# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/10/19

# Missionary Weapons (1)



When you were under the fig tree, I saw you. —[John 1:48](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+1%3A48)

**Worshiping in Everyday Occasions**. We presume that we would be ready for battle if confronted with a great crisis, but it is not the crisis that builds something within us— it simply reveals what we are made of already. Do you find yourself saying, “If God calls me to battle, of course I will rise to the occasion”? Yet you won’t rise to the occasion unless you have done so on God’s training ground. If you are not doing the task that is closest to you now, which God has engineered into your life, when the crisis comes, instead of being fit for battle, you will be revealed as being unfit. Crises always reveal a person’s true character.

A private relationship of worshiping God is the greatest essential element of spiritual fitness. The time will come, as Nathanael experienced in this passage, that a private “fig-tree” life will no longer be possible. Everything will be out in the open, and you will find yourself to be of no value there if you have not been worshiping in everyday occasions in your own home. If your worship is right in your private relationship with God, then when He sets you free, you will be ready. It is in the unseen life, which only God saw, that you have become perfectly fit. And when the strain of the crisis comes, you can be relied upon by God.

Are you saying, “But I can’t be expected to live a sanctified life in my present circumstances; I have no time for prayer or Bible study right now; besides, my opportunity for battle hasn’t come yet, but when it does, of course I will be ready”? No, you will not. If you have not been worshiping in everyday occasions, when you get involved in God’s work, you will not only be useless yourself but also a hindrance to those around you.

God’s training ground, where the missionary weapons are found, is the hidden, personal, worshiping life of the saint.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Wherever the providence of God may dump us down, in a slum, in a shop, in the desert, we have to labour along the line of His direction. Never allow this thought—“I am of no use where I am,” because you certainly can be of no use where you are not! Wherever He has engineered your circumstances, pray. So Send I You, 1325 L

# CCEL – 9/10/19

**I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.**—[JER. 32:39.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.32.html" \l "Jer.32.39)

A new heart . . . will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you.—Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, . . . endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

[Ezek. 36:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.36.html" \l "Ezek.36.26). -[Psa. 25:8-10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.25.html" \l "Ps.25.8).[John 17:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.17.html" \l "John.17.21).[Eph. 4:1-6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.1).

“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.” **[Mark 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.3.html" \l "Mark.3.13)**

Here was sovereignty. Impatient spirits may fret and fume, because they are not called to the highest places in the ministry; but reader be it thine to rejoice that Jesus calleth whom he wills. If he shall leave me to be a doorkeeper in his house, I will cheerfully bless him for his grace in permitting me to do anything in his service. The call of Christ’s servants comes from above. Jesus stands on the mountain, evermore above the world in holiness, earnestness, love and power. Those whom he calls must go up the mountain to him, they must seek to rise to his level by living in constant communion with him. They may not be able to mount to classic honours, or attain scholastic eminence, but they must like Moses go up into the mount of God and have familiar intercourse with the unseen God, or they will never be fitted to proclaim the gospel of peace. Jesus went apart to hold high fellowship with the Father, and we must enter into the same divine companionship if we would bless our fellowmen. No wonder that the apostles were clothed with power when they came down fresh from the mountain where Jesus was. This morning we must endeavour to ascend the mount of communion, that there we may be ordained to the lifework for which we are set apart. Let us not see the face of man today till we have seen Jesus. Time spent with him is laid out at blessed interest. We too shall cast out devils and work wonders if we go down into the world girded with that divine energy which Christ alone can give. It is of no use going to the Lord’s battle till we are armed with heavenly weapons. We must see Jesus, this is essential. At the mercy-seat we will linger till he shall manifest himself unto us as he doth not unto the world, and until we can truthfully say, “We were with him in the Holy Mount.”

# Word Live – 9/10/19

# Straight to the heart

## Prepare

‘Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name’ ([Psalm 86:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+86%3A11&version=NIV)).



## Bible passage: Nehemiah 7:73b – 8:12

##### Ezra Reads the Law

73  ...When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns,

#### Nehemiah 8

1 all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel.

2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

7 The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a sacred day. Do not grieve."

12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

## Explore

**Place of atonement**

Throughout Israel’s history, Jerusalem has been not only a structure, but a symbol. It was God’s chosen dwelling place ([Deuteronomy 12:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+12%3A11&version=NIV)). Its Temple was the only place where God’s people could receive atonement for their sins. It was the physical representation of God’s relationship with his people. It is hardly surprising, then, that God’s plan for it wasn’t only to rebuild the walls, but to ‘rebuild’ his people within them.

**Blueprint**

In Nehemiah God had chosen a man who understood that secure walls were worthless if the people’s hearts were far from God. Just a few days after the reconstruction was finished, Ezra read to all the people the blueprint for their lives.

There are many cracks in the wall of our society today. Many structures have been eroded or destroyed, and it is right that we as Christians act to rebuild those walls and meet our neighbours’ physical needs. But if we focus solely on the outward problems without bringing spiritual truth, we will be guilty of simply creating ‘whitewashed tombs’ ([Matthew 23:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23%3A27&version=NIV)) – lovely on the outside, but dead and decaying within.

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

Is God convicting you of any sin as you remember his law? Confess it to him now, but don’t forget that our confession can and should turn quickly to rejoicing as we receive the forgiveness Christ bought for us on the cross.

## Deeper Bible study

Most research into Scripture engagement tends to focus on individuals or small groups. In contrast, relatively little study has focused on congregational interaction with Scripture. Despite this gap in our empirical knowledge, we can learn much from Scripture itself. Ezra provides a model for evaluating our worship involvement. Both in summary (v 3) and in detail (vs 4–12), Ezra’s open-air congregation interacts in five key ways with the public reading and exposition of Scripture.

First, they are in step. The phrase ‘all the people’ occurs 10 times. The congregation stands before God’s Word, not as a series of individuals but as a community. The people anticipate Paul’s metaphor of the church as a body ([1 Cor 12:12–27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Cor+12%3A12%E2%80%9327&version=NIV)). Second, the people respond on cue to Ezra’s call to worship (v 6). Their double ‘Amen’ says they are raring to go. Third, the people are all ears as Scripture is read and expounded (v 3). Did Jesus have them in mind when urging us to consider carefully how we listen? ([Luke 8:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+8%3A18&version=NIV)) Fourth, the people are awestruck by the Lord’s presence in their midst (v 6). As in Corinth centuries later, any stranger visiting the Water Gate would feel compelled to exclaim ‘God is really among you!’ ([1 Cor 14:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Cor+14%3A25&version=NIV)) Fifth, heartstrings are pulled. People weep at their failure to meet the high standards of Scripture (v 9). Their lamentation turns into joy, however, when Nehemiah reminds them that the Torah communicates grace as well as law (v 10).

How will you respond next Sunday in church, as God’s Word is read and explained? In step with others? On cue and raring to go? Listening attentively to what God is saying? Awestruck by the glory of God? Stirred to weep for your sins and to rejoice in God’s grace?

‘Expectancy should mark our approach to the reading of God’s Word, and responsiveness our leaving it to enter our daily lives, if ever it is to be allowed to accomplish its primary purpose.’1

1 HGM Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, Word Books, 1985, p297

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

# Today in the Word – 9/10/19

# Lament as Grief

### Read: Psalm 13[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+13%e2%80%9314#fen-NIV-14076a)]

#### For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
    How long will you hide your face from me?  
2How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
    and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
    How long will my enemy triumph over me?

3Look on me and answer, Lord my God.  
    Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
4and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”  
    and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

5But I trust in your unfailing love;  
    my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
6I will sing the Lord’s praise,  
    for he has been good to me.

### Psalm 14

#### For the director of music. Of David.

1The fool[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+13%e2%80%9314#fen-NIV-14082b)] says in his heart,  
    “There is no God.”  
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;  
    there is no one who does good.

2The Lord looks down from heaven  
    on all mankind  
to see if there are any who understand,  
    any who seek God.  
3All have turned away, all have become corrupt;  
    there is no one who does good,  
    not even one.

4Do all these evildoers know nothing?

They devour my people as though eating bread;  
    they never call on the Lord.  
5But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,  
    for God is present in the company of the righteous.  
6You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,  
    but the Lord is their refuge.

7Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
    When the Lord restores his people,  
    let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 13:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+13%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-14076) In Hebrew texts 13:1-6 is numbered 13:2-6.
2. [Psalm 14:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+13%e2%80%9314#en-NIV-14082) The Hebrew words rendered fool in Psalms denote one who is morally deficient.

In 2014, psychologists from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville conducted an experiment with undergraduate students. They put each student in a room with no distractions. Then they told them that, if they wanted to, they could push a button and shock themselves. The results were shocking! Sixty-seven percent of the men and 25 percent of the women shocked themselves rather than sit quietly.

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. Psalm 13:5

Many people feel it is hard to be alone and even harder to be abandoned. David began this lament asking four times, “How long?” David wanted reassurance that God still cared. He wanted to see God act in his defense. He was surrounded by enemies who wanted nothing better than to gloat over his demise and David felt abandoned by God.

When we feel abandoned, we might think that God does not want to help us. We may begin to doubt the existence of God altogether. David did not go down either of these roads. Instead, he waited. It was a waiting filled with questions and pleas, but waiting nonetheless. By waiting, we can be faithful to God even in the midst of sorrow (v. 2).

But David also waited in hope. He trusted in God’s covenant commitment to him and anticipated God’s salvation (v. 5). He remembered what God had done for him in the past (v. 6). It is possible to be full of grief and hope at the same time. The Apostle Paul reminded the church at Thessalonica, “We do not want you to be uninformed . . . so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:13). David here reminds us that God is worth clinging to even when we do not experience His presence at the moment.

### Apply the Word

Perhaps you are walking through a time of anxiety or trouble. David would encourage us to voice our concern to God directly and honestly. Remember that even our Lord cried the words of a lament Psalm, “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Remember when God has met your needs, and trust that He still cares for you.

### Pray with Us

Please join us in prayer for Dr. Mark Jobe, Moody’s president, today. Ask God to guide his steps, giving him godly wisdom as he makes decisions and leads the faculty and staff. Give him your joy, as he works unto the Lord.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/10/19

# I Will Fear No Evil

 **Read:** [**Psalm 23**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/10/i-will-fear-no-evil)

#### A psalm of David.

1The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
2    He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
3    he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
    for his name’s sake.  
4Even though I walk  
    through the darkest valley,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Psalm+23#fen-NIV-14240a)]  
I will fear no evil,  
    for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
    they comfort me.

5You prepare a table before me  
    in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
    my cup overflows.  
6Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
    all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
    forever.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 23:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Psalm+23#en-NIV-14240) Or the valley of the shadow of death

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. [Psalm 23:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Psalm+23%3A4)

In 1957, Melba Pattillo Beals was selected to be one of the “Little Rock Nine,” a group of nine African American students who first integrated the previously all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. In her 2018 memoir, I Will Not Fear: My Story of a Lifetime of Building Faith under Fire, Beals gives a heartbreaking account of the injustices and harassment she struggled to face courageously every day as a fifteen-year-old student.

But she also wrote about her deep faith in God. In her darkest moments, when fear almost overwhelmed her, Beals repeated the familiar Bible verses she had learned at an early age from her grandmother. As she recited them, she was reminded of God’s presence with her, and Scripture gave her courage to endure.

Beals frequently recited Psalm 23, finding comfort in confessing, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (v. 4). Her grandmother’s encouragement would ring through her ears as well, reassuring her that God “is as close as your skin, and you have only to call on Him for help.”

Although our particular situations may vary, we will all likely endure difficult struggles and overwhelming circumstances that could easily cause us to give in to fear. In those moments, may your heart find encouragement in the truth that God’s powerful presence is always with us.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

When have you felt God’s presence in a fearful situation? How is it comforting to know that God is always with you?

Father, when circumstances cause me to fear, help me to remember that You are near, and to find courage in the power of Your presence.

#### Insight

Psalm 23, penned by David, is an expression of trust in God. The imagery builds the metaphor of God as a Shepherd leading His people (v. 1)—a metaphor commonly used for kings (2 Samuel 5:2; Isaiah. 44:28). The Shepherd leads the psalmist by “quiet waters” (Psalm 23:2) and “along the right paths” (v. 3), indicating the peace that sustains our journey even “through the darkest valley” (v. 4).

The rod and staff (v. 4) were typically used by shepherds to guide and protect the sheep. David knew from tending his father’s flocks that these had to be actively used to keep the sheep safe (1 Samuel 17:34–35). The mention of God’s goodness and love following him was also an active act—the Hebrew word radaph can be translated “pursue.” These final words affirm that God would be with David both during his life on earth and in heaven, where he would “dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).

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

# God Calling – 9/10/19

# God or Mammon?

You must be ready to stand apart from the world. Do you want the full and complete satisfaction that you find in Me, and the satisfaction of the world too? Then you are trying to serve God and Mammon, or if not trying to serve, then claiming the wages of both God and Mammon.

If you work for Me, you have your reward. But then you turn to the world, to human beings, and expect that reward too. This is not right.

Do not expect love or gratitude or acknowledgement from any. All reward necessary I will give you.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; ... Ye cannot serve God and mammon.  Matthew 6:24

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/11/19

# Missionary Weapons (2)



If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. —[John 13:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+13%3A14)

**Ministering in Everyday Opportunities.** Ministering in everyday opportunities that surround us does not mean that we select our own surroundings— it means being God’s very special choice to be available for use in any of the seemingly random surroundings which He has engineered for us. The very character we exhibit in our present surroundings is an indication of what we will be like in other surroundings.

