# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/24/19

# The “Go” of Preparation



If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. —[Matthew 5:23-24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A23-24%C2%A0)

It is easy for us to imagine that we will suddenly come to a point in our lives where we are fully prepared, but preparation is not suddenly accomplished. In fact, it is a process that must be steadily maintained. It is dangerous to become settled and complacent in our present level of experience. The Christian life requires preparation and more preparation.

The sense of sacrifice in the Christian life is readily appealing to a new Christian. From a human standpoint, the one thing that attracts us to Jesus Christ is our sense of the heroic, and a close examination of us by our Lord’s words suddenly puts this tide of enthusiasm to the test.

“…go your way. First be reconciled to your brother….” The “go” of preparation is to allow the Word of God to examine you closely. Your sense of heroic sacrifice is not good enough. The thing the Holy Spirit will detect in you is your nature that can never work in His service. And no one but God can detect that nature in you. Do you have anything to hide from God? If you do, then let God search you with His light. If there is sin in your life, don’t just admit it— confess it. Are you willing to obey your Lord and Master, whatever the humiliation to your right to yourself may be?

Never disregard a conviction that the Holy Spirit brings to you. If it is important enough for the Spirit of God to bring it to your mind, it is the very thing He is detecting in you. You were looking for some big thing to give up, while God is telling you of some tiny thing that must go. But behind that tiny thing lies the stronghold of obstinacy, and you say, “I will not give up my right to myself”— the very thing that God intends you to give up if you are to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

When you are joyful, be joyful; when you are sad, be sad. If God has given you a sweet cup, don’t make it bitter; and if He has given you a bitter cup, don’t try and make it sweet; take things as they come.  Shade of His Hand, 1226 L

# CCEL – 9/24/19

**It is good for me to draw near to God.**—[PSA. 73:28.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.28)

Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.—A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.—Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.—Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us: . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

[Psa. 26:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.26.html" \l "Ps.26.8). -[Psa. 84:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.10). -[Psa. 65:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.65.html" \l "Ps.65.4).[Lam. 3:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.25). -[Isa. 30:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.30.html" \l "Isa.30.18).[Heb. 10:19,20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.19),[22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.22).

“For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.” [Ezra 8:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezra.8.html" \l "Ezra.8.22)

A convoy on many accounts would have been desirable for the pilgrim band, but a holy shame-facedness would not allow Ezra to seek one. He feared lest the heathen king should think his professions of faith in God to be mere hypocrisy, or imagine that the God of Israel was not able to preserve his own worshippers. He could not bring his mind to lean on an arm of flesh in a matter so evidently of the Lord, and therefore the caravan set out with no visible protection, guarded by him who is the sword and shield of his people. It is to be feared that few believers feel this holy jealousy for God; even those who in a measure walk by faith, occasionally mar the lustre of their life by craving aid from man. It is a most blessed thing to have no props and no buttresses, but to stand upright on the Rock of Ages, upheld by the Lord alone. Would any believers seek state endowments for their Church, if they remembered that the Lord is dishonoured by their asking Caesar’s aid? as if the Lord could not supply the needs of his own cause! Should we run so hastily to friends and relations for assistance, if we remembered that the Lord is magnified by our implicit reliance upon his solitary arm? My soul, wait thou only upon God. “But,” says one, “are not means to be used?” Assuredly they are; but our fault seldom lies in their neglect: far more frequently it springs out of foolishly believing in them instead of believing in God. Few run too far in neglecting the creature’s arm; but very many sin greatly in making too much of it. Learn, dear reader, to glorify the Lord by leaving means untried, if by using them thou wouldst dishonour the name of the Lord.

# Word Live – 9/24/19

# Big questions

## Prepare

Having a good reputation is important for us. All the better if people voice their appreciation and speak well of us. But we turn now to the one who sees us just as we are and has promised to love us come what may.



## Bible passage: Luke 10:25–37

##### **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

25On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

28"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

29But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."   
      Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

## Explore

**Different motivations**

Two questions, different motivations, although neither is flattering to the enquirer. The first is motivated by a desire to test Jesus (v 25). It’s a good question but it’s staged to try to expose Jesus’ faulty knowledge of the Law. The second reflects the questioner’s need to make himself look and feel better: he wanted to ‘justify’ himself (v 29).

**Clear response**

It’s not worth speculating about the lawyer’s state of mind except that he is more interested in proving his point than listening to Jesus. And Jesus offers a very clear response. He joins two commandments from the Law and says this represents all that God requires of everybody.

**Essence of a disciple**

The first command is found in [Deuteronomy 6:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+6%3A5&version=NIV); one that was and still is recited twice daily by pious Jews. In all likelihood, this would have been part of Jesus’ daily prayer life. The second is taken from [Leviticus 19:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19%3A18&version=NIV) and Jesus elevates it to the same status as the other command. Love God and love others fully – that is the essence of being a disciple.

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

## Respond

Scot McKnight refers to verse 27, also found in [Mark 12:29–31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12%3A29%E2%80%9331&version=NIV) and [Matthew 22:37,38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A37%2C38&version=NIV), as the Jesus creed. This is Jesus’ own summary of discipleship and McKnight suggests we memorise, recite and practise these words daily.

## Deeper Bible study

The teaching here is unequivocal: we are to do good to all people, without regard to differences of ethnicity, gender, orientation, religion or any of the other marks that tend to divide us from each other. This extends especially to those people from whom we feel most estranged. This parable is justly famous and is in every sense classically Christian.

