you, Father, for reassuring Paul with your presence through his “great fear and trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3).

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/19/20

# Valiant Actions

 **Read:** [**John 10:7–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.7%E2%80%9318)

7Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. 9I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+10%3A7%E2%80%9318&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-26491a" \o "See footnote a)] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

11“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 10:9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+10%3A7-18&version=NIV#en-NIV-26491) Or *kept safe*

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep. [John 10:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.14%E2%80%9315)

John Harper had no idea what was about to unfold as he and his six-year-old daughter embarked on the Titanic. But one thing he knew: he loved Jesus and he was passionate that others know Him too. As soon as the ship hit an iceberg and water started pouring in, Harper, a widower, put his little girl on a lifeboat and headed into the chaos to save as many people as possible. As he distributed life jackets he reportedly shouted, “Let the women, children, and the unsaved into the lifeboats.” Until his last breath, Harper shared about Jesus with anyone who was around him. John willingly gave his life away so others could live.

There was One who laid down His life freely two thousand years ago so you and I can live not only in this life but for all eternity. Jesus didn’t just wake up one day and decide He would pay the penalty of death for humanity’s sin. This was His life’s mission. At one point when He was talking with the Jewish religious leaders He repeatedly acknowledged, “I lay down my life” ([John 10:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.11), [15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.15), [17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.17), [18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.18)). He didn’t just say these words but lived them by actually dying a horrific death on the cross. He came so that the Pharisees, John Harper, and we “may have life, and have it to the full” (v. 10).

By:  [Estera Pirosca Escobar](https://odb.org/author/esteraescobar/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How do you reveal that you truly love those around you? How can you show Jesus’ love to someone through your actions today?

Jesus, there aren’t words grand enough to thank You for demonstrating the greatest act of love there is. Thank You for giving Your life away so I might live. Help me to show Your love to others no matter how much it costs me.

#### **Insight**

The gospel of John introduces Jesus as a lamb ([John 1:29](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.29)) before describing Him as a good shepherd (ch. 10). Finally, the great mystery of the Jewish Scriptures could be explained. Even now, without God’s help no one could connect the dots between a rabbi from Nazareth (1:45-46), David’s song of the good shepherd ([Psalm 23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2023)), Isaiah’s vision of people who needed to be rescued by One led like a lamb to the slaughter ([Isaiah 53:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2053.6%E2%80%937)), and the prophet Ezekiel’s warning of shepherds who, in contrast to Jesus ([John 10:14–15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.14%E2%80%9315)), were looking after themselves rather than their flocks ([Ezekiel 34:1–2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezek%2034.1%E2%80%932), [11–16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ezekiel%2034.11%E2%80%9316)).

# God Calling – 11/19/20

# Hills of the Lord

**I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.    
My help cometh form the Lord, which made heaven and earth.  Psalm 121:1,2**

Yes! always raise your eyes, from earth's sordid and mean and false, to the Hills of the Lord. From poverty, lift your eyes to the Help of the Lord.

In moments of weakness, lift your eyes to the Hills of the Lord.

Train your sight by constantly getting this long view.  Train it to see more and more, further and further, until distant peaks seem familiar.

The Hills of the Lord.  The Hills whence comes your help.  A parched earth looks to the Hills for its rivers, its streams, its life.  So look you to the Hills.  From those Hills comes Help.  Help from the Lord - who made Heaven and earth.

So, for all your spiritual needs, look to the Lord, who made Heaven, and for all your temporal needs look to Me, owner of all this, the Lord who made the earth.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.  James 4:10

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

# The Forgiveness of God



In Him we have…the forgiveness of sins… —[Ephesians 1:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Ephesians+1%3A7)

Beware of the pleasant view of the fatherhood of God: God is so kind and loving that of course He will forgive us. That thought, based solely on emotion, cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament. The only basis on which God can forgive us is the tremendous tragedy of the Cross of Christ. To base our forgiveness on any other ground is unconscious blasphemy. The only ground on which God can forgive our sin and reinstate us to His favor is through the Cross of Christ. There is no other way! Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost the agony at Calvary. We should never take the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and our sanctification in simple faith, and then forget the enormous cost to God that made all of this ours.

Forgiveness is the divine miracle of grace. The cost to God was the Cross of Christ. To forgive sin, while remaining a holy God, this price had to be paid. Never accept a view of the fatherhood of God if it blots out the atonement. The revealed truth of God is that without the atonement He cannot forgive— He would contradict His nature if He did. The only way we can be forgiven is by being brought back to God through the atonement of the Cross. God’s forgiveness is possible only in the supernatural realm.

Compared with the miracle of the forgiveness of sin, the experience of sanctification is small. Sanctification is simply the wonderful expression or evidence of the forgiveness of sins in a human life. But the thing that awakens the deepest fountain of gratitude in a human being is that God has forgiven his sin. Paul never got away from this. Once you realize all that it cost God to forgive you, you will be held as in a vise, constrained by the love of God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else. “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord”;…  The Highest Good—The Pilgrim’s Song Book, 537 L

# CCEL – 11/20/20

**When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.**—[MIC. 7:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mic.7.html" \l "Mic.7.8)

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.—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. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.—What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.—The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

[Isa. 43:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.43.html" \l "Isa.43.2). -[Isa. 42:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.42.html" \l "Isa.42.16).[Psa. 23:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.23.html" \l "Ps.23.4). -[Psa. 56:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.56.html" \l "Ps.56.3). -[Psa. 27:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.27.html" \l "Ps.27.1).