The things Jesus did were the most menial of everyday tasks, and this is an indication that it takes all of God’s power in me to accomplish even the most common tasks in His way. Can I use a towel as He did? Towels, dishes, sandals, and all the other ordinary things in our lives reveal what we are made of more quickly than anything else. It takes God Almighty Incarnate in us to do the most menial duty as it ought to be done.

Jesus said, “I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” ([John 13:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13:15)). Notice the kind of people that God brings around you, and you will be humiliated once you realize that this is actually His way of revealing to you the kind of person you have been to Him. Now He says we should exhibit to those around us exactly what He has exhibited to us.

Do you find yourself responding by saying, “Oh, I will do all that once I’m out on the mission field”? Talking in this way is like trying to produce the weapons of war while in the trenches of the battlefield— you will be killed while trying to do it.

We have to go the “second mile” with God (see [Matthew 5:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:41)). Yet some of us become worn out in the first ten steps. Then we say, “Well, I’ll just wait until I get closer to the next big crisis in my life.” But if we do not steadily minister in everyday opportunities, we will do nothing when the crisis comes.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/11/19

**Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.**—[ROM. 12:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.2)

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.—Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, . . . as the truth is in Jesus.

[Exo. 23:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.23.html" \l "Exod.23.2).[Jas. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.4.html" \l "Jas.4.4).[II Cor. 6:14-16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.14). -[I John 2:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.15),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.17).[Eph. 2:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.2). -[Eph. 4:20,21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.20).

“Be ye separate.” **[2 Corinthians 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17)**

The Christian, while in the world, is not to be of the world. He should be distinguished from it in the great object of his life. To him, “to live,” should be “Christ.” Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he should do all to God’s glory. You may lay up treasure; but lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves break not through nor steal. You may strive to be rich; but be it your ambition to be “rich in faith,” and good works. You may have pleasure; but when you are merry, sing psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. In your spirit, as well as in your aim, you should differ from the world. Waiting humbly before God, always conscious of his presence, delighting in communion with him, and seeking to know his will, you will prove that you are of heavenly race. And you should be separate from the world in your actions. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done; if it be wrong, though you would gain by it, you must scorn the sin for your Master’s sake. You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings. Therefore, keep thyself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings; let not these eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in his beauty—let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are ere long to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy.

Then rise my soul! and soar away,

Above the thoughtless crowd;

Above the pleasures of the gay,

And splendours of the proud;

Up where eternal beauties bloom,

And pleasures all divine;

Where wealth, that never can consume,

And endless glories shine.

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# Word Live – 9/11/19

# Tent city

## Prepare

Why do we light fireworks on 5 November and eat turkey at Christmas? Why do we sing our National Anthem at international sporting events? Rituals and liturgies aren’t just for the religious. Take a moment to ponder why.



## Bible passage: Nehemiah 8:13–18

13 On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the scribe to give attention to the words of the Law. 14 They found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in booths during the feast of the seventh month 15 and that they should proclaim this word and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem: "Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make booths"-as it is written.

16 So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves booths on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. 17 The whole company that had returned from exile built booths and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this. And their joy was very great.

18 Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

## Explore

**Temporary shelters**

The festival celebrated in this passage is known as the ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ or the ‘Festival of Booths’. The people camped in ‘booths’ for the   
week to remind them of the temporary shelters they lived in when God brought them out of Egypt ([Leviticus 23:33–43](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A33%E2%80%9343&version=NIV)).

**Utter dependence**

In ‘acting out’ this story, the Israelites had a physical reminder of how God freed them from slavery, and of their utter dependence on him in the wilderness. Perhaps it also reminded them that at that time Jerusalem was just a distant dream – a holy city in a promised land – and now here they were living in it. God frees, God provides, God keeps his promises.

**God keeps his promises**

A similar ‘acting out’ for us would be communion. Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup we are giving ourselves a physical reminder of how God has freed us from slavery to sin. We are acknowledging our dependence on him for everything, and we are looking forward to dwelling with him in our own holy city, with the assurance that God keeps his promises.

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

‘Jesus, thank you for dying for me and freeing me from sin. Father, thank you for your daily provision for my needs. Holy Spirit, thank you that your presence in me is a reminder and guarantee of my inheritance to come (see [Ephesians 1:13,14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1%3A13%2C14&version=NIV)). Amen.’

## Deeper Bible study

History, today, is both suspected and neglected. Postmodern historian Hayden White claims that all historical narratives are little more than ‘verbal fictions’.1 According to British historian Eric Hobsbawm, most young people at the cusp of the twenty-first century were growing up in ‘a sort of permanent present lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in’.2 Ancient Israel also tended to ignore history. That’s why God gave them annual public festivals as reminders of specific mighty acts that God had wrought on their behalf. Among these was the Festival of Tabernacles (or Booths). In today’s reading, Ezra helps heads of families to rediscover this festival. Living for a week in temporary shelters is a reminder of their predecessors’ 40-year wilderness pilgrimage.

The significance of Tabernacles must have become blurred (v 17). It’s not that the festival had lapsed. We know that it was celebrated by Solomon and also in Hosea’s day, as well as more recently in the time of Zerubbabel ([2 Chr 8:13; Hos 12:9; Ezra 3:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chr+8%3A13%3B+Hos+12%3A9%3B+Ezra+3%3A4&version=NIV)). However, over time, the festival’s secondary focus on harvest ([Deut 16:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deut+16%3A13&version=NIV)) seems to have become dominant. The role of covenant renewal it fulfilled in Joshua’s time ([Deut 31:9–13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deut+31%3A9%E2%80%9313&version=NIV)) had become obscured. An ever-present preoccupation to secure plentiful harvests had squeezed out the primary focus of recalling God’s faithfulness in the past.

Nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard taught that life is lived forwards but learned backwards. That is a reality with which we, like Ezra’s contemporaries, often lose touch. The Bible is a realistic narrative of God’s past acts performed on our behalf, culminating in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Every time we engage with Scripture, we are challenged to review this biblical past and to renew our commitment to follow Jesus into the future.

Lord, thank you for the grand narrative of the Bible. Help me share this good news with others, looking forward to its grand finale at the second coming of Jesus.

1 Butler, Postmodernism, OUP, 2002, p33

2 Age of Extremes, Michael Joseph, 1994, p3

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Rest days

How often do we need to be reminded to take a day off?  
  
The Sabbath is one of the first and most often reminded laws. God set it in place right at the beginning with creation (see [Genesis 2:2,3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%202:2,3;&version=72;)), and it’s the fourth commandment (see [Exodus 20:8–10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2020:8–10;&version=72;)). In fact, keeping the Sabbath is so important that failure to do so is actually punishable by death (see [Exodus 31:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2031:15;&version=72;))  
  
**Special Sabbaths**

As well as a weekly rest, there are also ‘extra’ Sabbaths, spread throughout the year – like our bank holidays. Here in Nehemiah they have two, marking the beginning and end of the Feast of Tabernacles ([Nehemiah 8:9,18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah%208:9,18;&version=72;)).  
  
**Putting it off**

With the hustle and bustle of daily life, things are often put off to the weekend. Sundays fill up with church commitments, leftover homework and household chores – while bank holiday weekends are famously the busiest periods for DIY.  
  
**The honour circle**

‘If we don’t do it now, when will it be done?’  
  
But it will get done. If we honour God by honouring the Sabbath then he provides for it (v 10).   
  
Take the day off. You might not be killed if you don’t, but you’re living a much fuller life if you do.  
  
Jude Adam

# Today in the Word – 9/11/19

# Invitation to Worship

### Read: Psalm 15

#### A psalm of David.

1Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?  
    Who may live on your holy mountain?

2The one whose walk is blameless,  
    who does what is righteous,  
    who speaks the truth from their heart;  
3whose tongue utters no slander,  
    who does no wrong to a neighbor,  
    and casts no slur on others;  
4who despises a vile person  
    but honors those who fear the Lord;  
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,  
    and does not change their mind;  
5who lends money to the poor without interest;  
    who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things  
    will never be shaken.

### Psalm 16

#### A miktam[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+15%e2%80%9316#fen-NIV-14094a)] of David.

1Keep me safe, my God,  
    for in you I take refuge.

2I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;  
    apart from you I have no good thing.”  
3I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
    “They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.”  
4Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.  
    I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
    or take up their names on my lips.

5Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
    you make my lot secure.  
6The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
    surely I have a delightful inheritance.  
7I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;  
    even at night my heart instructs me.  
8I keep my eyes always on the Lord.  
    With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

9Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
    my body also will rest secure,  
10because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
    nor will you let your faithful[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+15%e2%80%9316#fen-NIV-14103b)] one see decay.  
11You make known to me the path of life;  
    you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
    with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 16:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+15%e2%80%9316#en-NIV-14094) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
2. [Psalm 16:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+15%e2%80%9316#en-NIV-14103) Or holy

In July 2017, Canada’s governor general found himself embroiled in a controversy. While descending a flight of steps alongside the Queen of England, he touched the Queen’s elbow to assist her. What was meant as an act of service was actually seen as a breach of protocol, commented on by newspapers all over the world. When meeting the Queen, there are clear guidelines regarding what kind of behavior and actions are appropriate.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

In the Old Testament, worshiping the Lord involved certain rituals. Psalm 15 was likely intended as a question and answer psalm for those coming to the sanctuary. When David asks, “Lord​, who may dwell in your sacred tent?” (v. 1), the Lord replies with a list of eleven characteristics that focus not on external practices, but internal behavior.

The first characteristic is the most general: “One whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous” (v. 2). This does not mean a worshiper must be sinless. Indeed, most people who came to the sanctuary were offering a sacrifice for their sin. Instead, to be blameless meant to have a heart of repentance, one that feared God. The blameless life manifests itself in purity of speech. This person does not “slander” others, but “speaks the truth from the heart” (vv. 2–3).

The blameless person honors the people who fear God while rejecting those who despise Him (v. 4). The blameless are true to their word, even when it is to their disadvantage (v. 4). The blameless are marked by care for the poor. They lend money to the poor without interest. This kind of behavior shows genuine care. God cares deeply about how we treat the poor and vulnerable. He affirms that this is the kind of person who is welcome to worship in His presence.

### Apply the Word

While it is true that we can come “just as we are” to salvation, the worship of God in His presence should not to be taken lightly or casually (Matt. 5:23–24; 1 Cor. 11:27–32). What matters most to God in worship is not how we are dressed or how well we sing, but that we have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus evidenced by a life of integrity.

### Pray with Us

Moody’s Undergraduate Intercultural Studies professors are gifted servants of Christ equipping our students for missions and ministry. Would you support the work of Andy Pflederer, Samuel Naaman, and Mary Cloutier in your prayers today?

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/11/19

# Better Than Ever

 **Read:** [**2 Corinthians 4:16–5:9**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/11/better-than-ever-2)

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

### Awaiting the New Body

5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, 3because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7For we live by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. [2 Corinthians 4:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=2+Corinthians+4%3A16)

The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is a spectacular building. Its architecture is spellbinding, and its stained-glass windows and beautiful interior features are breathtaking. But after centuries of towering over the Paris landscape, it needed renovation—which had begun when a devastating fire caused extensive damage to the glorious old building.

So the people who love this eight-century-old landmark are coming to its rescue. More than a billion dollars has been raised to restore the building. The stone structure must be shored up. The damaged interior and its prized artifacts need to be repaired. The effort is worthwhile, though, because for many this ancient cathedral stands as a symbol of hope.

What’s true of buildings is also true of us. Our bodies, like this old church, will eventually look a bit worse for wear! But as the apostle Paul explains, there’s good news: while we might gradually lose the physical vibrancy of youth, the core of who we are—our spiritual being—can be continually renewed and growing (2 Corinthians 4:16).

As “we make it our goal to please [the Lord]” (5:9), relying on the Holy Spirit to fill and transform us (3:18; Ephesians 5:18), our spiritual growth need never stop—no matter what our “building” looks like.

By:  [Dave Branon](https://odb.org/author/davebranon/)

#### Reflect & Pray

Where have you seen the Spirit renewing your spiritual being? How does the knowledge that our spiritual growth never stops inspire you?

God, thank You for Your Spirit renewing and transforming us. Please continue to give us the strength and courage to rest in You.

#### Insight

Paul often compares our current existence to what we’ll experience with God in eternity. In fact, this passage in 2 Corinthians is the second time he’s addressed this issue with the Corinthian church. In his first letter to them, Paul spent a great deal of time (most of chapter 15) discussing the difference between life now and the life to come. He also talks about our future hope in Ephesians (1:18–23), Philippians (1:20–23), 1 Thessalonians (4:13–18), and 1 Timothy (6:17–19).

# God Calling – 9/11/19

# A Generous Giver

**I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.    John 10:10**

Yes, I, your Master, am a generous Giver. Abundant Life, in overflowing measure, I give to you. For that I came. Life for souls. The Life, Eternal Life, that pulses through your whole being, that animates your mind and body too.

A generous Giver. A Kingly Giver. For this I came that man might live in Me. Life it was of which I spoke when I said "I am the Vine and ye are the branches." The life flow of the Vine is in the branches.

Our lives are one - yours and Mine. All that is in  My Nature must therefore pass into yours, where the contact is so close a one.

I am Love and Joy and Peace and Strength and Power and Healing and Humility and Patience, and all else you see in Me your Lord. Then these, too, you must have as My Life flows through you. So courage.

You do not make yourselves loving and strong and patient and humble. You live with Me, and then My Life accomplishes the miracle-change.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. John 6:33

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/12/19

# Going Through Spiritual Confusion



Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask." —[Matthew 20:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+20%3A22)

There are times in your spiritual life when there is confusion, and the way out of it is not simply to say that you should not be confused. It is not a matter of right and wrong, but a matter of God taking you through a way that you temporarily do not understand. And it is only by going through the spiritual confusion that you will come to the understanding of what God wants for you.