To make his point Jesus employs a shock tactic. A despised Samaritan is presented as an embodiment of mercy. The lawyer who asks the question (v 25) knows his Scriptures well enough but evades their full implications. Perhaps he shares the common prejudice against Samaritans (one that Jesus did not share) and so is prevaricating. Or maybe he just likes to argue. Jesus does not answer his question as to who his neighbour might be. Instead he poses a different challenge: to whom can I prove to be a neighbour? And the answer is clear – to anybody who is in need.

The behaviour of the professional religious figures thought to be on their way to minister at the Temple is sometimes considered an indictment of those who place their ritual purity above common humanity. This may be so – and it is a sad fact that the religious are not always merciful. However, they are more likely to be going down the road from Jerusalem rather than up to it (v 31). They have done their religious shift and might be expected now, as exemplary figures, to show some simple compassion. For whatever reason (fear, or lack of concern?), they ‘passed by on the other side’. The Samaritan, in contrast, who might be expected to pass by, takes pity and shows mercy (v 37), a divine quality. Herein lies the shock. The application is that we should do the same, living lives full of mercy. We have no excuse.

God ‘is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.’ ([Luke 6:35,36](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+6%3A35%2C36&version=NIV))

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

## The Good Samaritan

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/yLGLmIaMwgM](view-source:https://www.youtube.com/embed/yLGLmIaMwgM?rel=0)

**Who is my neighbour?**

<https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W180811A3.mp3>

[Transcript](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W180811A3%20audio.pdf)

Who is my neighbour?

So the offering plate goes round at church and you put in some money.

Or your friend calls at a difficult time in great distress, and even though it’s inconvenient you lend a hand. You make a few meals, look after the kids, help out with the cleaning, fix the car, or listen to the problem.

Well done, you are a good neighbour.

You showed love to those in need.

But what about other people?

The homeless person who asks you for some spare change on your way to work. The street drinkers in the parts of town you avoid. The ones who just make you feel uncomfortable. The kids, who hang around your neighborhood and you are sure can't be up to anything good.

Are they your neighbour?

What about those further afield.

The people who made your trainers, or your IPod, in some factory, in some far away part of the world, struggling to survive in conditions you might describe as appalling. The farmers who grow your coffee, or your bananas, or the cocoa in your chocolate. The children, whose faces you see on the television after the next disaster. Hungry, frightened, grieving.

Are they your neighbour?

What about the people sat in rubble where their home once was because a weapon from the government you elected happened to fall on them by mistake? Or the would-be extremist, training for Jihad in some far part of the world who, you're told, is a threat to your way of life.

Or the person at work, or college, or wherever, who just makes your life more difficult. Whose bad attitude or competitiveness means you have to struggle. Or the group of Christians with views that are different to yours. The whole-person approach to faith embarrasses you and makes you want to keep your distance.

Are they your neighbour? In a Globalised, connected world like ours, is there anyone who isn't?

How then, might you be a Good Samaritan to some of them today?

Ben Askew for WordLive www.wordlive.org.uk© Scripture Union 2011

# Today in the Word – 9/24/19

# Our Refuge

**Read:** [**Psalm 31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31#fen-NIV-14333a)**]**

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

1In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;  
    let me never be put to shame;  
    deliver me in your righteousness.  
2Turn your ear to me,  
    come quickly to my rescue;  
be my rock of refuge,  
    a strong fortress to save me.  
3Since you are my rock and my fortress,  
    for the sake of your name lead and guide me.  
4Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,  
    for you are my refuge.  
5Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
    deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

6I hate those who cling to worthless idols;  
    as for me, I trust in the Lord.  
7I will be glad and rejoice in your love,  
    for you saw my affliction  
    and knew the anguish of my soul.  
8You have not given me into the hands of the enemy  
    but have set my feet in a spacious place.

9Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress;  
    my eyes grow weak with sorrow,  
    my soul and body with grief.  
10My life is consumed by anguish  
    and my years by groaning;  
my strength fails because of my affliction,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31#fen-NIV-14342b)]  
    and my bones grow weak.  
11Because of all my enemies,  
    I am the utter contempt of my neighbors  
and an object of dread to my closest friends—  
    those who see me on the street flee from me.  
12I am forgotten as though I were dead;  
    I have become like broken pottery.  
13For I hear many whispering,  
    “Terror on every side!”  
They conspire against me  
    and plot to take my life.

14But I trust in you, Lord;  
    I say, “You are my God.”  
15My times are in your hands;  
    deliver me from the hands of my enemies,  
    from those who pursue me.  
16Let your face shine on your servant;  
    save me in your unfailing love.  
17Let me not be put to shame, Lord,  
    for I have cried out to you;  
but let the wicked be put to shame  
    and be silent in the realm of the dead.  
18Let their lying lips be silenced,  
    for with pride and contempt  
    they speak arrogantly against the righteous.

19How abundant are the good things  
    that you have stored up for those who fear you,  
that you bestow in the sight of all,  
    on those who take refuge in you.  
20In the shelter of your presence you hide them  
    from all human intrigues;  
you keep them safe in your dwelling  
    from accusing tongues.