“O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul.” [Lamentations 3:58](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.58)

Observe how positively the prophet speaks. He doth not say, “I hope, I trust, I sometimes think, that God hath pleaded the causes of my soul;” but he speaks of it as a matter of fact not to be disputed. “Thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul.” Let us, by the aid of the gracious Comforter, shake off those doubts and fears which so much mar our peace and comfort. Be this our prayer, that we may have done with the harsh croaking voice of surmise and suspicion, and may be able to speak with the clear, melodious voice of full assurance. Notice how gratefully the prophet speaks, ascribing all the glory to God alone! You perceive there is not a word concerning himself or his own pleadings. He doth not ascribe his deliverance in any measure to any man, much less to his own merit; but it is “thou”—“O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.” A grateful spirit should ever be cultivated by the Christian; and especially after deliverances we should prepare a song for our God. Earth should be a temple filled with the songs of grateful saints, and every day should be a censor smoking with the sweet incense of thanksgiving. How joyful Jeremiah seems to be while he records the Lord’s mercy. How triumphantly he lifts up the strain! He has been in the low dungeon, and is even now no other than the weeping prophet; and yet in the very book which is called “Lamentations,” clear as the song of Miriam when she dashed her fingers against the tabor, shrill as the note of Deborah when she met Barak with shouts of victory, we hear the voice of Jeremy going up to heaven—“Thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.” O children of God, seek after a vital experience of the Lord’s lovingkindness, and when you have it, speak positively of it; sing gratefully; shout triumphantly.

# Word Live – 11/20/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/20/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/20/20

# Powerful Encounters

**Read:** [**Acts 18:23–19:20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20)

23After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

24Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#fen-NIV-27583a)] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

27When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

### **Paul in Ephesus**

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#fen-NIV-27588b)] you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

3So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

4Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#fen-NIV-27592c)] and prophesied. 7There were about twelve men in all.

8Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

11God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

13Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” 14Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” 16Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. 18Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. 19A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20" \l "fen-NIV-27605d" \o "See footnote d)] 20In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 18:25](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#en-NIV-27583) Or with fervor in the Spirit
2. [Acts 19:2](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#en-NIV-27588) Or after
3. [Acts 19:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#en-NIV-27592) Or other languages
4. [Acts 19:19](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+18%3a23%e2%80%9319%3a20#en-NIV-27605) A drachma was a silver coin worth about a day’s wages.

Most people know the name of Jesus, but they may not understand fully who He is. They have important gaps in their understanding. After a year in Corinth, Paul set out again, dropping off Priscilla and Aquilla at Ephesus. There they met Apollos, who taught what he already knew about Jesus accurately enough but “knew only the baptism of John” (18:25). The couple filled in the gaps in Apollos’s information, and he went on to be a powerful defender of the gospel. Meanwhile, Paul arrived in Ephesus, where he met other former disciples of John. They also needed more information about Jesus. They had been baptized by John but not “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (19:5).

In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. Acts 19:20

Notice that Paul followed the same pattern of ministry in Ephesus as he had in Corinth. He preached every Sabbath in the synagogue until persistent rejection drove him out. During the week, he conducted discussions in the afternoon in the lecture hall of Tyrannus after working at his tentmaking trade in the morning. During these two years of his ministry, the Lord confirmed the authenticity of Paul’s message with miracles.

The sons of Sceva were itinerant exorcists who attempted to use Jesus’ name to cast out demons. Their approach appears to have relied more on incantations and magic spells than prayer or faith. The difference is reflected in the demon’s ironic reply in 19:15: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” When others heard about their failure, they confessed their sin and showed their repentance by burning their scrolls that contained the magic spells, which were considered valuable.

**Apply the Word**

There is power in the occult, but it is no match for Jesus’ name. The power you have in Christ does not work like a magic spell but works by taking God at His word. If you have dabbled in the occult, confess, and find forgiveness in Jesus’ name.

### **Pray with Us**

We praise you, Lord, as a powerful Creator, the source of truth and grace, and the giver of true freedom. Give us courage and discernment to follow you wholeheartedly, with commitment and strong faith.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/20/20

# Turning from Conflict

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 4:26–32**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.26%E2%80%9332)

26“In your anger do not sin”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4%3A26%E2%80%9332&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-29299a" \o "See footnote a)]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27and do not give the devil a foothold. 28Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 4:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+4%3A26%E2%80%9332&version=NIV#en-NIV-29299) Psalm 4:4 (see Septuagint)

Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. [Ephesians 4:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.26)

In his graveside tribute to a famous Dutch scientist, Albert Einstein didn’t mention their scientific disputes. Instead, he recalled the “never-failing kindness” of Hendrik A. Lorentz, a beloved physicist known for his easy manner and fair treatment of others. “Everyone followed him gladly,” Einstein said, “for they felt he never set out to dominate but always simply to be of use.”