**The Shrouding of His Friendship** (see [Luke 11:5-8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:5-8)). Jesus gave the illustration here of a man who appears not to care for his friend. He was saying, in effect, that is how the heavenly Father will appear to you at times. You will think that He is an unkind friend, but remember— He is not. The time will come when everything will be explained. There seems to be a cloud on the friendship of the heart, and often even love itself has to wait in pain and tears for the blessing of fuller fellowship and oneness. When God appears to be completely shrouded, will you hang on with confidence in Him?

**The Shadow on His Fatherhood** (see [Luke 11:11-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:11-13)). Jesus said that there are times when your Father will appear as if He were an unnatural father— as if He were callous and indifferent— but remember, He is not. “Everyone who asks receives…” ([Luke 11:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11:10)). If all you see is a shadow on the face of the Father right now, hang on to the fact that He will ultimately give you clear understanding and will fully justify Himself in everything that He has allowed into your life.

**The Strangeness of His Faithfulness** (see [Luke 18:1-8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:1-8)). “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” ([Luke 18:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18:8)). Will He find the kind of faith that counts on Him in spite of the confusion? Stand firm in faith, believing that what Jesus said is true, although in the meantime you do not understand what God is doing. He has bigger issues at stake than the particular things you are asking of Him right now.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The Bible is the only Book that gives us any indication of the true nature of sin, and where it came from. The Philosophy of Sin, 1107 R

# CCEL – 9/12/19

**I have seen his ways, and will heal him.**—[ISA. 57:18.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.57.html" \l "Isa.57.18)

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.—Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.—All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

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.—He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed.—He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.—Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

[Exo. 15:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.15.html" \l "Exod.15.26).[Psa. 139:1-3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.1). -[Psa. 90:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.90.html" \l "Ps.90.8). -[Heb. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.13).[Isa. 1:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.1.html" \l "Isa.1.18). -[Job 33:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.33.html#Job.33.24). -[Isa. 53:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.5). -[Isa. 61:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.61.html" \l "Isa.61.1). -[Mark 5:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.5.html" \l "Mark.5.34).

“God is jealous.” **[Nahum 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Nah.1.html" \l "Nah.1.2)**

Your Lord is very jealous of your love, O believer. Did he choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another. Did he buy you with his own blood? He cannot endure that you should think that you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that he would not stop in heaven without you; he would sooner die than you should perish, and he cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart’s love and himself. He is very jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we lean upon him, he is glad, but when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely upon our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, he is displeased, and will chasten us that he may bring us to himself. He is also very jealous of our company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in him only, this is true love; but to commune with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, to prefer even the society of our fellow Christians to secret intercourse with him, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He would fain have us abide in him, and enjoy constant fellowship with himself; and many of the trials which he sends us are for the purpose of weaning our hearts from the creature, and fixing them more closely upon himself. Let this jealousy which would keep us near to Christ be also a comfort to us, for if he loves us so much as to care thus about our love we may be sure that he will suffer nothing to harm us, and will protect us from all our enemies. Oh that we may have grace this day to keep our hearts in sacred chastity for our Beloved alone, with sacred jealousy shutting our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!

# Word Live – 9/12/19

# Who before what

## Prepare

‘O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly’ (13th-century prayer of St Richard of Chichester).



## Bible passage: Nehemiah 9:1–21

##### The Israelites Confess Their Sins

1 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. 3 They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God. 4 Standing on the stairs were the Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani—who called with loud voices to the LORD their God. 5 And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. "   
       "Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. 6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

7 "You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

9 "You saw the suffering of our forefathers in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea. 10 You sent miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. 11 You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. 12 By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take.

13 "You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. 14 You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. 15 In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

16 "But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. 17 They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, 18 even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, 'This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,' or when they committed awful blasphemies.

19 "Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. 21 For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

## Explore

**Understanding the rules**

When the Bible talks about ‘the Law’, it never just means ‘the rules’. ‘The Law’ encompasses all of the first five books of the Bible, because we cannot understand the rules without also understanding who God is. That’s why the Israelites here set their confession within the retelling of the story of creation, God’s covenant with Abraham, the Exodus, the commandments, the miracles, the people’s rebellions, and God’s abounding love, forgiveness and faithfulness.

**Knowing God**

In order to live righteous lives before God, we have to know not just his rules, but him. In the book Dirty Glory, about the 24-7 prayer movement, Pete Greig says that often when he is seeking guidance, God responds with relationship: ‘When I say, “Where should I go?” he says, “I love you.” I ask, “What should I do?” and he says, “I’m proud of you.” … Time and time again God ignores my most pressing questions in order to answer the deepest longing of my heart’ (NavPress, 2016, p56).

**Walking by his side**

The best way to ensure we are walking in God’s ways is to focus on knowing and loving him – we can’t go far wrong when we’re walking by his side.

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

Often when we find our will in conflict with God’s it is because deep down we don’t really trust that he is good and faithful. Ask God to reveal his character to you more and more each day.

## Deeper Bible study

Today we read the first part of a long prayer of confession. It is led by the Levites in preparation for a covenant renewal service recorded in chapter 10. The prayer seems to be inspired by a third public reading of Scripture (v 3). Close study of verses 5–21 reveals that frequent references from the Hebrew Bible permeate the prayer. In fact, verses 9–11 form ‘almost a pastiche of quotations from the Exodus account’.1

The prayer leaders are combining practices of reading Scripture and praying. They repeatedly incorporate literal phrases from earlier Scriptures. A comparison of verses 9–11 with Exodus 14:10–30 reveals the close dependence of the former on the text of the latter. The prayer goes on to reflect on the wilderness wanderings (vs 13–15) and rebellions (vs 16–18). It specially highlights God’s compassionate refusal to abandon his people in spite of their waywardness (vs 19–21). A reference Bible will demonstrate almost continuous appropriation throughout the prayer of earlier biblical texts. The Israelite congregation is speaking to God by employing his own words.

Praying Scripture today is exceedingly helpful, especially when we feel our prayers have become dull and tedious. There are various possible ways to do this. We can follow the example of Nehemiah 9 and use multiple Scripture texts on a theme. Or we can repeat specific prayers in the Bible, like a psalm or one of Paul’s prayers in his epistles. Alternatively, after reading and meditating on a biblical passage we can return to it, praying our way through the text verse by verse. This helps us to respond to what God is saying to us in the passage. In fact, any part of the Bible can be used to speak to God. Why not combine praying with reading today?

Thank you, Lord, that when I read the Bible you speak to me and I can speak to you.

1 HGM Williamson, World Biblical Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah, Word Books, 1985

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## The people’s prayer

Today’s reading is the start of a mighty time of prayer and recommitment to God that stretches over the next two chapters. The people promise before God to do all that he requires of them and not to ‘neglect the house of our God’ ([10:39](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=nehemiah%2010:39;&version=72;)).  
  
Verse 3 gives us a helpful framework for ourselves as we come to God in prayer. Why not use this as part of your devotions right now:  
  
**1** The people ‘read from the Book of the Law of the Lord’. In essence, this is what you have done as you have read through these verses in Nehemiah 9. For the people, it served as an act of collective remembrance of their history and of what God had done for them, and this is reflected in the prayer that follows.  
  
Spend some time now thinking back through your life in this way. What God has done for us in the past can be a great spur to worship and trusting him for the future.  
  
**2** The people ‘confessed their sins’ (v 2, The Message). Take some time now to sit quietly before God. Think through the last few days and ask him to bring to mind both the wrong things that you have done and the good things that you haven’t. Don’t try to dredge stuff up, just allow God to speak into whatever he wants.  
  
**3** The people spent time ‘worshipping the Lord their God’. Finish this prayer activity by doing just that, in whatever way you feel led.  
  
Ruth Valerio

# Today in the Word – 9/12/19

# Your Kingdom Come

**Read:** [**Psalm 17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+17)

#### A prayer of David.

1Hear me, Lord, my plea is just;  
    listen to my cry.  
Hear my prayer—  
    it does not rise from deceitful lips.  
2Let my vindication come from you;  
    may your eyes see what is right.

3Though you probe my heart,  
    though you examine me at night and test me,  
you will find that I have planned no evil;  
    my mouth has not transgressed.  
4Though people tried to bribe me,  
    I have kept myself from the ways of the violent  
    through what your lips have commanded.  
5My steps have held to your paths;  
    my feet have not stumbled.

6I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;  
    turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.  
7Show me the wonders of your great love,  
    you who save by your right hand  
    those who take refuge in you from their foes.  
8Keep me as the apple of your eye;  
    hide me in the shadow of your wings  
9from the wicked who are out to destroy me,  
    from my mortal enemies who surround me.

10They close up their callous hearts,  
    and their mouths speak with arrogance.  
11They have tracked me down, they now surround me,  
    with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.  
12They are like a lion hungry for prey,  
    like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

13Rise up, Lord, confront them, bring them down;  
    with your sword rescue me from the wicked.  
14By your hand save me from such people, Lord,  
    from those of this world whose reward is in this life.  
May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies;  
    may their children gorge themselves on it,  
    and may there be leftovers for their little ones.

15As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;  
    when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Children have an innate sense of fairness. If you give a piece of cake to each of two siblings, they will carefully examine each slice to ensure that they did not get the smaller one. Or, if one child gets a consequence for misbehavior, they will make sure their brother or sister gets the same treatment.

As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. Psalm 17:15

In Psalm 17, David finds himself surrounded by adversaries. While the cause is not entirely clear, it seems these enemies were falsely accusing him of wrongdoing. They were arrogant and looking for every opportunity to take David down (vv. 10–12). The primary problem with the wicked is that they believe that their “reward is in this life” (v. 14). That is, they do not think that God will hold them accountable, or that there is any judgment after death. In contrast, David declared that he had lived a holy life. “Though you probe my heart . . . you will find that I have planned no evil” (v. 3). He was not saying that he was perfect, but rather that he feared God. When he sinned, he repented and called out to God for help. He lived as a man who knew he would one day give account to God. That is the essence of what it means to fear God. David begged God to rescue him from the wicked and to vindicate him from false charges (v. 15).

Even more than getting justice, David wanted to experience God’s presence. This desire is clear from his opening plea (v. 1). In the middle of the psalm, he asked God to “keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings” (v. 8). He ended the psalm by declaring, “When I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness” (v. 15). You could summarize David’s prayer this way: “May the wicked be far from me, and may You be close.”

### Apply the Word

When we look at the evil that surrounds us, it can be easy to think that God must be very far away. David prays that God will be present in his life. In some ways, this is the essence of the Lord’s Prayer, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). When the Lord returns, this prayer will be fully answered.

### Pray with Us

Please continue to uplift in prayer the Undergraduate Intercultural Studies faculty, including Richard Wilkinson, Kyeong-Sook Park, Michael Rydelnik, and Timothy Sisk. Pray that they will inspire their students for a deeper thirst for the Word.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/12/19

# Tongue Tamers

 **Read:** [**James 3:1–6**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/12/tongue-tamers)

### Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

3When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up. [Ephesians 4:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Ephesians+4%3A29)

In West with the Night, author Beryl Markham detailed her work with Camciscan, a feisty stallion she was tasked with taming. She’d met her match with Camciscan. No matter what strategy she employed, she could never fully tame the proud stallion, chalking up only one victory over his stubborn will.

How many of us feel this way in the battle to tame our tongues? While James compares the tongue to the bit in a horse’s mouth or a ship’s rudder (James 3:3–5), he also laments, “Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be” (v. 10).

So, how can we win the battle over the tongue? The apostle Paul offers tongue-taming advice. The first involves speaking only the truth (Ephesians 4:25). This is not a license to be painfully blunt, however. Paul follows up with “do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up” (v. 29). We can also take out the trash: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice” (v. 31). Is this easy? Not if we attempt to do it on our own. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit who helps us as we rely on Him.

As Markham learned, consistency with Camciscan was needed in the battle of wills. Such is the case in the taming of the tongue.

By:  [Linda Washington](https://odb.org/author/lindawashingtonodb/)

#### Reflect & Pray

What do you find most challenging in taming your tongue? What practical steps can you take to win the battle in the coming week?

Jesus, I need You to help me be mindful of the words I use.

#### Insight

Who was James, the “servant of God” (1:1) and author of this epistle? Several different men named James appear in the New Testament. The most prominent is James, Zebedee’s son and John’s brother (Matthew 4:21). Another of Christ’s disciples was James the son of Alphaeus (10:3). James the younger or “the Less” (nkjv) is mentioned in Mark 15:40, but some scholars say this James might have been James the son of Alphaeus. Another was the father of Judas (not Iscariot, Luke 6:16). Finally, is James the half-brother of Jesus Himself (Matthew 13:55; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19). This James most likely wrote the book. James the son of Zebedee was the first of Christ’s disciples to be martyred (Acts 12:2), and the others were not prominent enough to have such broad influence.

# God Calling – 9/12/19

# Money Values

**But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.      - Matthew 6:33**

**If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.      -   Matthew 6:22**

The eye of the soul is the will.  If your one desire is My Kingdom, to find that Kingdom, to serve that Kingdom, then truly shall your whole body be full of light.

When you are told to seek first the Kingdom of God, the first step is to secure that your will is for that Kingdom.  A single eye to God's glory. Desiring nothing less than that His Kingdom come. Seeking in all things the advance of His Kingdom.

Know no values but Spiritual values. No profit but that of Spiritual gain. Seek in all things His Kingdom first.