21Praise be to the Lord,  
    for he showed me the wonders of his love  
    when I was in a city under siege.  
22In my alarm I said,  
    “I am cut off from your sight!”  
Yet you heard my cry for mercy  
    when I called to you for help.

23Love the Lord, all his faithful people!  
    The Lord preserves those who are true to him,  
    but the proud he pays back in full.  
24Be strong and take heart,  
    all you who hope in the Lord.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 31:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31#en-NIV-14333) In Hebrew texts 31:1-24 is numbered 31:2-25.
2. [Psalm 31:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+31#en-NIV-14342) Or guilt

We all need a safe place where we can escape the fears and anxieties of the world. Young children who enter a new and intimidating situation will often hide behind their parent and grab onto their leg. Their parent is their safe place, or refuge. As adults, we choose different things to help feel secure. Our home or a favorite hobby can become a place of refuge.

But I trust in you, LORD; I say, “You are my God.” Psalm 31:14

Psalm 31 has two main movements. The first 18 verses contain a prayer of trust and petition. The second half celebrates an answer to that prayer. In the first section, the themes of trust in God are interwoven with desperate cries for help. David looks to God as his safe place, or his refuge. “In you, Lord​, I have taken refuge . . . be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me” (vv. 1–2). David found the Lord to be faithful and declared his steadfast trust in Him (v. 5). Because of this deep level of trust, David is able to beg God for help. Here, he shouted commands at God, “turn you ear to me, come quickly . . . deliver me . . . save me” (vv. 2, 15–16). David was the object of slander from enemies who wanted to take his life (vv. 11, 13, 17–18). That kind of public humiliation coupled with the threat of violence made David run to the Lord as his refuge.

The tone of the psalm changes dramatically in verses 19–24. David’s prayer has been heard. The Lord is his secure refuge. David declares, “In the shelter of your presence you hide them from all human intrigues” (v. 20). This deliverance motivates David to call all of God’s people to praise the Lord: “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord​” (v. 24).

### **Apply the Word**

On the cross, Jesus was slandered by His enemies and publicly humiliated. He prayed words from this psalm, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus modeled what it looks like to take refuge in the Lord. When surrounded by evil, we can run to the Lord. We know that, ultimately, evil will not have the last word.

### **Pray with Us**

Please support in prayer MBI’s chief marketing officer, Samuel Choy, who works diligently to champion Moody’s public voice and outreach to our donors. We ask that the Holy Spirit provides continued peace and invigoration in his ministry.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/24/19

# Qualified in God’s Eyes

# Devotional Image Read: [Genesis 6:9–18](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/24/qualified-in-gods-eyes)

### **Noah and the Flood**

9This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

11Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14So make yourself an ark of cypress[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#fen-NIV-152a)] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#fen-NIV-153b)] 16Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#fen-NIV-154c)] high all around.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#fen-NIV-154d)] Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 6:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#en-NIV-152) The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
2. [Genesis 6:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#en-NIV-153) That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high
3. [Genesis 6:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#en-NIV-154) That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters
4. [Genesis 6:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9%E2%80%9318#en-NIV-154) The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

[Noah] walked faithfully with God. [Genesis 6:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Genesis+6%3A9)

A technology-consulting firm hired me after college although I couldn’t write a line of computer code and had very little business knowledge. During the interview process for my entry-level position, I learned that the company did not place high value on work experience. Instead, personal qualities such as the ability to solve problems creatively, exercise good judgment, and work well with a team were more important. The company assumed new workers could be taught the necessary skills as long as they were the kind of people the company was looking for.

Noah didn’t have the right resume for the job of constructing the ark—he wasn’t a boat builder or even a carpenter. Noah was a farmer, a man comfortable with dirt on his shirt and a plow in his hands. Yet as God decided how to deal with the evil in the world at that time, Noah stood out because “he walked faithfully with God” (Genesis 6:9). God valued the teachableness of Noah’s heart—the strength to resist the corruption around him and to do what was right.

When opportunities to serve God come our way, we may not feel qualified for the work. Thankfully, God is not necessarily concerned with our skill set. He prizes our character, love for Him, and willingness to trust Him. When these qualities are being developed inside us by the Spirit, He can use us in big or small ways to accomplish His will on earth.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What character qualities do you need God to develop in you? Why is your character so important to God?

Dear God, give me a heart that’s willing to serve You in any way. Equip me in the areas where I lack experience, and fill me with Your Spirit.

#### **Insight**

The words “he walked faithfully with God” describe Noah’s life (Genesis 6:9). The Hebrew word translated “walked faithfully” (some versions have “walked” nkjv, nasb) is used to describe one’s lifestyle or conduct. Twice it’s said of Enoch that he “walked faithfully with God” (5:22, 24). In Genesis 17:1, Abraham was commanded by God to “walk before me faithfully.” Interestingly, we find in Hebrews 11:5–8 that all three of these men—Enoch, Noah, and Abraham—are commended for their faith. Theirs was a genuine faith that compelled them to honor God by the way they lived.

# God Calling – 9/24/19

# Learn of Me

Lord, to whom shall we go?  Thou has the words of eternal life.  John 6:68

Learn of no one but Me. Teachers are to point the way to Me.  After that you must accept Me, the Great Teacher.

The words of Eternal Life are all the words controlling your being, even controlling your temporal life.  Take these too from Me. Have no fear. Abide in Me and accept My ruling.