Lorentz inspired scientists to put aside political prejudice and work together, especially after World War I. “Even before the war was over,” Einstein said of his fellow Nobel Prize winner, “[Lorentz] devoted himself to the work of reconciliation.”

Working for reconciliation should be the goal of everyone in the church as well. True, some conflict is inevitable. Yet we must do our part to work for peaceful resolutions. Paul wrote, “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” ([Ephesians 4:26](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.26)). To grow together, the apostle advised, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs” (v. 29).

Finally, said Paul, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (vv. 31–32). Turning from conflict whenever we are able helps build God’s church. In this, indeed, we honor Him.

By:  [Patricia Raybon](https://odb.org/author/patriciaraybon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can God help us deal with conflict? To honor Him and your church, what conflict should you let go?

Loving God, when I face conflict, remind my heart to turn my anger over to You.

#### **Insight**

As believers in Christ, Paul tells us we’re to live differently from non-believers. Our lives are to be holy—set apart and devoted to God ([Ephesians 4:20–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%204.20%E2%80%9324)). Our speech is to be characterized by words that are truthful and that help, edify, build up, encourage, and benefit others (vv. 25, 29). Through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we’ll put away unwholesome and abusive language, along with bitter, angry, harsh, slanderous, or malicious words (vv. 29–31). How we forgive others is the defining virtue of the believers in Jesus. We’re to forgive as God has forgiven us (v. 32; [Colossians 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Col%203.13)). The evidence that we’re forgiven by the Father is when we’re willing to forgive others. The forgiven believer in Jesus is a forgiving person ([Matthew 18:21–35](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2018.21%E2%80%9335); [Luke 7:36–50](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%207.36%E2%80%9350)).

Visit [ChristianUniversity.org/ML502](https://ChristianUniversity.org/ML502) to learn more about dealing with conflict.

# God Calling – 11/20/20

# Mysteries

Your Hope is in the Lord. More and more set your hopes on Me. Know that whatever the future may hold it will hold more and more of Me. It cannot but be glad and full of Joy.  So in Heaven, or on earth, wherever you may be, your way must be truly one of delight.

Do not try to find answers to the mysteries of the world.  Learn to know Me more and more, and in that Knowledge you will have all the answers you need here, and when you see Me Face to Face, in that purely Spiritual world, you will find no need to ask.  There again all your answers will be in Me.

Remember, I was the answer in time to all man's questions about My Father and His Laws. Know no theology. Know Me. I was the Word of God. All you need to know about God you know in Me. If a man knows me not, all your explanations will fall on an unresponsive heart.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.  Psalm 43:5

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/21/20

# “It is Finished!”



I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. —[John 17:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+17%3A4)

The death of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment in history of the very mind and intent of God. There is no place for seeing Jesus Christ as a martyr. His death was not something that happened to Him— something that might have been prevented. His death was the very reason He came.

Never build your case for forgiveness on the idea that God is our Father and He will forgive us because He loves us. That contradicts the revealed truth of God in Jesus Christ. It makes the Cross unnecessary, and the redemption “much ado about nothing.” God forgives sin only because of the death of Christ. God could forgive people in no other way than by the death of His Son, and Jesus is exalted as Savior because of His death. “We see Jesus…for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor…” ([Hebrews 2:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2:9)). The greatest note of triumph ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was that sounded on the Cross of Christ— “It is finished!” ([John 19:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19:30)). That is the final word in the redemption of humankind.

Anything that lessens or completely obliterates the holiness of God, through a false view of His love, contradicts the truth of God as revealed by Jesus Christ. Never allow yourself to believe that Jesus Christ stands with us, and against God, out of pity and compassion, or that He became a curse for us out of sympathy for us. Jesus Christ became a curse for us by divine decree. Our part in realizing the tremendous meaning of His curse is the conviction of sin. Conviction is given to us as a gift of shame and repentance; it is the great mercy of God. Jesus Christ hates the sin in people, and Calvary is the measure of His hatred.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 11/21/20

**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**—[JOHN 6:37.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.37)

It shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.—I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.—I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.

[Exo. 22:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.22.html" \l "Exod.22.27). -[Lev. 26:44](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.26.html" \l "Lev.26.44). -[Ezek. 16:60](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.60).[Isa. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.1.html" \l "Isa.1.18). -[Isa. 55:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.7). -[Luke 23:42,43](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.42).[Isa. 42:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.42.html" \l "Isa.42.3).

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit.” **[Ephesians 4:30](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.30)**

All that the believer has must come from Christ, but it comes solely through the channel of the Spirit of grace. Moreover, as all blessings thus flow to you through the Holy Spirit, so also no good thing can come out of you in holy thought, devout worship, or gracious act, apart from the sanctifying operation of the same Spirit. Even if the good seed be sown in you, yet it lies dormant except he worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Do you desire to speak for Jesus—how can you unless the Holy Ghost touch your tongue? Do you desire to pray? Alas! what dull work it is unless the Spirit maketh intercession for you! Do you desire to subdue sin? Would you be holy? Would you imitate your Master? Do you desire to rise to superlative heights of spirituality? Are you wanting to be made like the angels of God, full of zeal and ardour for the Master’s cause? You cannot without the Spirit—“Without me ye can do nothing.” O branch of the vine, thou canst have no fruit without the sap! O child of God, thou hast no life within thee apart from the life which God gives thee through his Spirit! Then let us not grieve him or provoke him to anger by our sin. Let us not quench him in one of his faintest motions in our soul; let us foster every suggestion, and be ready to obey every prompting. If the Holy Spirit be indeed so mighty, let us attempt nothing without him; let us begin no project, and carry on no enterprise, and conclude no transaction, without imploring his blessing. Let us do him the due homage of feeling our entire weakness apart from him, and then depending alone upon him, having this for our prayer, “Open thou my heart and my whole being to thine incoming, and uphold me with thy free Spirit when I shall have received that Spirit in my inward parts.”