Only seek material gain when that gain will mean a gain for My Kingdom. Get away from money values altogether. Walk with Me. Learn of Me. Talk to Me. Here lies your true happiness.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.  Luke 12:31

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/13/19

# After Surrender— Then What?



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)

True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will— and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person’s will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again.

**Surrender for Deliverance.** “Come to Me…and I will give you rest” ([Matthew 11:28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:28)). It is only after we have begun to experience what salvation really means that we surrender our will to Jesus for rest. Whatever is causing us a sense of uncertainty is actually a call to our will— “Come to Me.” And it is a voluntary coming.

**Surrender for Devotion.** “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself…” (Matthew 16:24). The surrender here is of my self to Jesus, with His rest at the heart of my being. He says, “If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me.” And once this is done, the remainder of your life will exhibit nothing but the evidence of this surrender, and you never need to be concerned again with what the future may hold for you. Whatever your circumstances may be, Jesus is totally sufficient (see [2 Corinthians 12:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12:9) and [Philippians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4:19)).

**Surrender for Death.** “…another will gird you…” ([John 21:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21:18); also see [John 21:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John21:19)). Have you learned what it means to be girded for death? Beware of some surrender that you make to God in an ecstatic moment in your life, because you are apt to take it back again. True surrender is a matter of being “united together [with Jesus] in the likeness of His death” ([Romans 6:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:5)) until nothing ever appeals to you that did not appeal to Him.

And after you surrender— then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

It is not what a man does that is of final importance, but what he is in what he does. The atmosphere produced by a man, much more than his activities, has the lasting influence.  Baffled to Fight Better, 51 L

# CCEL – 9/13/19

**If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**—[JOHN 7:37.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.7.html" \l "John.7.37)

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.—The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—My blood is drink indeed.

Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

[Psa. 84:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.2). -[Psa. 63:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.1).[Isa. 55:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html" \l "Isa.55.1). -[Rev. 22:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.22.html" \l "Rev.22.17). -[John 4:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.4.html" \l "John.4.14). -[John 6:55](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.6.html" \l "John.6.55).[Song 5:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.1).

“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well, the rain also filleth the pools.” **[Psalm 84:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.6)**

This teaches us that the comfort obtained by a one may often prove serviceable to another; just as wells would be used by the company who came after. We read some book full of consolation, which is like Jonathan’s rod, dropping with honey. Ah! we think our brother has been here before us, and digged this well for us as well as for himself. Many a “Night of Weeping,” “Midnight Harmonies,” an “Eternal Day,” “A Crook in the Lot,” a “Comfort for Mourners,” has been a well digged by a pilgrim for himself, but has proved quite as useful to others. Specially we notice this in the Psalms, such as that beginning, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” Travellers have been delighted to see the footprint of man on a barren shore, and we love to see the waymarks of pilgrims while passing through the vale of tears.

The pilgrims dig the well, but, strange enough, it fills from the top instead of the bottom. We use the means, but the blessing does not spring from the means. We dig a well, but heaven fills it with rain. The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. The means are connected with the end, but they do not of themselves produce it. See here the rain fills the pools, so that the wells become useful as reservoirs for the water; labour is not lost, but yet it does not supersede divine help.

Grace may well be compared to rain for its purity, for its refreshing and vivifying influence, for its coming alone from above, and for the sovereignty with which it is given or withheld. May our readers have showers of blessing, and may the wells they have digged be filled with water! Oh, what are means and ordinances without the smile of heaven! They are as clouds without rain, and pools without water. O God of love, open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing!

# Word Live – 9/13/19

# Emergency use only?

## Prepare

Too often we treat God like a fire extinguisher – vitally important… to keep sitting in the corner in case of emergencies. In this passage we see where that attitude leads us.



## Bible passage: Nehemiah 9:22–38

22 "You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers. They took over the country of Sihon king of Heshbon and the country of Og king of Bashan. 23 You made their sons as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their fathers to enter and possess. 24 Their sons went in and took possession of the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites, who lived in the land; you handed the Canaanites over to them, along with their kings and the peoples of the land, to deal with them as they pleased. 25 They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness.

26 "But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. 27 So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

28 "But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time.

29 "You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. 30 For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples. 31 But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

32 "Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings and leaders, upon our priests and prophets, upon our fathers and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. 33 In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong. 34 Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the warnings you gave them. 35 Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

36 "But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our forefathers so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. 37 Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

##### The Agreement of the People

38 "In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it."

## Explore

**No different**

It’s easy to roll our eyes at the Israelites and wonder how they could be so fickle, but if we’re honest, our story is no different. How often have you found that your fervent prayers during a crisis become considerably less passionate once peace has been restored?

**Developing faith**

It is a well-known phenomenon that in times of persecution the church grows, and its people develop incredible faith and depth of relationship with God. Compare that with the long decades of declining church attendance in the comfortable West, and you can see that thousands of years of reading these truths haven’t made us any better at learning them.

**Going our own way**

When everything is fine, we think it’s because we are strong, capable and competent. We tell ourselves that we are the masters of our fate, and it is a short step from there to wandering away from God’s side and going our own way.

**Pay attention**

All Scripture is given to us so that we can learn from it. Let us pay attention.

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

‘Lord, I am sorry for the times when I have cried out to you in desperation then forgotten you when you’ve answered my prayers. Please help me to learn the lessons of the Israelites and walk closely with you all my days. Amen.’

## Deeper Bible study

The communal prayer continues as a plea for revival. The congregation is about to renew its covenant commitment to the Lord. This commitment, announced in verse 38, will be the subject of chapter 10. A leading topic of the prayer is the gift of the land. This is the core of the covenant with Abraham (v 8). It is the goal of the Exodus (v 15) and it is the rationale of the conquest (vs 23–25,35,36) but, once settled in the land, privileged Israel lapses into arrogant Israel (v 29). This decline is highlighted in three cycles of rebellion issuing in divine judgement. In each cycle, judgement takes the form of subservience to foreign powers (vs 26,27; v 28; and vs 29–31).

However, the prayer’s principle theme is the Lord’s astonishing compassion (vs 27,28) (see [Neh 9:17; Exod 34:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Neh+9%3A17%3B+Exod+34%3A6&version=NIV)). Despite provocation, he responds to his people’s cry of distress. Significantly, there is no such cry in the third cycle (vs 29–31). This omission implies that the prayer itself becomes a cry to the Lord for deliverance from ‘the hardship that has come on us’ (v 32). Continual past expressions of God’s grace (vs 19,27,28) have created an expectancy that God will act once more in a definitive way on Israel’s behalf.

Charles Finney’s declamation that a revival of religion presupposes an earlier decline1 echoes the prayer of Ezra’s Levites. So also does Arthur Wallis’ reminder that historical accounts of revivals are ‘precious documents to all who long to see a movement in our day’.2 One way of following up today’s reading is to acquaint yourself with the history of revivals. May that history rouse you to pray for a deep spiritual awakening in your church and in your community.

‘If my people … will humble themselves and … turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.’ ([2 Chr 7:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chr+7%3A14&version=NIV))

1 Charles Finney, Revival Lecture 1: What a Revival of Religion is, c 1835

2 Arthur Wallis, In the Day of Thy Power, CLC, London, 1956, pxi

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## I vow to thee, my country

Throughout the Bible, covenants come in all shapes and sizes. They are promises made or agreed between two parties, with one of those parties often being God.  
  
**Covenants**The best known covenants include:   
  
• The Noahic Covenant (see [Genesis 8,9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%208,9;&version=72;)) where God promises never again to flood the earth.   
  
• The Abrahamic Covenant (see [Genesis 12–17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2012–17;&version=72;)) when God promises to make Abraham a great nation.  
  
• The Mosaic Covenant – at the centre of which is the Ten Commandments (see [Exodus 20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2020;&version=72;); [Deuteronomy 5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%205;&version=72;)).  
  
• The Davidic Covenant (see [2 Samuel 7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Samuel%207;&version=72;)).  
  
**Reciprocal promise**

Here at the end of the passage (and on through chapter 10 if you are interested in reading further), we see a covenant going in the other direction. This ‘National Covenant’ is one of several in the Old Testament made at times of spiritual renewal, or a recommitment to following the Law/Mosaic Covenant (see [Exodus 19:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2019:8;&version=72;); [Joshua 24:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%2024:24;&version=72;); [2 Kings 23:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Kings%2023:3;&version=72;)).  
  
**Hagar and Sarah**

In the New Testament, Paul refers several times to ‘old’ and ‘new’ covenants. In [Galatians 4:21–31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%204:21–31;&version=72;) he uses Abraham’s wives Hagar and Sarah to express his point.  
  
The old covenant, as embodied by Hagar, represents an ‘imposed obligation’ of following rules by which to maintain a right relationship with the Lord. The ‘new’ covenant through Christ, as shown by Sarah’s story, is not an imposed obligation but a living relationship of trust with God’s ability to keep his promises.  
  
Jude Adam

# Today in the Word – 9/13/19

# Rescued At Last

**Read:** [**Psalm 18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14120a)**]**

#### For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

1I love you, Lord, my strength.

2The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
    my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
    my shield[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14121b)] and the horn[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14121c)] of my salvation, my stronghold.

3I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,  
    and I have been saved from my enemies.  
4The cords of death entangled me;  
    the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.  
5The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
    the snares of death confronted me.

6In my distress I called to the Lord;  
    I cried to my God for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice;  
    my cry came before him, into his ears.  
7The earth trembled and quaked,  
    and the foundations of the mountains shook;  
    they trembled because he was angry.  
8Smoke rose from his nostrils;  
    consuming fire came from his mouth,  
    burning coals blazed out of it.  
9He parted the heavens and came down;  
    dark clouds were under his feet.  
10He mounted the cherubim and flew;  
    he soared on the wings of the wind.  
11He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—  
    the dark rain clouds of the sky.  
12Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,  
    with hailstones and bolts of lightning.  
13The Lord thundered from heaven;  
    the voice of the Most High resounded.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14132d)]  
14He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,  
    with great bolts of lightning he routed them.  
15The valleys of the sea were exposed  
    and the foundations of the earth laid bare  
at your rebuke, Lord,  
    at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

16He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
    he drew me out of deep waters.  
17He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
    from my foes, who were too strong for me.  
18They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
    but the Lord was my support.  
19He brought me out into a spacious place;  
    he rescued me because he delighted in me.

20The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness;  
    according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.  
21For I have kept the ways of the Lord;  
    I am not guilty of turning from my God.  
22All his laws are before me;  
    I have not turned away from his decrees.  
23I have been blameless before him  
    and have kept myself from sin.  
24The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness,  
    according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

25To the faithful you show yourself faithful,  
    to the blameless you show yourself blameless,  
26to the pure you show yourself pure,  
    but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.  
27You save the humble  
    but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.  
28You, Lord, keep my lamp burning;  
    my God turns my darkness into light.  
29With your help I can advance against a troop[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14148e)];  
    with my God I can scale a wall.

30As for God, his way is perfect:  
    The Lord’s word is flawless;  
    he shields all who take refuge in him.  
31For who is God besides the Lord?  
    And who is the Rock except our God?  
32It is God who arms me with strength  
    and keeps my way secure.  
33He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;  
    he causes me to stand on the heights.  
34He trains my hands for battle;  
    my arms can bend a bow of bronze.  
35You make your saving help my shield,  
    and your right hand sustains me;  
    your help has made me great.  
36You provide a broad path for my feet,  
    so that my ankles do not give way.

37I pursued my enemies and overtook them;  
    I did not turn back till they were destroyed.  
38I crushed them so that they could not rise;  
    they fell beneath my feet.  
39You armed me with strength for battle;  
    you humbled my adversaries before me.  
40You made my enemies turn their backs in flight,  
    and I destroyed my foes.  
41They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—  
    to the Lord, but he did not answer.  
42I beat them as fine as windblown dust;  
    I trampled them[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#fen-NIV-14161f)] like mud in the streets.  
43You have delivered me from the attacks of the people;  
    you have made me the head of nations.  
People I did not know now serve me,  
44    foreigners cower before me;  
    as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.  
45They all lose heart;  
    they come trembling from their strongholds.

46The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock!  
    Exalted be God my Savior!  
47He is the God who avenges me,  
    who subdues nations under me,  
48    who saves me from my enemies.  
You exalted me above my foes;  
    from a violent man you rescued me.  
49Therefore I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;  
    I will sing the praises of your name.

50He gives his king great victories;  
    he shows unfailing love to his anointed,  
    to David and to his descendants forever.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 18:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14120) In Hebrew texts 18:1-50 is numbered 18:2-51.
2. [Psalm 18:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14121) Or sovereign
3. [Psalm 18:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14121) Horn here symbolizes strength.
4. [Psalm 18:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14132) Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Samuel 22:14); most Hebrew manuscripts resounded, / amid hailstones and bolts of lightning
5. [Psalm 18:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14148) Or can run through a barricade
6. [Psalm 18:42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+18#en-NIV-14161) Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac and Targum (see also 2 Samuel 22:43); Masoretic Text I poured them out

In 2010 a mine in Chile collapsed trapping thirty-three miners over two thousand feet underground. An international rescue team worked round the clock for days, drilling exploratory holes from the surface to locate the missing men. After seventeen days, when food and water were running short, the miners were discovered. One can only imagine the relief and joy they felt when they realized that rescue was at hand.

For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? Psalm 18:31

For many years, David had lived his life on the run from King Saul. After Saul’s death, it took seven years before David’s reign was established over the whole nation. One can imagine the relief he felt when he was finally at peace. In Psalm 18, David expressed his profound thanks to God. He declared his love for the Lord, who had proven himself faithful as “my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer . . . my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (v. 2).