Be full of gratitude.  Wing up your prayers on Praise to Heaven.  Take all that happens as My planning.  All is well.  I have all prepared in My Love.  Let your heart sing.

But whom say ye that I am?  And Simon Peter answered and said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."  Matthew 16:15-16

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/25/19

# The “Go” of Relationship



Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. —[Matthew 5:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew%205:41&version=KJV)

Our Lord’s teaching can be summed up in this: the relationship that He demands for us is an impossible one unless He has done a supernatural work in us. Jesus Christ demands that His disciple does not allow even the slightest trace of resentment in his heart when faced with tyranny and injustice. No amount of enthusiasm will ever stand up to the strain that Jesus Christ will put upon His servant. Only one thing will bear the strain, and that is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ Himself— a relationship that has been examined, purified, and tested until only one purpose remains and I can truly say, “I am here for God to send me where He will.” Everything else may become blurred, but this relationship with Jesus Christ must never be.

The Sermon on the Mount is not some unattainable goal; it is a statement of what will happen in me when Jesus Christ has changed my nature by putting His own nature in me. Jesus Christ is the only One who can fulfill the Sermon on the Mount.

If we are to be disciples of Jesus, we must be made disciples supernaturally. And as long as we consciously maintain the determined purpose to be His disciples, we can be sure that we are not disciples. Jesus says, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you…” ([John 15:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:16)). That is the way the grace of God begins. It is a constraint we can never escape; we can disobey it, but we can never start it or produce it ourselves. We are drawn to God by a work of His supernatural grace, and we can never trace back to find where the work began. Our Lord’s making of a disciple is supernatural. He does not build on any natural capacity of ours at all. God does not ask us to do the things that are naturally easy for us— He only asks us to do the things that we are perfectly fit to do through His grace, and that is where the cross we must bear will always come.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/25/19

**Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**—[JAS. 1:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.4)

Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.—We glory in tribulations: . . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.—Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.—Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts.

[I Pet. 1:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.6). -[Rom. 5:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3).[Lam. 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.26). -[Heb. 10:34-36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.34). -[II Thes. 2:16,17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiThess.2.html" \l "iiThess.2.16).

“Just, and the justifier of him which believeth.” [Romans 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.26)

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Conscience accuses no longer. Judgment now decides for the sinner instead of against him. Memory looks back upon past sins, with deep sorrow for the sin, but yet with no dread of any penalty to come; for Christ has paid the debt of his people to the last jot and tittle, and received the divine receipt; and unless God can be so unjust as to demand double payment for one debt, no soul for whom Jesus died as a substitute can ever be cast into hell. It seems to be one of the very principles of our enlightened nature to believe that God is just; we feel that it must be so, and this gives us our terror at first; but is it not marvellous that this very same belief that God is just, becomes afterwards the pillar of our confidence and peace! If God be just, I, a sinner, alone and without a substitute, must be punished; but Jesus stands in my stead and is punished for me; and now, if God be just, I, a sinner, standing in Christ, can never be punished. God must change his nature before one soul, for whom Jesus was a substitute, can ever by any possibility suffer the lash of the law. Therefore, Jesus having taken the place of the believer—having rendered a full equivalent to divine wrath for all that his people ought to have suffered as the result of sin, the believer can shout with glorious triumph, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Not God, for he hath justified; not Christ, for he hath died, “yea rather hath risen again.” My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, he is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am, or shall be, or feel, or know, but in what Christ is, in what he has done, and in what he is now doing for me. On the lion of justice the fair maid of hope rides like a queen.

# Word Live – 9/25/19

# Only one thing is needed

## Prepare

Life can seem very cluttered. Meetings, journeys, relationships, objectives, obligations – the list is endless. But where is Jesus asking us to focus? What is the one thing we need to do? Take time to hear God’s still, small voice.



## Bible passage: Luke 10:38–42

##### **At the Home of Martha and Mary**

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

## Explore

**Terrible dualism**

This story can easily make us feel guilty about our spiritual lives, apparently forcing us to choose between being practical or spiritual. And of course, we all think it’s the so-called spiritual choice that’s preferred, trapping us all in a terrible dualism: physical needs are less important than heavenly matters.

**Rest and recovery**

The setting is delightful. After a tough time on the road, this is a chance for some rest and recovery with old friends. This is a place of welcome and hospitality. Whilst Martha prepares food, Mary spends time listening to Jesus. Martha is frustrated by Mary’s indolence, complaining that she is left to do all the work.

**Subversive message**

So, what are we to make of this? Some scholars have seen a subversive message: women also can sit at Jesus’ feet and be his disciples. Male rabbis only had male disciples. In a religiously male world where men had a monopoly on prayer and theology, Jesus is commending Mary for breaking through the glass ceiling and choosing the better part.

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

## Respond

Churches and other Christian communities often force a binary choice on members: some can help in the spiritual ministry whilst others are obliged to be practical. Is culture, gender or background holding me back from responding to the call of Christ?

## Deeper Bible study

Although this passage gives the impression that Jesus and his disciples just happened to come across Martha and Mary, other passages suggest that he was a regular visitor. The village they lived in was Bethany, near Jerusalem, and it was a convenient port of call when Jesus was in Jerusalem for the festivals. They knew him well. This perhaps explains why Martha could be forthright about the catering problems caused by Jesus and his band. The lesson here is often thought to be that Mary and Martha represent two kinds of spirituality, the contemplative and the activist. Yet the deeper lesson relates to the fact that this Mary (a common name at that time) was upsetting convention and breaking new ground. She was not the only Mary who played the pioneer and whose name has been remembered ([John 12:1–8, 20:11–18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+12%3A1%E2%80%938%2C+20%3A11%E2%80%9318&version=NIV)).