# Word Live – 11/21/20

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# Scripture Union – 11/21/20

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

# Today in the Word – 11/21/20

# Hard Pressed

**Read:** [**Acts 19:21–20:12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+19%3a21%e2%80%9320%3a12)

21After all this had happened, Paul decided[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+19%3a21%e2%80%9320%3a12#fen-NIV-27607a)] to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” 22He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

### **The Riot in Ephesus**

23About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. 25He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. 26And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. 27There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

28When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. 30Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. 34But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

35The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? 36Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. 37You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. 38If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. 39If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. 40As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” 41After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

### **Through Macedonia and Greece**

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. 2He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

### **Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas**

7On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” 11Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 19:21](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+19%3a21%e2%80%9320%3a12#en-NIV-27607) Or decided in the Spirit

Doing the right thing, especially when it is a God-centered thing, is often met by opposition. While on his deathbed, evangelist John Wesley wrote a letter of encouragement to William Wilberforce, a British politician who led the movement to abolish the slave trade. “Unless God raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils,” Wesley warned. “But if God be for you, who can be against you?”

We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed. 2 Corinthians 4:8

When the gospel spreads through a culture, it will disrupt the sinful structures in it. The growing number of believers in Ephesus were disturbing to those whose income was tied to idolatry. Demetrius, a silversmith, stirred this discontent into a near-riot by appealing to a mixture of religion, local pride, and greed. The tradesmen seized Paul’s traveling companions and took them to the theater, where public meetings took place. It is estimated that the theater could seat 25,000 people. While Paul wanted to address the mob personally, his friends persuaded him not to enter the theater. The clerk who acted as the executive administrator of the city’s official assembly quieted the mob by warning that the Romans could charge them with rioting.

Paul planned to return to Jerusalem and then go to Rome, passing through Macedonia and Achaia along the way (Acts 19:21). His itinerary was interrupted because of plots against him (Acts 20:3). During a weeklong stay at Troas, Paul’s extended message combined with the stuffiness of the upper room where they were meeting had an unfortunate result. Eutychus, one of those who accompanied him from Ephesus, dozed off and fell out the window to his death! Through the power of Christ, Paul restored the man to life.

**Apply the Word**

Are you going through difficult times because of your faith in Jesus? Don’t be surprised if your efforts to spread the gospel bring opposition or unexpected hardship. Remember that God will carry you through. If God is for you, who can be against you?

### **Pray with Us**

In response to today’s teaching from Acts 19 and 20, let’s pray for the determination to always rely on God no matter the situation. Lord, help us remember that with you on our side we can overcome anything!

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/21/20

# Instruments of Peace

 **Read:** [**James 3:13–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.13%E2%80%9318)

### **Two Kinds of Wisdom**

13Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. [James 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.18)

When World War I erupted in 1914, British statesman Sir Edward Grey declared, “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.” Grey was right. When the “war to end all wars” finally ended, some 20 million had been killed (10 million of them civilians) and another 21 million injured.

While not on the same scale or magnitude, devastation can also occur in our personal lives. Our home, workplace, church, or neighborhood can also be shrouded by the dark specter of conflict. This is one of the reasons God calls us to be difference-makers in the world. But to do so we must rely on His wisdom. The apostle James wrote, “The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness” ([James 3:17–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.17%E2%80%9318)).

The role of peacemaker is significant because of its harvest. The word righteousness means “right standing” or “right relationship.” Peacemakers can help restore relationships. No wonder Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” ([Matthew 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%205.9)). His children, relying on His wisdom, become instruments of His peace where it’s needed most.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what personal conflicts do you need the light of God’s wisdom? How can His peace enable you to be a peacemaker when people around you choose to fight?

Father, Your light penetrates the deepest darkness and Your peace calms the most troubled heart. Help me know Your wisdom and peace and carry it to others in their struggles as well.

Listen to Discover the Word, “Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?” at [DiscoverTheWord.org/series/why-can’t-we-all-just-get-along/.](https://DiscoverTheWord.org/series/why-can’t-we-all-just-get-along/)

#### **Insight**

[James 3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203) demonstrates why the label “the Proverbs of the New Testament” fits the book of James. For example, both books share the common themes of speech and wisdom. [James 3:5–12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.5%E2%80%9312) describes the power of the tongue and its potential for destruction (see [Proverbs 10:19–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%2010.19%E2%80%9320), [31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%2010.31); [15:2](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%2015.2), [4](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%2015.4)).