David painted a vivid picture of the kinds of trouble he faced, “the cords of death entangled me, the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me” (v. 4). This terrifying image is answered by an equally vivid picture of the Lord answering his prayer for help: “He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind” (vv. 9–10). No foe is able to stand against the Lord who rescued His anointed.

David’s experience of God’s salvation leads David to praise God’s Word and to recognize how unique the Lord is. “For who is God besides the Lord​? And who is the Rock except our God?” (v. 31). David recognizes that the Lord is our only real hope for security. He concluded by declaring that he will sing the praises of the Lord to all the nations (v. 49).

### Apply the Word

Our troubles can seem so overwhelming that we cannot see a way out. David describes this well by portraying his situation as being at death’s door. Yet, he knew God was his salvation. God would provide a way of escape. Psalm 18 reminds us that we worship a Lord who is more than competent to meet our needs. Let’s take refuge in Him.

### Pray with Us

The final verse of today’s Psalm says, “I will praise you, Lord, among the nations” (Psalm 18:49). Today, remember in prayer the people you know who are serving as missionaries across the world. And, ask God to use you as His witness to every person you meet today.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/13/19

# Whatever We Do

 **Read:** [**Proverbs 16:1–9**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/13/whatever-we-do)

16 To humans belong the plans of the heart,  
    but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue.

2All a person’s ways seem pure to them,  
    but motives are weighed by the Lord.

3Commit to the Lord whatever you do,  
    and he will establish your plans.

4The Lord works out everything to its proper end—  
    even the wicked for a day of disaster.

5The Lord detests all the proud of heart.  
    Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

6Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;  
    through the fear of the Lord evil is avoided.

7When the Lord takes pleasure in anyone’s way,  
    he causes their enemies to make peace with them.

8Better a little with righteousness  
    than much gain with injustice.

9In their hearts humans plan their course,  
    but the Lord establishes their steps.

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. [Proverbs 16:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Proverbs+16%3A3)

In Surprised by Joy, C. S. Lewis confessed he came to Christianity at the age of thirty-three, “kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance to escape.” Despite Lewis’s own personal resistance, his shortcomings, and the obstacles he faced, the Lord transformed him into a courageous and creative defender of the faith. Lewis proclaimed God’s truth and love through writing powerful essays and novels that are still being read, studied, and shared more than fifty-five years after his death. His life reflected his belief that a person is “never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream.”

As we make plans and follow dreams, God can purify our motives and empower us to devote whatever we do to Him (Proverbs 16:1–3). From the most ordinary tasks to the greatest challenges, we can live for the glory of our almighty Maker, who “works out everything to its proper end” (v. 4). Every action, every word, and every thought can become an expression of heartfelt worship, a sacrificial gift to honor our Lord, as He watches over us (v. 7).

God can’t be limited by our limitations, our reservations, or our tendencies to settle or dream small. As we choose to live for Him—dedicated to and dependent on Him—He will bring about His plans for us. Whatever we do can be done with Him, for Him, and only because of Him.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How can Proverbs 16:3 help you be more confident in the use of your gifts? What steps can you take to honor God as you follow a dream He’s placed on your heart?

God, thank You for reminding us that no jobs are too small and no dreams are too big in Your great kingdom.

#### Insight

The book of Proverbs stresses honoring God in whatever we do. One phrase that parallels this sentiment is “the fear of the Lord” (16:6), which speaks of profound reverence and respect for God. Such awe, honor, and deference should be reserved uniquely for Him as Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Lord over all. The personal and corporate value of possessing this essential quality is noted throughout the Proverbs. The fear of the Lord is foundational for wise living (1:7; 9:10); it’s something that can be chosen (1:29); possessing it prolongs one’s life (10:27); and its value is greater than material wealth (15:16). Those who are guided by the fear of the Lord protect themselves from evil (16:6; 19:23) and have everything they need (10:3).

# God Calling – 9/13/19

# No Other Name

My Name is the Power that turns evil aside, that summons all good to your aid.  Spirits of evil flee at the sound of "Jesus."  Spoken in fear, in weakness, in sorrow, in pain, it is an appeal I never fail to answer.  "Jesus."

Use My Name often. Think of the unending call of "Mother" made by her children. To help, to care, to decide, to appeal, "Mother." Use My Name in that same way - simply, naturally, forcefully.  "Jesus."

Use it not only when you need help but to express Love. Uttered aloud, or in the silence of your hearts, it will alter an atmosphere from one of discord to one of Love. It will raise the standard of talk and thought.  "Jesus."

"There is none other Name under Heaven whereby you can be saved."

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth. Song of Solomon 1:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/14/19

# Arguments or Obedience



…the simplicity that is in Christ.  —[2 Corinthians 11:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+11%3A3)

Simplicity is the secret to seeing things clearly. A saint does not think clearly until a long time passes, but a saint ought to see clearly without any difficulty. You cannot think through spiritual confusion to make things clear; to make things clear, you must obey. In intellectual matters you can think things out, but in spiritual matters you will only think yourself into further wandering thoughts and more confusion. If there is something in your life upon which God has put His pressure, then obey Him in that matter. Bring all your “arguments and…every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” regarding the matter, and everything will become as clear as daylight to you ([2 Corinthians 10:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+10:5)). Your reasoning capacity will come later, but reasoning is not how we see. We see like children, and when we try to be wise we see nothing (see [Matthew 11:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:25)).

Even the very smallest thing that we allow in our lives that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit is completely sufficient to account for spiritual confusion, and spending all of our time thinking about it will still never make it clear. Spiritual confusion can only be conquered through obedience. As soon as we obey, we have discernment. This is humiliating, because when we are confused we know that the reason lies in the state of our mind. But when our natural power of sight is devoted and submitted in obedience to the Holy Spirit, it becomes the very power by which we perceive God’s will, and our entire life is kept in simplicity.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/14/19

**I, even I, am he that comforteth you.**—[ISA. 51:12.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.51.html" \l "Isa.51.12)

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.—As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.—Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth.—The Spirit . . . helpeth our infirmities.

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

[II Cor. 1:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.3). -[Psa. 103:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.13). -[Isa. 66:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.66.html" \l "Isa.66.13). -[I Pet. 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.7).[Psa. 86:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.86.html" \l "Ps.86.15).[John 14:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.14.html" \l "John.14.16). -[Rom. 8:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.26).[Rev. 21:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.21.html" \l "Rev.21.4).

“There were also with him other little ships.” **[Mark 4:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.4.html" \l "Mark.4.36)**

Jesus was the Lord High Admiral of the sea that night, and his presence preserved the whole convoy. It is well to sail with Jesus, even though it be in a little ship. When we sail in Christ’s company, we may not make sure of fair weather, for great storms may toss the vessel which carries the Lord himself, and we must not expect to find the sea less boisterous around our little boat. If we go with Jesus we must be content to fare as he fares; and when the waves are rough to him, they will be rough to us. It is by tempest and tossing that we shall come to land, as he did before us.

When the storm swept over Galilee’s dark lake all faces gathered blackness, and all hearts dreaded shipwreck. When all creature help was useless, the slumbering Saviour arose, and with a word, transformed the riot of the tempest into the deep quiet of a calm; then were the little vessels at rest as well as that which carried the Lord. Jesus is the star of the sea; and though there be sorrow upon the sea, when Jesus is on it there is joy too. May our hearts make Jesus their anchor, their rudder, their lighthouse, their life-boat, and their harbour. His Church is the Admiral’s flagship, let us attend her movements, and cheer her officers with our presence. He himself is the great attraction; let us follow ever in his wake, mark his signals, steer by his chart, and never fear while he is within hail. Not one ship in the convoy shall suffer wreck; the great Commodore will steer every barque in safety to the desired haven. By faith we will slip our cable for another day’s cruise, and sail forth with Jesus into a sea of tribulation. Winds and waves will not spare us, but they all obey him; and, therefore, whatever squalls may occur without, faith shall feel a blessed calm within. He is ever in the centre of the weather-beaten company: let us rejoice in him. His vessel has reached the haven, and so shall ours.

# Word Live – 9/14/19

# Death by compromise

## Prepare

Restoration, failure, restoration, failure. In just a short time the Israelites had slipped away again. Ask God to protect your heart from arrogance as you read today’s passage – their story could so easily be ours.



## Bible passage: Nehemiah 13:1–31

##### Nehemiah's Final Reforms

1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, 2 because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) 3 When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

4 Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, 5 and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

6 But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission 7 and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. 8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. 9 I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

10 I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. 11 So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. 13 I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers.

14 Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

15 In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. 16 Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. 17 I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? 18 Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

19 When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. 21 But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. 22 Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.   
      Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. 26 Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. 27 Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

29 Remember them, O my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

30 So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. 31 I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits.   
      Remember me with favor, O my God.

## Explore

**Catastrophic failure**

Yesterday’s reading ended with the people signing a covenant, the details of which are set out in [Nehemiah 10:30–39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah+10%3A30%E2%80%9339&version=NIV). It’s worth looking up some time and comparing with this passage, to see just how specifically the people broke all their promises! God’s house was defiled, his worship neglected, his day desecrated and his people polluted. How does this catastrophic failure happen?

**One compromise at a time**

It begins with what we saw yesterday – a cooling off of relationship with God when we don’t see our urgent need of him any more. As we move slowly and steadily away from him we start to ease off on his rules a little. ‘It won’t matter just this once’, ‘I can date him/her without it affecting my faith’, ‘It’s just more convenient to shop on a Sunday…’ One tiny compromise at a time and soon enough we’ve broken all the rules we thought we were so committed to.

**God never gives up**

Nehemiah ends on rather a low note, but our gracious and forgiving God never gave up on his people – and he doesn’t now. Let us run to him, receive his forgiveness, and start again.

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

What compromises are you making in your faith? Where are you tempted to think ‘it doesn’t really matter’? Allow God to show you where you are wandering away from his will – then repent and return to him.

## Deeper Bible study

Religious revivals initially make a big impact, but history demonstrates that their influence lessens with the passing of time. Such is the story told in the book of Nehemiah. By chapter 13 much water has flowed under the bridge since the dramatic events of chapters 8, 9 and 10. Nehemiah had been in Persia for a period and has just returned (vs 6,7). He is dismayed that the vows of the past are now forgotten.

Nehemiah takes steps to reform the community in three key areas. First, he reforms holy space by restoring divine protocol in the Temple (vs 4–9). The priest Eliashib (probably not the high priest of v 28) had taken advantage of Nehemiah’s absence to house Tobiah inside the Temple. Nehemiah sees this as a violation of sacred space and evicts the unlawful resident. Next, the governor reforms holy time by ending the Sabbath commercialisation by visiting Tyrian merchants. The merchants were distracting city residents from resting and worshiping the Lord on the Sabbath (vs 15–22). Finally, Nehemiah conserves holy matrimony by reprimanding men who had married unbelieving wives whose children were unable to follow the language of Israelite worship (vs 23–27).

Like the Judean community, the church today is called to be holy. The church’s holiness is to be less ceremonial and more ethical. It fosters an all-embracing holy-character-forming ethos ([1 Pet 1:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Pet+1%3A16&version=NIV)). As Christians, we also are called to sanctify our time ([Eph 5:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph+5%3A16&version=NIV)). We are to do this constantly, while keeping one day special for worshipping God ([Rev 1:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rev+1%3A10&version=NIV)). We are also commanded to make our sexuality holy by respecting singleness and honouring marriage as divinely instituted ([1 Thess 4:3–8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thess+4%3A3%E2%80%938&version=NIV)). Holiness is an attribute of God which he wishes to share with us. The crunch question – do we really want to be holy?

Too often we see holiness as an option not a necessity. Ask God to create in you a desire to become as like Christ as is possible in this life.

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Messin’ with the natives

One of the hot topics in both Nehemiah ([13:1–3,23–28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah%2013:1–3,23–28;&version=72;)) and Ezra ([9:1 – 10:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezra%209:1%20–%2010:7;&version=72;)) is the rebuking of Israelite men for marrying foreign women.  
  
**Intermarriage**

Intermarriage was forbidden in the Law (see [Deuteronomy 7:1–14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%207:1–14;&version=72;)) for several reasons. It weakened the purity of the Israelite blood line, but most importantly it threatened ‘spiritual purity’. By aligning with another race or culture it was likely you would be tempted to participate in their (heretical) traditions and therefore sin against the Law.  
  
Here in Nehemiah we see exactly that has happened. Half the children of the intermarriages don’t even speak the language of Judah (v 24), and none of the families are living within the Law.  
  
**Not so black and white?**

Where [Deuteronomy 7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%207;&version=72;) is crystal clear on this subject, [Deuteronomy 21:10–14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2021:10–14%20;&version=72;) permits intermarriage with a captive – listing a kind of conversion ritual.  
  
Conversion to Judaism also appears to sanctify intermarriage – most particularly in the story of Ruth. Where the Law previously states that no Moabite is to be accepted up to the tenth generation (see [Deuteronomy 23:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2023:3;&version=72;)), Ruth’s conversion (see [Ruth 1:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth%201:15;&version=72;)) enables David to be king in only the second generation (see [Ruth 4:13–17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth%204:13–17;&version=72;)).  
  
**Hush your mouth!**

There is also a stern warning about maligning those who marry foreigners. When Miriam was moaning about Moses taking a Cushite (probably black) woman for a wife (see [Numbers 12:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers%2012:1;&version=72;)), the Lord struck her down with leprosy for a week (see [12:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers%2012:10;&version=72;))!  
  