It was all to do with the place of women in the religious community of the time. There were reservations about the degree to which women could be entrusted with the Law. Mary was sitting at the Lord’s feet and learning from him, just like any of the male disciples. This did not conform to the typical expectations of the time – and this was part of Martha’s irritation.

It is unlikely that Mary was playing the part of the suffragette (though who knows?). It is more likely that she simply loved the Lord and had been included by him in the circle of those to whom he was making the Father known. She was hungry for more. We have noted that there were other women among Jesus’ close associates – and in the early church their number was added to rapidly. This incident should be read, therefore, as more than a one-off incident. It was a breakthrough – and if we listen we should hear the glass ceiling cracking for good and all.

What are the glass ceilings that you need to break through?

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

## Background: Mary and Martha

**Hospitable family**Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus in a village called Bethany. This small village was on the slopes of the Mount of Olives about a mile and a half east of Jerusalem. It was a convenient place for Jesus to stay when he and his disciples were visiting Jerusalem to attend feasts or for other purposes.   
  
**Different perspectives**In Luke’s Gospel, Martha (a name which in Aramaic meant ‘lady’ or ‘mistress’) does not come across well, being distracted by many things while Mary (whose name derives from the Hebrew name Miriam) shines as the one devoted to listening to Jesus teach.   
  
But a different picture emerges in [John 11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011&version=TNIV). Here it is Martha who goes out to talk to Jesus while Mary stays at home. She dialogues with Jesus in a frank way, and makes a wonderful confession of faith in him as the Messiah and Son of God (v 27). Mary finally goes out to him, but can do little except weep.  
  
**A memorable dinner party**Jesus in compassion raises their brother Lazarus from the dead, an absolutely amazing story ([John 11:38–44](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011:38-44&version=TNIV)). This is followed by a dinner party in their home at Bethany, where Mary anoints Jesus with priceless perfume in preparation for his burial ([John 12:1–11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2012:1-11&version=TNIV)).   
  
In the parallel story in [Mark 14:1–11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2014:1-11&version=TNIV), the woman is unnamed, but it is clearly the same incident. Human virtues of hospitality and friendship when combined with faith in Jesus lead to actions of world-changing significance.

## Life support

<https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W190811A2.mp3>

If you’re a Martha you might like to listen to this reflection by Phil Andrews. Marys might find it helpful too!

[Transcript](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W190811A2%20audio.pdf)

Many of us are busy with jobs, families, church and social obligations. If we don’t give our time and energy to these things we fear our quality of life will suffer. It’s strange then that time spent with God often gets squeezed out of our schedules as it’s the key factor in guaranteeing quality of life.

The way Jesus handles Martha’s complaint about her sister’s apparent idleness tells us a lot about how God sees the time we spend with him. We need to grasp that it’s a huge honour for us to be invited into a dynamic and interactive relationship with one who is at the same time Ruler of the universe! If we are finding it a chore we’re probably not fully appreciating the privilege of it. Martha has very good intentions; to offer the best hospitality she can to this important young rabbi no matter the effort required. We too can get caught up with doing things for God, often very good things, instead of listening to what God wants for us. Mary gets her priorities right. Jesus isn’t looking for us to wait on him first as servants; rather he wants us to wait on his presence, to listen to his every word, to revel in his supernatural closeness. It’s only out of first encountering and reflecting on his love, truth and power that we can hope to serve him effectively in other parts of our lives. That’s the wonder of grace – not what we do for God, but what God does for, in and through us.

James 4 instructs us: ‘Come near to God and he will come near to you’. Our daily devotions demonstrate that we know how much we rely on God. Why not take some time now to focus on him? Begin by praying: ‘Thank you, Lord, that you want me to come near to you because you want to come near to me’.

Phil Andrews for WordLive www.wordlive.org.uk© Scripture Union 2011

# Today in the Word – 9/25/19

# The Blessed One

**Read:** [**Psalms 32**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333)

#### **Of David. A maskil.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333" \l "fen-NIV-14357a" \o "See footnote a)]**

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

3When I kept silent,  
    my bones wasted away  
    through my groaning all day long.  
4For day and night  
    your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
    as in the heat of summer.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333#fen-NIV-14360b)]

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

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

8I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
    I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.  
9Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
    which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
    or they will not come to you.  
10Many are the woes of the wicked,  
    but the Lord’s unfailing love  
    surrounds the one who trusts in him.

11Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;  
    sing, all you who are upright in heart!

### **Read: Psalm 33**

1Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;  
    it is fitting for the upright to praise him.  
2Praise the Lord with the harp;  
    make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.  
3Sing to him a new song;  
    play skillfully, and shout for joy.

4For the word of the Lord is right and true;  
    he is faithful in all he does.  
5The Lord loves righteousness and justice;  
    the earth is full of his unfailing love.

6By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
    their starry host by the breath of his mouth.  
7He gathers the waters of the sea into jars[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333#fen-NIV-14374c)];  
    he puts the deep into storehouses.  
8Let all the earth fear the Lord;  
    let all the people of the world revere him.  
9For he spoke, and it came to be;  
    he commanded, and it stood firm.