[James 3:13–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%203.13%E2%80%9318) turns the readers’ attention to wisdom and matters of the heart: “But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth” (v. 14). The characteristics of earthly or demonic “wisdom” in verses 15–16—envy, selfish ambition, disorder, evil practices—are contrasted with the virtuous qualities of true wisdom from God, which is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, merciful, impartial, and sincere (v. 17). The importance of wisdom can also be seen in [Proverbs 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Prov%201.7); [3:13–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%203.13%E2%80%9318); [4:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%204.6%E2%80%937); [14:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%2014.8); and [29:11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Proverbs%2029.11).

# God Calling – 11/21/20

# Radiate Joy

Not only must you rejoice, but your Joy must be made manifest.  "Known unto all men."  A candle must not be set under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all who are in the house.

Men must see and know your Joy, and seeing it, know, without any doubt, that it springs from trust in Me, from living with Me.

The hard dull way of resignation is not My Way.  When I entered Jerusalem, knowing well that scorn and reviling and death awaited Me, it was with cries of Hosanna, and with a triumphal procession.  Not just a few "Lost Cause" followers creeping with Me into the city.  There was no note of sadness in My Last Supper Talk with My disciples, and "when we had sung an hymn" we went out unto the Mount of Olives.

So trust, so conquer, so joy.  Love colors the way. Love takes the sting out of the wind of adversity.

Love. Love. Love of Me. The consciousness of My Presence, and that of My Father, we are one, and He - God - is Love.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.  Matthew 5:16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/22/20

# Shallow and Profound



Whether you eat or drink, or 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)

Beware of allowing yourself to think that the shallow aspects of life are not ordained by God; they are ordained by Him equally as much as the profound. We sometimes refuse to be shallow, not out of our deep devotion to God but because we wish to impress other people with the fact that we are not shallow. This is a sure sign of spiritual pride. We must be careful, for this is how contempt for others is produced in our lives. And it causes us to be a walking rebuke to other people because they are more shallow than we are. Beware of posing as a profound person— God became a baby.

To be shallow is not a sign of being sinful, nor is shallowness an indication that there is no depth to your life at all— the ocean has a shore. Even the shallow things of life, such as eating and drinking, walking and talking, are ordained by God. These are all things our Lord did. He did them as the Son of God, and He said, “A disciple is not above his teacher…” ([Matthew 10:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+10:24)).

We are safeguarded by the shallow things of life. We have to live the surface, commonsense life in a commonsense way. Then when God gives us the deeper things, they are obviously separated from the shallow concerns. Never show the depth of your life to anyone but God. We are so nauseatingly serious, so desperately interested in our own character and reputation, we refuse to behave like Christians in the shallow concerns of life.

Make a determination to take no one seriously except God. You may find that the first person you must be the most critical with, as being the greatest fraud you have ever known, is yourself.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Crises reveal character. When we are put to the test the hidden resources of our character are revealed exactly.  Disciples Indeed, 393 R

# CCEL – 11/22/20

Praying in the Holy Ghost.—[JUDE 20.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jude.1.html" \l "Jude.1.20)

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—We . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

The Spirit . . . helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.—This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.—When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication.

[John 4:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.24). -[Eph. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.18).[Matt. 26:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html" \l "Matt.26.39).[Rom. 8:26,27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.26). -[I John 5:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.14). -[John 16:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.13).[Eph. 6:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.6.html" \l "Eph.6.18).

“Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.” [Hosea 12:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hos.12.html" \l "Hos.12.12)

Jacob, while expostulating with Laban, thus describes his own toil, “This twenty years have I been with thee. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee: I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.” Even more toilsome than this was the life of our Saviour here below. He watched over all his sheep till he gave in as his last account, “Of all those whom thou hast given me I have lost none.” His hair was wet with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. Sleep departed from his eyes, for all night he was in prayer wrestling for his people. One night Peter must be pleaded for; anon, another claims his tearful intercession. No shepherd sitting beneath the cold skies, looking up to the stars, could ever utter such complaints because of the hardness of his toil as Jesus Christ might have brought, if he had chosen to do so, because of the sternness of his service in order to procure his spouse —

“Cold mountains and the midnight air,

Witnessed the fervour of his prayer;

The desert his temptations knew,

His conflict and his victory too.”

It is sweet to dwell upon the spiritual parallel of Laban having required all the sheep at Jacob’s hand. If they were torn of beasts, Jacob must make it good; if any of them died, he must stand as surety for the whole. Was not the toil of Jesus for his Church the toil of one who was under suretiship obligations to bring every believing one safe to the hand of him who had committed them to his charge? Look upon toiling Jacob, and you see a representation of him of whom we read, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.”

# Word Live – 11/22/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/22/20

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# Today in the Word – 11/22/20

# A Shepherd of the Flock

**Read:** [**Acts 20:13–36**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3a13%e2%80%9336)

### **Paul’s Farewell to the Ephesian Elders**

13We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 16Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

17From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 20You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

25“Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3a13%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-27655a)] which he bought with his own blood.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3a13%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-27655b)] 29I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. 34You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

36When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 20:28](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3a13%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-27655) Many manuscripts of the Lord
2. [Acts 20:28](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3a13%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-27655) Or with the blood of his own Son.