Jude Adam

# Today in the Word – 9/14/19

# Speaking of His Wonder

**Read:** [**Psalm 19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19#fen-NIV-14170a)**]**

#### For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1The heavens declare the glory of God;  
    the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
2Day after day they pour forth speech;  
    night after night they reveal knowledge.  
3They have no speech, they use no words;  
    no sound is heard from them.  
4Yet their voice[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19#fen-NIV-14173b)] goes out into all the earth,  
    their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.  
5    It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
    like a champion rejoicing to run his course.  
6It rises at one end of the heavens  
    and makes its circuit to the other;  
    nothing is deprived of its warmth.

7The law of the Lord is perfect,  
    refreshing the soul.  
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
    making wise the simple.  
8The precepts of the Lord are right,  
    giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
    giving light to the eyes.  
9The fear of the Lord is pure,  
    enduring forever.  
The decrees of the Lord are firm,  
    and all of them are righteous.

10They are more precious than gold,  
    than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
    than honey from the honeycomb.  
11By them your servant is warned;  
    in keeping them there is great reward.  
12But who can discern their own errors?  
    Forgive my hidden faults.  
13Keep your servant also from willful sins;  
    may they not rule over me.  
Then I will be blameless,  
    innocent of great transgression.

14May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart  
    be pleasing in your sight,  
    Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 19:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19#en-NIV-14170) In Hebrew texts 19:1-14 is numbered 19:2-15.
2. [Psalm 19:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19#en-NIV-14173) Septuagint, Jerome and Syriac; Hebrew measuring line

According to the National Solar Observatory, the core temperature of the sun is 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. Every second of every day, the sun releases five million tons of pure energy. Consider that the sun is one of trillions of stars in the sky, which were created when God spoke, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky” (Gen. 1:14).

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

Psalm 19 celebrates the truth that it is possible for us to know the Creator of the heavens and the earth. One way we can learn truth about God is by opening our eyes and looking at the world around us. Just like a painting can reveal truth about the artist, the stars and mountains, woods and streams reveal truth about the One who spoke them into being. David declares, “Day after day they pour forth speech” (v. 2). The word “pour forth” is used of a spring bubbling up out of the ground. It is as if the heavens are bubbling over, jabbering away about God.

In the second half of the psalm, David declares that we can know God through His Word. It is perfect and refreshing to the soul (v. 7). If we had to choose between Scripture and a heap of gold, the obvious choice is God’s Word. In addition to giving us wisdom, joy, and life, it warns us of danger and keeps us from errors (v. 11).

Most people in life desire money and pleasure. David here proclaims that Scripture meets both needs. The Word of God is sweeter than honey and more precious than gold. David concludes by thinking about his own speech. He recognizes how pure and true the words of Scripture are and prays that his own words will mirror those same qualities (v. 14).

### Apply the Word

When was the last time you watched a sunset or viewed the stars at night, giving praise to God for His greatness and power? Today, take special notice of the beauty of this created world. Then, as you turn to Scripture, thank God for the clarity and gift of His written revelation. His Word really is more valuable than gold!

### Pray with Us

Josie Scott and Troy Fichter serve at our athletics facility, Moody’s Solheim Center. This Center provides training for our athletes and has made an impressive impact on our surrounding urban community. Join us as we praise God for this outreach!

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/14/19

# Whatever the Cost

 **Read:** [**John 12:37–43**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/14/closet-friends)

### Belief and Unbelief Among the Jews

37Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. 38This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

“Lord, who has believed our message  
    and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+12%3A37%E2%80%9343#fen-NIV-26619a)]

39For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

40“He has blinded their eyes  
    and hardened their hearts,  
so they can neither see with their eyes,  
    nor understand with their hearts,  
    nor turn—and I would heal them.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+12%3A37%E2%80%9343#fen-NIV-26621b)]

41Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

42Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; 43for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

#### Footnotes:

1. [John 12:38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+12%3A37%E2%80%9343#en-NIV-26619) Isaiah 53:1
2. [John 12:40](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+12%3A37%E2%80%9343#en-NIV-26621) Isaiah 6:10

They would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear. [John 12:42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+12%3A42)

The film Paul, Apostle of Christ takes an unflinching look at persecution in the early days of the church. Even the movie’s minor characters reveal how dangerous it was to follow Jesus. Consider these roles listed in the credits: Beaten Woman; Beaten Man; Christian Victims 1, 2, and 3.

Identifying with Christ often came at a high cost. And in much of the world, it’s still dangerous to follow Jesus. Many in the church today can relate to that kind of persecution. Some of us, however, may feel “persecuted” prematurely—outraged any time our faith is mocked or we suspect we were passed over for a promotion because of our beliefs.

Obviously, there’s a colossal difference between sacrificing social status and sacrificing our lives. Realistically, though, self-interest, financial stability, and social acceptance have always been intense human motivators. We see this in the actions of some of Jesus’s earliest converts. The apostle John reports that, mere days before Jesus’s crucifixion, although most Israelites were still rejecting Him (John 12:37), many “even among the leaders believed” (v. 42). However, “They would not openly acknowledge their faith . . . for they loved human praise more than praise from God” (vv. 42–43).

Today we still face societal pressures (and worse) to keep our faith in Christ hidden. Whatever the cost, let’s stand together as a people who seek God’s approval more than human praise.

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

#### Reflect & Pray

We might be tempted to judge the early believers who hid their faith, but are we any different? Are there times we choose to be quiet so we can hide our identification with Jesus?

Jesus, I want to be a close friend of Yours.

#### Insight

When John (12:38–40) quotes Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10, it might appear that he’s blaming God for pre-determining widespread unbelief in Jesus. But when we read both Isaiah and John in context, we see that God decided ahead of time to give His people the freedom to have their own way so that He could show them how far He would go to rescue them from themselves.

John described religious leaders who, for their own political and religious reasons, were afraid to believe in Jesus (John 11:45–53; 12:42–43). Isaiah—a prophet living six centuries before Christ—wrote about a King who would eventually show up in the story and glory of Jesus (Isaiah 6:1–10; John 12:41) and in the God-given freedom of those who refused to believe in Him. Without divine revelation, they couldn’t and wouldn’t believe Christ was their Messiah.

# God Calling – 9/14/19

# When Faith Fails

**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.     Mark 9:24**

This cry of the human heart is as expressive of human need as it was when uttered to Me while I was on earth. It expresses the soul's progress.

As a soul realizes Me and My Power, and knows Me as Helper and Savior, that soul believes in Me more and more. At the same time it is more conscious than before of its falling short of absolute trust in Me.

"Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief." The soul's progress - an increased belief - then a cry for more faith - a plea to conquer all unbelief, all lack of trust.

That cry heard. That prayer answered. More faith, and at the same time more power to see where trust is lacking.

My children seek to go up this path, leading by each stage, nearer to Me.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.    Hebrews 3:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/15/19

# What To Renounce



We have renounced the hidden things of shame…  —[2 Corinthians 4:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+4%3A2)

Have you “renounced the hidden things of shame” in your life— the things that your sense of honor or pride will not allow to come into the light? You can easily hide them. Is there a thought in your heart about anyone that you would not like to be brought into the light? Then renounce it as soon as it comes to mind— renounce everything in its entirety until there is no hidden dishonesty or craftiness about you at all. Envy, jealousy, and strife don’t necessarily arise from your old nature of sin, but from the flesh which was used for these kinds of things in the past (see [Romans 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:19) and [1 Peter 4:1-3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+4:1-3)). You must maintain continual watchfulness so that nothing arises in your life that would cause you shame.

“…not walking in craftiness…” ([2 Corinthians 4:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+4:2)). This means not resorting to something simply to make your own point. This is a terrible trap. You know that God will allow you to work in only one way— the way of truth. Then be careful never to catch people through the other way— the way of deceit. If you act deceitfully, God’s blight and ruin will be upon you. What may be craftiness for you, may not be for others— God has called you to a higher standard. Never dull your sense of being your utmost for His highest— your best for His glory. For you, doing certain things would mean craftiness coming into your life for a purpose other than what is the highest and best, and it would dull the motivation that God has given you. Many people have turned back because they are afraid to look at things from God’s perspective. The greatest spiritual crisis comes when a person has to move a little farther on in his faith than the beliefs he has already accepted.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”?  Disciples Indeed, 389 L

# CCEL – 9/15/19

**Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**—[ROM. 6:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.14)

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.—My brethren, ye . . . are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.—Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.—The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.—Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.—If the Son . . . shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

[Rom. 6:15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.15). -[Rom. 7:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.4). -[I Cor. 9:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.9.html" \l "iCor.9.21). -[I Cor. 15:56,57](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.15.html" \l "iCor.15.56).[Rom. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.2). -[John 8:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.34). -[John 8:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.8.html" \l "John.8.36).[Gal. 5:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.1).

“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.” **[Psalm 112:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.112.html" \l "Ps.112.7)**

Christian, you ought not to dread the arrival of evil tidings; because if you are distressed by them, what do you more than other men? Other men have not your God to fly to; they have never proved his faithfulness as you have done, and it is no wonder if they are bowed down with alarm and cowed with fear: but you profess to be of another spirit; you have been begotten again unto a lively hope, and your heart lives in heaven and not on earthly things; now, if you are seen to be distracted as other men, what is the value of that grace which you profess to have received? Where is the dignity of that new nature which you claim to possess?

Again, if you should be filled with alarm, as others are, you would, doubtless, be led into the sins so common to others under trying circumstances. The ungodly, when they are overtaken by evil tidings, rebel against God; they murmur, and think that God deals hardly with them. Will you fall into that same sin? Will you provoke the Lord as they do?

Moreover, unconverted men often run to wrong means in order to escape from difficulties, and you will be sure to do the same if your mind yields to the present pressure. Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea, “Stand still and see the salvation of God.” For if you give way to fear when you hear of evil tidings, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty, and sustains under adversity. How can you glorify God if you play the coward? Saints have often sung God’s high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had none to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God, “let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

# Word Live – 9/15/19

# Sure salvation

## Prepare

Do you feel close to God or far from him today? Ask him to speak to you through his Word.



## Bible passage: Psalm 69

##### For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of David.

1 Save me, O God,   
       for the waters have come up to my neck.

2 I sink in the miry depths,   
       where there is no foothold.   
       I have come into the deep waters;   
       the floods engulf me.

3 I am worn out calling for help;   
       my throat is parched.   
       My eyes fail,   
       looking for my God.

4 Those who hate me without reason   
       outnumber the hairs of my head;   
       many are my enemies without cause,   
       those who seek to destroy me.   
       I am forced to restore   
       what I did not steal.

5 You know my folly, O God;   
       my guilt is not hidden from you.

6 May those who hope in you   
       not be disgraced because of me,   
       O Lord, the LORD Almighty;   
       may those who seek you   
       not be put to shame because of me,   
       O God of Israel.

7 For I endure scorn for your sake,   
       and shame covers my face.

8 I am a stranger to my brothers,   
       an alien to my own mother's sons;

9 for zeal for your house consumes me,   
       and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

10 When I weep and fast,   
       I must endure scorn;

11 when I put on sackcloth,   
       people make sport of me.

12 Those who sit at the gate mock me,   
       and I am the song of the drunkards.

13 But I pray to you, O LORD,   
       in the time of your favor;   
       in your great love, O God,   
       answer me with your sure salvation.

14 Rescue me from the mire,   
       do not let me sink;   
       deliver me from those who hate me,   
       from the deep waters.

15 Do not let the floodwaters engulf me   
       or the depths swallow me up   
       or the pit close its mouth over me.

16 Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness of your love;   
       in your great mercy turn to me.

17 Do not hide your face from your servant;   
       answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.

18 Come near and rescue me;   
       redeem me because of my foes.

19 You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed;   
       all my enemies are before you.

20 Scorn has broken my heart   
       and has left me helpless;   
       I looked for sympathy, but there was none,   
       for comforters, but I found none.

21 They put gall in my food   
       and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

22 May the table set before them become a snare;   
       may it become retribution and a trap.

23 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,   
       and their backs be bent forever.

24 Pour out your wrath on them;   
       let your fierce anger overtake them.

25 May their place be deserted;   
       let there be no one to dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute those you wound   
       and talk about the pain of those you hurt.

27 Charge them with crime upon crime;   
       do not let them share in your salvation.

28 May they be blotted out of the book of life   
       and not be listed with the righteous.

29 I am in pain and distress;   
       may your salvation, O God, protect me.

30 I will praise God's name in song   
       and glorify him with thanksgiving.

31 This will please the LORD more than an ox,   
       more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.

32 The poor will see and be glad—   
       you who seek God, may your hearts live!

33 The LORD hears the needy   
       and does not despise his captive people.

34 Let heaven and earth praise him,   
       the seas and all that move in them,

35 for God will save Zion   
       and rebuild the cities of Judah.   
       Then people will settle there and possess it;

36 the children of his servants will inherit it,   
       and those who love his name will dwell there.

## Explore

**Where to turn?**

After the success story of Nehemiah, today’s psalm acknowledges the seasons of life when things aren’t going right, when we aren’t able to brush off the insults and threats we receive with Nehemiah’s confidence. Yet despite all his troubles, the psalmist knows where to turn for solace and for salvation: the Lord.

**Through the trials of life**

Notice that regardless of all that is going wrong, all the trials in his life and, we can infer, God’s apparent silence and inaction, the psalmist never doubts God’s existence, his power or his love. When God seems distant, it is all too easy to start to doubt him. Even if we are certain of his existence, we sometimes question his character. Is he good? Is he trustworthy? Can he really help? Does he love me?