10The Lord foils the plans of the nations;  
    he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.  
11But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever,  
    the purposes of his heart through all generations.

12Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
    the people he chose for his inheritance.  
13From heaven the Lord looks down  
    and sees all mankind;  
14from his dwelling place he watches  
    all who live on earth—  
15he who forms the hearts of all,  
    who considers everything they do.

16No king is saved by the size of his army;  
    no warrior escapes by his great strength.  
17A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;  
    despite all its great strength it cannot save.  
18But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,  
    on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,  
19to deliver them from death  
    and keep them alive in famine.

20We wait in hope for the Lord;  
    he is our help and our shield.  
21In him our hearts rejoice,  
    for we trust in his holy name.  
22May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,  
    even as we put our hope in you.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 32:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333#en-NIV-14357) Title: Probably a literary or musical term
2. [Psalm 32:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333#en-NIV-14360) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 5 and 7.
3. [Psalm 33:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+32%e2%80%9333#en-NIV-14374) Or sea as into a heap

In 2019, Time magazine ran an online poll asking participants, “What are your major sources of happiness?” The top four answers all involved relationships. Having and maintaining healthy relationships with children, friends, and family were considered key components of happiness for most people.

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Psalm 32:1

In Psalm 32, David highlights the importance of another relationship as a key to happiness. He declares “blessed” or “happy” are those whose “transgressions are forgiven” (v. 1). The first two verses of this psalm reflect a profound understanding of the nature of sin and forgiveness. David uses three different Hebrew words for sin, here translated as “transgressions . . . sins . . . sin” (vv. 1–2). The first term reflects intentional, or high-handed sin. The second word is the most general term for wrongdoing either intentional or unintentional. The third term references the guilt associated with sin (v. 2).

These three terms for sin are matched by three metaphors for forgiveness. The verb “forgiven” literally means “to carry” (v. 1). That is, our sin is like a burden we cannot bear. Someone must carry it for us. Second, David declares blessed the person whose sins are “covered” (v. 1). Finally, sin is pictured as a debt that is canceled (v. 2). In sum, the blessed person is not the one who never sins. Rather, they are the kind of person who has sinned, but whose burden of that sin has been carried off by God.

In verses 3–5, David recounts a time when he tried to hide his sin. This led to a crushing sense of guilt and shame (v. 4). Finally, he confessed his sin to God and received forgiveness and relief (v. 5). He instructed others to follow his example. Joy and peace are to be found in the confession of sin and receiving of forgiveness.

### **Apply the Word**

Take a few minutes today and reflect on your own life. Do you have unconfessed sin? First Peter 2:24 tells us, “He [Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the cross.” If you confess your sin to God, He is faithful to forgive because Jesus paid our debt. Take time for confession and experience the joy and relief David celebrated today!

### **Pray with Us**

Father, help us to be honest about our sins! We pray the Holy Spirit will work in our hearts and guide us into all truth. Thank you, Jesus, for paying our debt on the cross and giving us freedom in you.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/25/19

# False Places of Safety

 **Read:** [**Mark 1:9–15**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/25/false-places-of-safety)

### **The Baptism and Testing of Jesus**

9At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

12At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Mark+1%3A9%E2%80%9315#fen-NIV-24229a)] by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

### Jesus Announces the Good News

14After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Mark 1:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Mark+1%3A9%E2%80%9315#en-NIV-24229) The Greek for tempted can also mean tested.

The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news! [Mark 1:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Mark+1%3A15)

When our dog Rupert was a puppy, he was so afraid of going outside I’d have to drag him to the park. After getting him there one day, I foolishly let him off his leash. He sprinted home, back to his place of safety.

That experience reminded me of a man I met on a plane, who began apologizing to me as we taxied down the runway. “I’m going to get drunk on this flight,” he said. “It sounds like you don’t want to,” I replied. “I don’t,” he said, “but I always run back to the wine.” He got drunk, and the saddest part was watching his wife embrace him when he got off the plane, smell his breath, then push him away. Drink was his place of safety, but it was no safe place at all.

Jesus began His mission with the words, “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). “Repent” means to reverse direction. The “kingdom of God” is His loving rule over our lives. Instead of running to places that entrap us, or being ruled by fears and addictions, Jesus says we can be ruled by God Himself, who lovingly leads us to new life and freedom.

Today Rupert runs to the park barking with joy. I pray the man on the plane finds that same joy and freedom, leaving behind his false place of safety.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What false place of safety do you run to in times of fear or stress? How will you leave it behind today and place yourself under God’s freeing rule?

Jesus, forgive me for running to anything but You in search of life and happiness. I turn away from those things now, and turn my life over to You. Lead me to real freedom.

#### **Insight**

Why would Jesus go to John to be baptized? (Mark 1:9). Mark records that John came “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (v. 4), and Matthew records that John baptized “with water for repentance” (3:11). Jesus was the only sinless person to walk the earth, so He wasn’t in need of repentance or forgiveness. Some have argued that Christ’s baptism was part of His identification with humanity in its sinful state. Others have said it was the inauguration of His ministry. Perhaps Jesus was identifying with us in His surrender to God and to the Father’s will. That’s what those confessing their sins were doing—surrendering to God—and in that vein, Jesus was doing the same thing.