Pastors are called many things. Some people address them as reverend, preacher, or even just brother. The term pastor comes from the Latin word for shepherd. Paul used this term to describe the work of the church leaders in Ephesus (Acts 20:28). Hoping to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, the apostle stopped at Miletus and sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. While he did not know exactly what lay ahead, he was certain that “prison and hardships” would be in his future (v. 23).

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace. Acts 20:32

Paul’s tone was grave because he knew he would not see these leaders again. He began by reminding them of his own pattern of life and ministry. The heart of his message was a charge to “keep watch” (v. 28). Like ordinary shepherds, pastors must act as guardians over God’s flock. The threat from false teaching can come from both outside and inside the church. Personal ambition is a major motive for false teachers that arise within the church. They “distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them” (v. 30). False teachers are often motivated by greed (v. 33). They enrich themselves at the expense of God’s people. Using language reminiscent of the prophet Samuel’s farewell address in 1 Samuel 12:1–5, Paul urged the church’s leaders to follow his example instead.

The apostle’s warning shows that one of the primary functions of the church’s leaders is to teach God’s Word. This is why 1 Timothy 3:2 says anyone who serves as an overseer must be “able to teach.”

**Apply the Word**

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul says that pastors whose ministry is teaching are Christ’s gift to the church. Do you pray for your pastor? Pastors need wisdom from God’s Word and the courage to speak the truth. Maybe you can write a note or send an email to offer your encouragement and express appreciation for their ministry.

### **Pray with Us**

We invite you to use today’s passage as a reminder to pray for your pastor and ministry leaders. Jesus, thank you for raising shepherds in the church! We ask that you protect them and guide them as they lead others.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/22/20

# An Open, Generous Heart

 **Read:** [**1 Timothy 6:17–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%206.17%E2%80%9319)

17Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Be generous and willing to share. [1 Timothy 6:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%206.18)

After Vicki’s old car broke down with no option for repair, she started scraping together money for another vehicle. Chris, a frequent customer of the restaurant where Vicki works at the drive-thru window, one day heard her mention she needed a car. “I couldn’t stop thinking about it,” Chris said. “I [had] to do something.” So he bought his son’s used car (his son had just put it up for sale), shined it up, and handed Vicki the keys. Vicki was shocked. “Who . . . does that?” she said in amazement and gratitude.

The Scriptures call us to live with open hands, giving freely as we can—providing what’s truly best for those in need. As Paul says: “Command [those who are rich] to do good, to be rich in good deeds” ([1 Timothy 6:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%206.18)). We don’t merely perform a benevolent act here or there, but rather live out a cheerful spirit of giving. Big-heartedness is our normal way of life. “Be generous and willing to share,” we’re told (v. 18).

As we live with an open, generous heart, we don’t need to fear running out of what we need. Rather, the Bible tells us that in our compassionate generosity, we’re taking “hold of [true] life” (v. 19). With God, genuine living means loosening our grip on what we have and giving to others freely.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When do you struggle the most with being generous? How does God’s generous heart encourage you to give more freely?

I want to hold what I have loosely, God. I want to be generous, like You. Transform my heart and help me to give freely.

#### **Insight**

In 1 Timothy and throughout the Bible, God’s people are encouraged to give generously (6:18). We’re told that when we do, we’re blessed in return. [Deuteronomy 15:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Deut%2015.10) states, “Give generously . . . without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.” In Proverbs we read, “The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor” (22:9). Why give? Because God “richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” ([1 Timothy 6:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Tim%206.17)). As James declares, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” ([James 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%201.17)). The apostle Paul, who also wrote the letters to Timothy, offers this guideline for giving: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” ([2 Corinthians 9:7](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Cor%209.7)).

# God Calling – 11/22/20

# Only Love Lasts

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a a tinkling cymbal.  1 Corinthians 13:1

SEE that only Love tells.  Only what is done in Love lasts, for God is Love, and only the work of God remains.

The fame of the world, the applause given to the one who speaks with the tongues of men and of angels, who attracts admiration and compels attention, it is all given to what is passing, is really worthless, if it lacks that God-quality, Love.

Think how a smile, or word of Love, goes winged on its way, a God-Power, simple though it may seem, while the mighty words of an orator can fall fruitless to the ground.  The test of all true work and words is - are they inspired by Love?

If man only saw how vain is so much of his activity! So much work done in My Name is not acknowledged by Me. As for Love. Turn out from your hearts and lives all that is not loving, so shall ye bear much fruit, and by this shall all men know ye are My disciples, because ye have Love one toward another.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.  1 Corinthians 13:13

# My Utmost for His Highest – 11/23/20

# The Distraction of Contempt

# The Distraction of Contempt

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us! For we are exceedingly filled with contempt. —[Psalm 123:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Psalm+123%3A3)

What we must beware of is not damage to our belief in God but damage to our Christian disposition or state of mind. “Take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously” ([Malachi 2:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+2:16)). Our state of mind is powerful in its effects. It can be the enemy that penetrates right into our soul and distracts our mind from God. There are certain attitudes we should never dare to indulge. If we do, we will find they have distracted us from faith in God. Until we get back into a quiet mood before Him, our faith is of no value, and our confidence in the flesh and in human ingenuity is what rules our lives.