**Reality of God’s love**

Psalms like this are a beautiful model of what it looks like to be completely honest about our reality, but to completely rely on God. The psalmist doesn’t pretend that everything is fine; he is totally honest with God and with others about his situation. But he grounds it all in the reality of God’s love and his ‘sure salvation’ (v 13).

[Jennie Pollock](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

## Respond

What is your experience of God’s presence and character in hard times? Talk to him honestly and ask him to reveal the truth to you. You may find [Romans 8:18–39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A18%E2%80%9339&version=NIV) helpful.

## Deeper Bible study

Years ago, when I was studying theology, one of my professors taught us that the psalms are the autobiography of Jesus. This is true of some psalms more than others, but undoubtedly Psalm 69 was regarded as messianic by the apostles and early church. As you read it today, reflect on how Jesus might have thought and felt as he prayed this psalm.

Let’s take time to explore some New Testament quotations from the psalm. John 15:25 tells us that on Maundy Thursday, the day before his crucifixion, Jesus quotes verse 4 (‘Those who hate me without reason’). It is the lens through which he interprets for his disciples the hateful treatment meted out to him by religious leaders. Again, in John 2:17 we learn that verse 9 (’zeal for your house consumes me’) enabled the disciples to deduce Jesus’ motivation in cleansing the Temple. Yet again, in describing the crucifixion all four evangelists allude to verse 21 (they ‘gave me vinegar for my thirst’) ([Matt 27:34; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:28–30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+27%3A34%3B+Mark+15%3A23%3B+Luke+23%3A36%3B+John+19%3A28%E2%80%9330&version=NIV)). In Romans 15:3, Paul quotes verse 9 (‘the insults of those who insult you fall on me’) to anticipate Jesus’ readiness not to please himself. Verses 22–28 of the psalm make difficult reading for us. The early church found them less of a problem. For the psalmist, these verses are a passionate and colourful request to God for justice to be done, but for Paul they are a warning! The judgement requested by the psalmist has become the grim reality from which all hardened enemies of God cannot escape ([Rom 11:7–10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom+11%3A7%E2%80%9310&version=NIV)).

Which parts of Psalm 69 have you found to be autobiographical of Jesus? Are some parts not? Were you conscious of Christ praying with you and for you?

‘When we pray this psalm the prayer does not come out of any personal experience of suffering we may have but out of the sufferings of Christ in which we too are partakers.’1

1 Bonhoeffer, The Psalms

[Fergus MacDonald](https://www.wordlive.org/AboutWordLive/Contributors/M-P/3527733.id#.VknC1XbhCUk)

# Today in the Word – 9/15/19

# God Hears My Cry

### Read: Psalm 20[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#fen-NIV-14184a)]

#### For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1May the Lord answer you when you are in distress;  
    may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.  
2May he send you help from the sanctuary  
    and grant you support from Zion.  
3May he remember all your sacrifices  
    and accept your burnt offerings.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#fen-NIV-14186b)]  
4May he give you the desire of your heart  
    and make all your plans succeed.  
5May we shout for joy over your victory  
    and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the Lord grant all your requests.

6Now this I know:  
    The Lord gives victory to his anointed.  
He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary  
    with the victorious power of his right hand.  
7Some trust in chariots and some in horses,  
    but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.  
8They are brought to their knees and fall,  
    but we rise up and stand firm.  
9Lord, give victory to the king!  
    Answer us when we call!

### Psalm 21[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#fen-NIV-14193c)]

#### For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1The king rejoices in your strength, Lord.  
    How great is his joy in the victories you give!

2You have granted him his heart’s desire  
    and have not withheld the request of his lips.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#fen-NIV-14194d)]  
3You came to greet him with rich blessings  
    and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.  
4He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—  
    length of days, for ever and ever.  
5Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;  
    you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.  
6Surely you have granted him unending blessings  
    and made him glad with the joy of your presence.  
7For the king trusts in the Lord;  
    through the unfailing love of the Most High  
    he will not be shaken.

8Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies;  
    your right hand will seize your foes.  
9When you appear for battle,  
    you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace.  
The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath,  
    and his fire will consume them.  
10You will destroy their descendants from the earth,  
    their posterity from mankind.  
11Though they plot evil against you  
    and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.  
12You will make them turn their backs  
    when you aim at them with drawn bow.

13Be exalted in your strength, Lord;  
    we will sing and praise your might.

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 20:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-14184) In Hebrew texts 20:1-9 is numbered 20:2-10.
2. [Psalm 20:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-14186) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here.
3. [Psalm 21:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-14193) In Hebrew texts 21:1-13 is numbered 21:2-14.
4. [Psalm 21:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+20%e2%80%9321#en-NIV-14194) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here.

As Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, He encountered ten lepers who begged Him for healing. Jesus answered their request, and in accordance with Mosaic Law, instructed the men to show themselves to the priest who would declare them clean. Even so, only one man returned to give praise to God and thank Jesus for His healing touch (Luke 17:11–17).

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. Psalm 20:7

Psalms 20 and 21 remind us to give thanks to the Lord. Today’s passage opens with David on the eve of battle. His people surrounded him, offering a plea on his behalf. They asked that God would “answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you” (v. 1). They asked God to remember the sacrifices and offerings the king had made (v. 3). Ultimately, they prayed for victory.

In the ancient world, it would be tempting to put your hope in war horses, chariots, or, even better, a mighty army. But Israel knew better. They declared, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord​ our God” (v. 7). They remembered the period of the Judges when God raised up deliverers who used weapons like ox goads, donkey jawbones, tent pegs, and clay pots and torches. Salvation did not depend upon military prowess, but upon the Lord’s power.

David was not slow in giving thanks to the Lord. Psalm 21 is a rousing hymn in which David declares, “Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty” (21:5). He was able to achieve victory because the Lord showed up and delivered him (v. 9). This was reason enough for the nation to join David and declare, “Be exalted in your strength, Lord​; we will sing your praise and your might” (v. 13).

### Apply the Word

Once your prayer is answered, it can be easy to forget to thank God. Other issues press for our time and attention. Even worse, we turn to new needs that arise and fail to reflect on the great things God has done. Today, take a few minutes and think about answers to prayer. Give thanks to the Lord for His care and provision.

### Pray with Us

Lord, we pray for thankful hearts. We are grateful for your care and provision for your people. May our prayers, like King David’s, be hymns of praise for your glory, majesty, faithfulness, and love. Thank you for hearing our prayers!

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/15/19

# Unity

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 4:1–6**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/15/unity)

### Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. [Ephesians 4:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Ephesians+4%3A3)

In 1722 a small group of Moravian Christians, who lived in what is now the Czech Republic, found refuge from persecution on the estate of a generous German count. Within four years, more than 300 people came. But instead of an ideal community for persecuted refugees, the settlement became filled with discord. Different perspectives on Christianity brought division. What they did next may seem like a small choice, but it launched an incredible revival: They began to focus on what they agreed on rather than on what they disagreed on. The result was unity.

The apostle Paul strongly encouraged the believers in the church in Ephesus to live in unity. Sin would always bring trouble, selfish desires, and conflict in relationships. But as those who were made “alive with Christ” the Ephesians were called to live out their new identity in practical ways (Ephesians 5:2). Primarily, they were to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (4:3).

This unity isn’t just simple camaraderie achieved through human strength. We are to “be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (v. 2). From a human perspective, it’s impossible to act in this way. We can’t reach unity through our own power but through God’s perfect power “that is at work within us” (3:20).

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

#### Reflect & Pray

How are you experiencing division or unity in your community of faith? What efforts can you make in God’s strength to keep the unity of the Spirit?

Father, You who are over all and through all and in all, live among us in such a way that unity will be present.

#### Insight

Paul and his team planted the church at Ephesus during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19). He returned during his third journey, spending three years there growing the faith of the young believers in Jesus (19:1–41; 20:31). We read of the apostle’s final direct engagement with the Ephesians in Acts 20:17–38. As he was traveling to Jerusalem at the conclusion of his third missionary journey, Paul stopped at the port city of Miletus in western Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) and called for the Ephesian elders so he could invest in the congregation there one final time. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians some years later while he was under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his hearing before Caesar (28:30). Combined together, these points of contact reveal a deeper investment and relationship of Paul with the Ephesians than any of the other churches he served.

To learn more about Paul’s interaction with the Ephesian believers, visit [christianuniversity.org/NT334-03](https://christianuniversity.org/NT334-03).

# God Calling – 9/15/19

# Quiet Strength

Rest in Me. When tired nature rebels it is her call for rest. Rest then until My Life-Power flows through you.

Have no fear for the future. Be quiet, be still, and in that very stillness your strength will come and will be maintained.

The world sees strength in action. In My Kingdom it is known that strength lies in quiet.  "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

Such a promise!  Such glorious fulfillment!  The strength of Peace and the Peace of strength.  Rest in Me. Joy in Me.

My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.  Exodus 33:14

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/16/19

# Praying to God in Secret



When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place… —[Matthew 6:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+6%3A6)

The primary thought in the area of religion is— keep your eyes on God, not on people. Your motivation should not be the desire to be known as a praying person. Find an inner room in which to pray where no one even knows you are praying, shut the door, and talk to God in secret. Have no motivation other than to know your Father in heaven. It is impossible to carry on your life as a disciple without definite times of secret prayer.

“When you pray, do not use vain repetitions…” ([Matthew 6:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:7)). God does not hear us because we pray earnestly— He hears us solely on the basis of redemption. God is never impressed by our earnestness. Prayer is not simply getting things from God— that is only the most elementary kind of prayer. Prayer is coming into perfect fellowship and oneness with God. If the Son of God has been formed in us through regeneration ([see Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)), then He will continue to press on beyond our common sense and will change our attitude about the things for which we pray.

“Everyone who asks receives…” ([Matthew 7:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:8)). We pray religious nonsense without even involving our will, and then we say that God did not answer— but in reality we have neverasked for anything. Jesus said, “…you will ask what you desire…” ([John 15:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:7)). Asking means that our will must be involved. Whenever Jesus talked about prayer, He spoke with wonderful childlike simplicity. Then we respond with our critical attitude, saying, “Yes, but even Jesus said that we must ask.” But remember that we have to ask things of God that are in keeping with the God whom Jesus Christ revealed.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

If a man cannot prove his religion in the valley, it is not worth anything.  Shade of His Hand, 1200 L

# CCEL – 9/16/19

**The Lord pondereth the hearts.**—[PROV. 21:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.21.html" \l "Prov.21.2)

The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.—The Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy.—Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.—There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.

Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.—When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.—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.

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

[Psa. 1:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.1.html" \l "Ps.1.6). -[Num. 16:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.16.html" \l "Num.16.5). -[Matt. 6:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.4).[Psa. 139:23,24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.23). -[I John 4:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.18).[Psa. 38:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.38.html" \l "Ps.38.9). -[Psa. 142:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.142.html" \l "Ps.142.3). -[Rom. 8:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.27).[II Tim. 2:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.2.html" \l "iiTim.2.19).

“Partakers of the divine nature.” **[2 Peter 1:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.1.html" \l "iiPet.1.4)**

To be a partaker of the divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be participated in by the creature. Between the creature and the Creator there must ever be a gulf fixed in respect of essence; but as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a yet diviner sense made in the image of the Most High, and are partakers of the divine nature. We are, by grace, made like God. “God is love”; we become love—“He that loveth is born of God.” God is truth; we become true, and we love that which is true: God is good, and he makes us good by his grace, so that we become the pure in heart who shall see God. Moreover, we become partakers of the divine nature in even a higher sense than this—in fact, in as lofty a sense as can be conceived, short of our being absolutely divine. Do we not become members of the body of the divine person of Christ? Yes, the same blood which flows in the head flows in the hand: and the same life which quickens Christ quickens his people, for “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Nay, as if this were not enough, we are married unto Christ. He hath betrothed us unto himself in righteousness and in faithfulness, and he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Oh! marvellous mystery! we look into it, but who shall understand it? One with Jesus—so one with him that the branch is not more one with the vine than we are a part of the Lord, our Saviour, and our Redeemer! While we rejoice in this, let us remember that those who are made partakers of the divine nature will manifest their high and holy relationship in their intercourse with others, and make it evident by their daily walk and conversation that they have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. O for more divine holiness of life!

# Word Live – 9/16/19

# Question time

## Prepare

We are surrounded by comments and opinions in our social media age. We may have been on the receiving end of harsh words or spoken them ourselves. Bring these to mind now as we turn to the Lord in prayer.



## Bible passage: Luke 9:18–27

##### Peter’s Confession of Christ

18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”

19 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”

20 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

   Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 22 And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

23 Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

## Explore

**Flattering or crushing**

Two questions you should probably never ask: ‘What do people think of me?’, followed by ‘What do you think of me?’ In my experience the replies elicited will either be flattering or crushing, depending, of course, on who is asked. But these are questions that Jesus poses to his followers.

**Who are they following**

The setting here is important. Jesus’ strange request follows a shared time of prayer with his disciples, away from the crowds. In other words, Jesus isn’t fishing for compliments from an adoring public. Neither is he trying to gain validation from his friends. He wants to know whether they understand who it is they are following and why they are pursuing this lifestyle as followers.

**Anointed king**

After a few general religious comments, Jesus presses for a personal response from them. And he gets one from Peter. With no prior warning, Peter says that Jesus is the anointed king, promised long ago and now sent by God. He is unique; there is none other like him. All of God’s power is now invested in this one life.

[Gethin Russell-Jones](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/R-S/3527737.id)

## Respond

What do the people in your life say about Jesus? Who is he to you? A major religious figure or a person in whom all the hopes, longing and dreams of the world meet with a loving God?