# God Calling – 9/25/19

# Come and Stay

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.   Matthew 11:28

Yes, come for rest.  But stay for rest, too.  Stop all feverish haste and be calm and untroubled. Come unto Me, not only for petitions to be granted but for nearness to Me.

Be sure of My Help, be conscious of My Presence, and wait until My Rest fills your soul.

Rest knows no fear.  Rest knows no want.  Rest is strong, sure.  The rest of soft glades and peacefully flowing rivers, of strong, immovable hills.  Rest, and all you need to gain this rest is to come to Me. So come.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.  He that feareth is not made perfect in love.  1 John 4:18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/26/19

# The “Go” of Reconciliation



If you…remember that your brother has something against you… —[Matthew 5:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+5%3A23)

This verse says, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you….” It is not saying, “If you search and find something because of your unbalanced sensitivity,” but, “If you…remember….” In other words, if something is brought to your conscious mind by the Spirit of God— “First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” ([Matthew 5:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:24)). Never object to the intense sensitivity of the Spirit of God in you when He is instructing you down to the smallest detail.

“First be reconciled to your brother….” Our Lord’s directive is simple— “First be reconciled….” He says, in effect, “Go back the way you came— the way indicated to you by the conviction given to you at the altar; have an attitude in your mind and soul toward the person who has something against you that makes reconciliation as natural as breathing.” Jesus does not mention the other person— He says for you to go. It is not a matter of your rights. The true mark of the saint is that he can waive his own rights and obey the Lord Jesus.

“…and then come and offer your gift.” The process of reconciliation is clearly marked. First we have the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice, then the sudden restraint by the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit, and then we are stopped at the point of our conviction. This is followed by obedience to the Word of God, which builds an attitude or state of mind that places no blame on the one with whom you have been in the wrong. And finally there is the glad, simple, unhindered offering of your gift to God.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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

# CCEL – 9/26/19

**A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**[DEUT. 32:4.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.32.html#Deut.32.4)

Him that judgeth righteously.—We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.—Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—The soul that sinneth it shall die.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.—The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.—Just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.—Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

[I Pet. 2:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.23). -[II Cor. 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.10). -[Rom. 14:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.12). -[Ezek. 18:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.18.html" \l "Ezek.18.4).[Zech. 13:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.13.html" \l "Zech.13.7).[Isa. 53:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html#Isa.53.6). -[Psa. 85:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.85.html" \l "Ps.85.10). -[Jas. 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.2.html" \l "Jas.2.13). -[Rom. 6:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.6.html" \l "Rom.6.23).[Isa. 45:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.45.html" \l "Isa.45.21). -[Rom. 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html#Rom.3.26). -[Rom. 3:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.3.html" \l "Rom.3.24).

“The myrtle trees that were in the bottom.” [Zechariah 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.1.html" \l "Zech.1.8)

The vision in this chapter describes the condition of Israel in Zechariah’s day; but being interpreted in its aspect towards us, it describes the Church of God as we find it now in the world. The Church is compared to a myrtle grove flourishing in a valley. It is hidden, unobserved, secreted; courting no honour and attracting no observation from the careless gazer. The Church, like her head, has a glory, but it is concealed from carnal eyes, for the time of her breaking forth in all her splendour is not yet come. The idea of tranquil security is also suggested to us: for the myrtle grove in the valley is still and calm, while the storm sweeps over the mountain summits. Tempests spend their force upon the craggy peaks of the Alps, but down yonder where flows the stream which maketh glad the city of our God, the myrtles flourish by the still waters, all unshaken by the impetuous wind. How great is the inward tranquility of God’s Church! Even when opposed and persecuted, she has a peace which the world gives not, and which, therefore, it cannot take away: the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the hearts and minds of God’s people. Does not the metaphor forcibly picture the peaceful, perpetual growth of the saints? The myrtle sheds not her leaves, she is always green; and the Church in her worst time still hath a blessed verdure of grace about her; nay, she has sometimes exhibited most verdure when her winter has been sharpest. She has prospered most when her adversities have been most severe. Hence the text hints at victory. The myrtle is the emblem of peace, and a significant token of triumph. The brows of conquerors were bound with myrtle and with laurel; and is not the Church ever victorious? Is not every Christian more than a conqueror through him that loved him? Living in peace, do not the saints fall asleep in the arms of victory?

# Word Live – 9/26/19

# Teach us how you pray

## Prepare

Imagine how it would feel if we discovered how Jesus prayed and worshipped. Some of us are comfortable with spontaneity whilst others seek a more ordered approach. Read through the prayer given in [Luke 11:2–4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A2%E2%80%934&version=NIV), pausing when anything strikes you as important.



## Bible passage: Luke 11:1–13

##### **Jesus' Teaching on Prayer**

1One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2He said to them, "When you pray, say:   
   " 'Father,   
   hallowed be your name,   
   your kingdom come.   
 3Give us each day our daily bread.   
 4Forgive us our sins,   
      for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.   
   And lead us not into temptation.' "

5Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'

7"Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

11"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

## Explore

**The Lord’s Prayer**

It’s often referred to as the Lord’s Prayer: the one given by Jesus to his disciples. Some church traditions recite it at every liturgical gathering whilst others have a more fluid response. Fluid in the sense that it may not be said regularly or that it is deconstructed around certain themes so that it becomes a series of bullet points; general guidelines. Whilst that may be helpful, the text suggests otherwise.