Beware of “the cares of this world…” ([Mark 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+4:19)). They are the very things that produce the wrong attitudes in our soul. It is incredible what enormous power there is in simple things to distract our attention away from God. Refuse to be swamped by “the cares of this world.”

Another thing that distracts us is our passion for vindication. St. Augustine prayed, “O Lord, deliver me from this lust of always vindicating myself.” Such a need for constant vindication destroys our soul’s faith in God. Don’t say, “I must explain myself,” or, “I must get people to understand.” Our Lord never explained anything— He left the misunderstandings or misconceptions of others to correct themselves.

When we discern that other people are not growing spiritually and allow that discernment to turn to criticism, we block our fellowship with God. God never gives us discernment so that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

There is nothing, naturally speaking, that makes us lose heart quicker than decay—the decay of bodily beauty, of natural life, of friendship, of associations, all these things make a man lose heart; but Paul says when we are trusting in Jesus Christ these things do not find us discouraged, light comes through them.  
The Place of Help

# CCEL – 11/23/20

Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.—[PROV. 1:33.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.1.html" \l "Prov.1.33)

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.—He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Your life is hid with Christ in God.—He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.—Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.—God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear.

Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.—Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.—I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

[Psa. 90:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.1). -[Psa. 91:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.1). -[Psa. 91:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.91.html" \l "Ps.91.4).[Col. 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.3). -[Zech. 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.2.html" \l "Zech.2.8). -[Exo. 14:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.14.html" \l "Exod.14.13). -[Psa. 46:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.46.html" \l "Ps.46.1).[Matt. 14:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.14.html" \l "Matt.14.27). -[Luke 24:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.38). -[II Tim. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.1.html" \l "iiTim.1.12).

“Fellowship with him.” [1 John 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.6)

When we were united by faith to Christ, we were brought into such complete fellowship with him, that we were made one with him, and his interests and ours became mutual and identical. We have fellowship with Christ in his love. What he loves we love. He loves the saints—so do we. He loves sinners—so do we. He loves the poor perishing race of man, and pants to see earth’s deserts transformed into the garden of the Lord—so do we. We have fellowship with him in his desires. He desires the glory of God—we also labour for the same. He desires that the saints may be with him where he is—we desire to be with him there too. He desires to drive out sin—behold we fight under his banner. He desires that his Father’s name may be loved and adored by all his creatures—we pray daily, “Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven.” We have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. We are not nailed to the cross, nor do we die a cruel death, but when he is reproached, we are reproached; and a very sweet thing it is to be blamed for his sake, to be despised for following the Master, to have the world against us. The disciple should not be above his Lord. In our measure we commune with him in his labours, ministering to men by the word of truth and by deeds of love. Our meat and our drink, like his, is to do the will of him who hath sent us and to finish his work. We have also fellowship with Christ in his joys. We are happy in his happiness, we rejoice in his exaltation. Have you ever tasted that joy, believer? There is no purer or more thrilling delight to be known this side heaven than that of having Christ’s joy fulfilled in us, that our joy may be full. His glory awaits us to complete our fellowship, for his Church shall sit with him upon his throne, as his well-beloved bride and queen.

# Word Live – 11/23/20

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

# Scripture Union – 11/23/20

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# Today in the Word – 11/23/20

# Bound in Jerusalem

**Read:** [**Acts 21:1–40**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+21%3a1%e2%80%9340)

### **On to Jerusalem**

21 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. 3After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

7We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. 8Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. 9He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

12When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

15After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

### **Paul’s Arrival at Jerusalem**

17When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. 18The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. 19Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. 21They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. 22What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, 23so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. 24Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. 25As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

26The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

### **Paul Arrested**

27When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, 28shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.” 29(They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

30The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. 31While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. 34Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. 35When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Get rid of him!”

### **Paul Speaks to the Crowd**

37As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?”

“Do you speak Greek?” he replied. 38“Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the wilderness some time ago?”

39Paul answered, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.”

40After receiving the commander’s permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+21%3a1%e2%80%9340#fen-NIV-27705a)]:

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Acts 21:40](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+21%3a1%e2%80%9340#en-NIV-27705) Or possibly Hebrew; also in 22:2

Paul was aware of what the future held for him, but still, he kept on going. The same was true of Jesus who told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem to be killed and rise again on the third day, Simon Peter objected. In Matthew 16:22, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 21:13

When Luke and his team learned that Paul would be arrested and handed over to the Gentiles in Jerusalem, they too were upset (vv. 11–12). Paul’s fate was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit during a week-long stopover at Tyre and confirmed by the prophetic message of Agabus in Caesarea (v. 11). Although verse 4 sounds as if it was the Holy Spirit telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem, it was the Spirit who initially directed Paul to make the journey (Acts 20:22). The Holy Spirit did not object to Paul’s trip. It was Paul’s friends who objected because of what the Spirit revealed about its outcome. When they realized that Paul, like Christ, was determined to follow through even at the cost of his life, they recognized that this was God’s will (v. 14).

It did not take long before those who opposed the gospel of grace that Paul preached tried to kill him. They spread lies, saying Paul had brought Gentiles into the court of the temple where only Jews were allowed. They seized him, dragged him into the outer court of the temple precinct, and began to beat him to death. The commander of the Roman troops, stationed at the fortress adjacent to the temple, heard about the disturbance, saved Paul’s life by arresting him (v. 33).