## Introduction to Luke 9:18 – 13:9

The title for the following studies is borrowed from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s classic work The Cost of Discipleship, first published in Germany in 1937. Intended as an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, this writing was penned at a time when the need to resist the pressure to conform and to remain focused on Christ could not have been greater. It is well known that Bonhoeffer’s own determination to follow Christ was to lead to his martyrdom in Flossenburg concentration camp in April 1945. The opening words of the book are ‘Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace’.1 Bonhoeffer embodied what he proclaimed, as did the Lord who was his inspiration.

Although these notes on Luke do not contain the Sermon on the Mount (see [Matthew 5–7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%E2%80%937&version=NIV) and [Luke 6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+6&version=NIV) for this), from the very first reading we are confronted with the fact that following Christ is the greatest challenge we will ever face. As he makes his way towards death and martyrdom (and much more) in Jerusalem (‘for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!’ – 13:33), Jesus calls his followers to tread in his steps, to give up everything for the sake of identification with him. This challenge is for us all and is clear. Yet how it is worked out may be different for each one of us.

By following the Gospels closely, we can discern two circles of disciples, one inside the other. The inner circle consisted of men and women (8:1–3) who quite literally followed Jesus on his preaching journeys. They included the twelve (9:1–6) and maybe the seventy-two (10:1), and their lifestyle was stringent. Beyond these were those who stayed in their towns and villages, acting as those who ‘promote peace’ (see 10:6) and as the multitudinous family of disciples who give succour and support ([Matt 19:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+19%3A29&version=NIV)). Both circles are important. Whatever our calling, the challenge is the same: to offer up everything for Christ.

1 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, Reprint, SCM Press, 1959, p35

[Nigel Wright](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/V-W/3529885.id)

## Deeper Bible study

Today’s reading takes us to one of the turning points in this Gospel. Jesus’ disciples have been with him for some time but have yet to make the crucial breakthrough. Jesus now precipitates this by asking directly who they believe him to be (arguably the most important question that could ever be asked). The self-revelation of God in Christ coincides with the disciples’ ability to understand – and Peter gets it: Jesus is God’s Messiah. This is the fulfilment of whatever has gone before. This is the confession that every believer needs to make to be counted among the band of disciples. It is a revelation ([Matt 16:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+16%3A17&version=NIV)).

Yet strangely, given the requirement to confess Christ (v 26) and proclaim him ([Luke 24:45–49](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24%3A45%E2%80%9349&version=NIV)), Jesus’ first commands are to do the opposite (v 21). Why the need for silence? It is a temporary prohibition. Before Christ can be proclaimed as Messiah, expectations have to be managed. Jesus is not the Messiah some were wanting, a warrior who would lead the nation in battle. He would not shed blood, but would have his own blood shed, suffering rejection and being put to death before being vindicated (v 22). Such is the price he would pay for doing God’s will; such is the pattern of life for his followers. To follow Jesus is costly. There are easier options, but none of them leads to being owned by him in his glorious future or to seeing the kingdom of God (vs 26,27).

The Indian evangelist Sadhu Sundar Singh once passed through an icy, perilous pass into Tibet.1 Travelling with a Tibetan stranger, he noticed a badly wounded man on a ledge below. The Tibetan refused to help, fearing for his own life. Yet Singh carried the man to safety. Later, they came across the body of the Tibetan; Singh recalled verses 24 and 25:

‘For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.’

1 Phyllis Thompson, Sadhu Sundar Singh, Authentic, 1992, p90,94

[Nigel Wright](https://www.wordlive.org/Otherstuff/Contributors/V-W/3529885.id)

## Bible Background: Kingdom perspectives

The kingdom of God (Mark and Luke) or the kingdom of heaven (Matthew) is a central theme in the teaching of Jesus.   
  
**Kingdom past**   
  
The idea of the kingdom of God has its roots in the Old Testament promise that David’s descendants would always reign as God’s appointed kings ([2 Samuel 7:4–17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Samuel%207:4%E2%80%9317&version=NIV1984)). The prophets gave further impetus to the idea ([Zechariah 14:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah%2014:9&version=NIV1984)).  
  
 By the time of Jesus this promise was interpreted in a variety of ways, some political, some apocalyptic. But the central expectation was of a time when God would come to his people and rule in a new way.   
  
**Kingdom present**   
  
John announced the kingdom was about to come ([Matthew 3:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%203:2&version=NIV1984)) and Jesus confirmed it ([Matthew 4:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%204:17&version=NIV1984)). He claimed that his activity was a demonstration of the presence of the kingdom ([Luke 11:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2011:20&version=NIV1984); [7:18–23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%207:18%E2%80%9323&version=NIV1984)).  
  
In him, the Messiah, God’s kingdom had come. People are to prepare themselves by repenting and believing ([Mark 1:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%201:15&version=NIV1984)). Membership of the kingdom depends on knowing and obeying Jesus ([Matthew 7:21–23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%207:21%E2%80%9323&version=NIV1984)).   
  
**Kingdom future**  
  
Not everything was complete, however. Jesus looked forward to a time when God’s reign would be seen and experienced by all. God’s universal rule will be established but this will involve judgement ([Luke 13:28–30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2013:28%E2%80%9330&version=NIV1984)).   
  
The actual phrase kingdom of God is not as frequent in the letters as in the Gospels but it does occur several times and the idea of God’s reign which will finally be established in the presence of all is central (eg [Philippians 2:9-11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%202:9-11&version=NIV1984); [1 Corinthians 15:24-28](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:24-28&version=NIV1984)). The kingdom of God is not a physical territory; it is the dynamic rule of God in his creation.   
  
The kingdom of God is not the church; it is broader than the church and the church is the servant of the kingdom, taking the message that God reigns to all nations ([Matthew 28:18-20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2028:18-20&version=NIV1984)).   
  
John Grayston

## Who do you say I am?

[**https://www.youtube.com/embed/SY0\_qNywK1M?rel=0**](view-source:https://www.youtube.com/embed/SY0_qNywK1M?rel=0)

# Today in the Word – 9/16/19

# From Despair to Hope

### Read: [Psalm 22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22)[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14206a)]

#### For the director of music. To the tune of “The Doe of the Morning.” A psalm of David.

1My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
    Why are you so far from saving me,  
    so far from my cries of anguish?  
2My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
    by night, but I find no rest.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14207b)]

3Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
    you are the one Israel praises.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14208c)]  
4In you our ancestors put their trust;  
    they trusted and you delivered them.  
5To you they cried out and were saved;  
    in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6But I am a worm and not a man,  
    scorned by everyone, despised by the people.  
7All who see me mock me;  
    they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
8“He trusts in the Lord,” they say,  
    “let the Lord rescue him.  
Let him deliver him,  
    since he delights in him.”

9Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
    you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.  
10From birth I was cast on you;  
    from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

11Do not be far from me,  
    for trouble is near  
    and there is no one to help.

12Many bulls surround me;  
    strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.  
13Roaring lions that tear their prey  
    open their mouths wide against me.  
14I am poured out like water,  
    and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax;  
    it has melted within me.  
15My mouth[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14220d)] is dried up like a potsherd,  
    and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
    you lay me in the dust of death.

16Dogs surround me,  
    a pack of villains encircles me;  
    they pierce[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14221e)] my hands and my feet.  
17All my bones are on display;  
    people stare and gloat over me.  
18They divide my clothes among them  
    and cast lots for my garment.

19But you, Lord, do not be far from me.  
    You are my strength; come quickly to help me.  
20Deliver me from the sword,  
    my precious life from the power of the dogs.  
21Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
    save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

22I will declare your name to my people;  
    in the assembly I will praise you.  
23You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
    All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
    Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!  
24For he has not despised or scorned  
    the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
    but has listened to his cry for help.

25From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
    before those who fear you[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#fen-NIV-14230f)] I will fulfill my vows.  
26The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
    those who seek the Lord will praise him—  
    may your hearts live forever!

27All the ends of the earth  
    will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations  
    will bow down before him,  
28for dominion belongs to the Lord  
    and he rules over the nations.

29All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
    all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
    those who cannot keep themselves alive.  
30Posterity will serve him;  
    future generations will be told about the Lord.  
31They will proclaim his righteousness,  
    declaring to a people yet unborn:  
    He has done it!

#### Footnotes:

1. [Psalm 22:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14206) In Hebrew texts 22:1-31 is numbered 22:2-32.
2. [Psalm 22:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14207) Or night, and am not silent
3. [Psalm 22:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14208) Or Yet you are holy, / enthroned on the praises of Israel
4. [Psalm 22:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14220) Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text strength
5. [Psalm 22:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14221) Dead Sea Scrolls and some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Septuagint and Syriac; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text me, / like a lion
6. [Psalm 22:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22#en-NIV-14230) Hebrew him

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus makes only one statement from the cross, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani” (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’)” (Mark 15:34). Many people understand Jesus’ words as a cry of despair. Some critics of Christianity have incorrectly argued that Jesus was distraught and did not really understand what was happening to Him. However, for those with ears to hear, this statement is filled with hope. Jesus was not just praying extemporaneously, He was quoting from the opening line of today’s reading, Psalm 22.

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him. Psalm 22:27

In verses 1–11, David asks God why He seems so far off. He reminds God that in the past, He delivered the people of Israel (v. 4). Couldn’t God show that same salvation now? David was insulted by enemies who treated him as less than human (vv. 6–8). He envisioned himself as being surrounded by dangerous animals who were closing in with jaws gaping open to tear him apart (vv. 12–13). He was distraught, helpless, to the point of death (v. 15). He begged God to act on his behalf, “But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me” (v. 19).

However, the psalm takes a sharp turn in verse 22. David’s prayer has been heard and salvation has come! He resolves to praise the Lord in the sacred assembly (v. 22). He goes beyond simply calling Israel to praise the Lord, but addresses “all the ends of the earth” and “all the families of the nations” (v. 27). David declares the Lord is the ruler of all the nations. Because of this, all the nations owe their allegiance to him. This message of salvation is so significant that it even needs to be declared to those who are not born yet (v. 31).

### Apply the Word

When Jesus prayed this psalm on the cross, He was not only giving voice to the grief and pain but also proclaiming truth. This psalm proclaims that Jesus is Lord of all. One day, all nations and people will bow to Him. Even today, we are called to proclaim the victory of Jesus to all people and call them to repent and believe in Him.

### Pray with Us

Join us in prayer for our executive vice president and chief operations officer, Mark Wagner, as he guides Moody’s ministries to better efficiency and effectiveness. Please also pray for the teams of the Operations division.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/16/19

# Don’t Feed the Trolls



**Read:** [**Proverbs 26:4–12**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/16/dont-feed-the-trolls)

4Do not answer a fool according to his folly,  
    or you yourself will be just like him.  
5Answer a fool according to his folly,  
    or he will be wise in his own eyes.  
6Sending a message by the hands of a fool  
    is like cutting off one’s feet or drinking poison.  
7Like the useless legs of one who is lame  
    is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.  
8Like tying a stone in a sling  
    is the giving of honor to a fool.  
9Like a thornbush in a drunkard’s hand  
    is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.  
10Like an archer who wounds at random  
    is one who hires a fool or any passer-by.  
11As a dog returns to its vomit,  
    so fools repeat their folly.  
12Do you see a person wise in their own eyes?  
    There is more hope for a fool than for them.

Make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace. [Colossians 4:5–6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Colossians+4%3A5%E2%80%936)

Ever heard the expression, “Don’t feed the trolls”? “Trolls” refers to a new problem in today’s digital world—online users who repeatedly post intentionally inflammatory and hurtful comments on news or social media discussion boards. But ignoring such comments—not “feeding” the trolls—makes it harder for them to derail a conversation.

Of course, it’s nothing new to encounter people who aren’t genuinely interested in productive conversation. “Don’t feed the trolls” could almost be a modern equivalent of Proverbs 26:4, which warns that arguing with an arrogant, unreceptive person risks stooping to their level.

And yet . . . even the most seemingly stubborn person is also a priceless image-bearer of God. If we’re quick to dismiss others, we may be the ones in danger of being arrogant and becoming unreceptive to God’s grace (see Matthew 5:22).

That might, in part, explain why Proverbs 26:5 offers the exact opposite guideline. Because it takes humble, prayerful dependence on God to discern how best to show others love in each situation (see Colossians 4:5–6). Sometimes we speak up; other times, it’s best to be silent.

May we find peace in knowing that the same God who drew us near while we were still in hardened opposition to Him (Romans 5:6) is powerfully at work in each person’s heart.

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#### Reflect & Pray

How have you witnessed very different approaches being used by God to touch others? How can you better speak the truth in love?

Loving God, help me share Your love with others around me.

#### Insight

The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) is Hebrew poetry that uses a variety of poetic devices. In Proverbs 26, metaphors and analogies are used. The foolish person is compared to weather that’s inappropriate for the season (v. 1), an animal that needs to be constrained (v. 3), a useless leg (v. 7), and a powerless sling (v. 8). These comparisons warn about the self-destructive nature of foolish choices.

# God Calling – 9/16/19

# Assurance

**And the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. - Isaiah 32:17**

MY Peace it is which gives quietness and assurance forever.  My Peace that flows as some calm river through the dry land of life.  That causes the trees and flowers of life to spring forth and to yield abundantly.

Success is the result of work done in peace.  Only so can work yield its increase. Let there be no hurry in your plans.  You live not in time but in Eternity.  It is in the Unseen that your life-future is being planned.

Abide in Me, and I in you so shall you bring forth much fruit.  Be calm, assured, at rest.  Love, not rush.  Peace, not unrest. Nothing fitful.  All effectual.  Sown in Prayer, watered by Trust, bearing flower and fruit in Joy.  I love you.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.  -Hebrews 4:10