**Apply the Word**

Sometimes what seems like misfortune is God’s way of furthering His plan. While today’s reading has a somber tone, it should be an encouragement for us to know that we can trust God with our future. Whatever happens today, remember that God has got your back!

### **Pray with Us**

Father, we come to you today with a prayer of thanksgiving for ordering all the steps of our life. Thank you for your promise never to leave us or forsake us. Help us to believe your promises and rest in them.

## BY Dr. John Koessler

# Our Daily Bread – 11/23/20

# Space for Me

 **Read:** [**Mark 3:13–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.13%E2%80%9319)

### **Jesus Appoints the Twelve**

13Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14He appointed twelve[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+3%3A13%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24303a)] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15and to have authority to drive out demons. 16These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), 17James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), 18Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Mark 3:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+3%3A13%E2%80%9319&version=NIV#en-NIV-24303) Some manuscripts twelve—designating them apostles—

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. [Mark 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.13)

He was an aging military veteran, rough-edged and given to even rougher language. One day a friend cared enough about him to inquire about his spiritual beliefs. The man’s dismissive response came quickly: “God doesn’t have space for someone like me.”

Perhaps that was just part of his “tough-guy” act, but his words couldn’t be further from the truth! God creates space especially for the rough, the guilt-ridden, and the excluded to belong and thrive in His community. This was obvious from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, when He made some surprising choices for His disciples. First, He chose several fishermen from Galilee—the “wrong side of the tracks” from the perspective of those in Jerusalem. He also selected a tax collector, Matthew, whose profession included extorting from his oppressed countrymen. Then, for good measure, Jesus invited the “other” Simon—“the Zealot” ([Mark 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.18)).

We don’t know much about this Simon (he isn’t Simon Peter), but we do know about the Zealots. They hated traitors like Matthew, who got rich by collaborating with the despised Romans. Yet with divine irony, Jesus chose Simon along with Matthew, brought them together, and blended them into His team.

Don’t write anyone off as too “bad” for Jesus. After all, He said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” ([Luke 5:32](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%205.32)). He has plenty of space for the tough cases—people like you and me.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Who do you know that you think is unlikely to give their life to Jesus? How might you invite them to consider who Christ is and the space He has for them?

Dear Father, thank You that salvation is available to anyone who puts their faith in Jesus.

#### **Insight**

Jesus prayerfully and selectively appointed twelve men whom He designated as apostles ([Luke 6:12–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%206.12%E2%80%9318)) for two specific purposes: to “be with him” and “to send them out to preach” ([Mark 3:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.14)). The Greek word apóstolos means, “one who is sent, an ambassador.”

The Gospels tell of the conversion stories for some of them: Simon Peter and Andrew (sons of John) and James and John (sons of Zebedee) were fishermen ([Matthew 4:18–22](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%204.18%E2%80%9322); [Mark 1:16–20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%201.16%E2%80%9320); [Luke 5:1–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%205.1%E2%80%9311); [John 1:35-42](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.35-42)). Philip and Nathanael (scholars say Nathanael is the same person as Bartholomew), were from the fishing town of Bethsaida and were likely fishermen as well ([John 1:43–51](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%201.43%E2%80%9351)). Matthew [Levi] was a tax-collector from Capernaum ([Mark 2:1](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%202.1), [14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%202.14); [Luke 5:27–28](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%205.27%E2%80%9328)). We don’t know the conversion stories of the others: Thomas ([John 20:24–25](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.24%E2%80%9325)); James, son of Alphaeus ([Mark 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Mark%203.18)); Thaddaeus (scholars equate him with Judas son of James, 3:18; [Luke 6:16](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%206.16)); Simon the Zealot ([Luke 6:15](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%206.15); [Acts 1:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%201.13)); and Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who betrayed Jesus ([John 6:71](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%206.71)).

# God Calling – 11/23/20

# Earth's Furies

In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.  John 16:33

Then you may ask why have you, My children, to have tribulation if I have overcome the world.

My overcoming was never, you know, for Myself, but for you, for My children. Each temptation, each difficulty, I overcame as it presented itself.

The powers of evil were strained to their utmost to devise means to break Me.  They failed, but how they failed was known only to Me, and to My Father, who could read My undaunted spirit.  The world, even My own followers, would see a Lost Cause. Reviled, spat upon, scourged, they would deem Me conquered.  How could they know My Spirit was free, unbroken, unharmed?

And so, as I had come to show man God, I must show him God unconquered, unharmed, untouched by evil and its power. Man could not see My Spirit untouched, risen above these earth furies and hates, into the Secret Place of the Father. But man could see My Risen Body and learn by that, that even the last attempt of man had been powerless to touch Me.

Take heart from that, for you must share My tribulations. If evil is to leave you unchallenged you must be evil.  If evil challenges you, if trials press sore,  it is because you are on My side, and, as My friends, exposed to the hate of evil.

But be of good cheer.  You walk with Me.  I conquered evil at every point, though man could only see it proved beyond all doubt when I rose from the dead. And in My conquering Power you walk unharmed today.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8