**Praying with Jesus**

The disciple’s question (v 1) is met by the response that when they pray they are to say… In other words, this is Jesus’ way of praying, and in reciting these words we are repeating Jesus’ words and making the prayer our own. It really is the Lord’s Prayer, authored by him and most likely prayed by him and others twice if not thrice daily. Whenever we recite this prayer, we are praying with Jesus, speaking his words and aligning our will with his.

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

## Respond

Some churches and communities have a rule of faith; a commitment to pray at a set time during the day using common Bible verses and other liturgical texts. Could this work for you and what would yours look like?

## Deeper Bible study

We have formed the picture of a band of disciples close to Jesus and sharing his costly itinerant life. This group is forming an identity, just as the disciples of John the Baptist did before. We can think of them as ‘Jesus people’. When they asked Jesus to teach them to pray, as John the Baptist had taught his followers, he gave them a distinctive prayer – which we now call ‘the Lord’s Prayer’. We could call it a community prayer, since it helps to distinguish us. When we pray like this we are linking with all the Christians there have ever been and are now.

Understood so, the prayer takes on clearer meanings. The disciples had embraced poverty and were dependent on God for their daily bread. They needed to remain harmonious and so had to practise forgiveness towards each other and any who attacked them. They were living riskily, in danger from robbers and religious opponents, so prayed not to be put to the test, but to be protected. Above all, they yearned for the coming of God’s kingdom, when God’s name would be hallowed throughout the earth. Perhaps the most significant thing is that, like Jesus, they were to call God ‘Father’. If earthly fathers know how to be generous, he says, how much more will our heavenly Father give good gifts, and the Holy Spirit, to those who ask (vs 11–13)? There is, therefore, every encouragement to ask, seek and knock at the door of God’s generosity with the assurance that there will be a gracious response.

Today we are sensitive to gendered language, when it can be interpreted to bolster patriarchy. The issue in this prayer is not the power of males but the tenderness and kindness of God. This God is near to us and is on our side, not on our case.

Is there an issue on which you need to seek the Lord today?

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

## The Lord’s Prayer

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/HoqhzWx3cEk](view-source:https://www.youtube.com/embed/HoqhzWx3cEk?rel=0)

# Today in the Word – 9/26/19

# Taste and See

### **Read:** [**Psalm 34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34#fen-NIV-14390a)**][[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34" \l "fen-NIV-14390b" \o "See footnote b)]**

#### **Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.**

1I will extol the Lord at all times;  
    his praise will always be on my lips.  
2I will glory in the Lord;  
    let the afflicted hear and rejoice.  
3Glorify the Lord with me;  
    let us exalt his name together.

4I sought the Lord, and he answered me;  
    he delivered me from all my fears.  
5Those who look to him are radiant;  
    their faces are never covered with shame.  
6This poor man called, and the Lord heard him;  
    he saved him out of all his troubles.  
7The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,  
    and he delivers them.

8Taste and see that the Lord is good;  
    blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.  
9Fear the Lord, you his holy people,  
    for those who fear him lack nothing.  
10The lions may grow weak and hungry,  
    but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.  
11Come, my children, listen to me;  
    I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
12Whoever of you loves life  
    and desires to see many good days,  
13keep your tongue from evil  
    and your lips from telling lies.  
14Turn from evil and do good;  
    seek peace and pursue it.

15The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
    and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
16but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil,  
    to blot out their name from the earth.

17The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;  
    he delivers them from all their troubles.  
18The Lord is close to the brokenhearted  
    and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

19The righteous person may have many troubles,  
    but the Lord delivers him from them all;  
20he protects all his bones,  
    not one of them will be broken.

21Evil will slay the wicked;  
    the foes of the righteous will be condemned.  
22The Lord will rescue his servants;  
    no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 34:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34#en-NIV-14390) This psalm is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
2. [Psalm 34:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34#en-NIV-14390) In Hebrew texts 34:1-22 is numbered 34:2-23.

“Out of the frying pan and into the fire” describes the experience of getting out of one difficult situation only to land in another. In 1 Samuel 21, David was on the run from King Saul. He went to the last place anyone would expect to find him, the Philistine city of Gath. However, officials there identified him as David, the man who had killed thousands of Philistines in battle. In response, David feigned insanity, and was able to get away. Reflecting upon that experience, David wrote Psalm 34.

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Psalm 34:8

In 1 Samuel 21, it looks like David got out of a difficult situation using only his wits and acting skills. However, David knew better. He confessed, “I sought the Lord​, and he answered me . . . This poor man called, and the Lord​ heard him” (vv. 4, 6). He understood that his rescue was the result of answered prayer. This psalm illustrates the truth that there is no contradiction between faithfully using our talents and skills and being fully reliant upon the Lord. In a difficult situation, David prayed to the Lord and tried to work out a plan for escape. Upon his deliverance, he recognized that the Lord should get the credit.

After this remarkable answer to prayer David urged others to trust in the Lord. Verses 8–14 contain ten imperatives calling the congregation to “taste and see . . . come and listen” (vv. 8, 11). He encourages the faithful to “fear the Lord​” (v. 9), to trust fully in Him. Having a proper fear of the Lord calms our hearts from other fears (v. 4). It is important to note that having a proper fear of the Lord does not make us immune to trouble (v. 19). But it does mean we can trust that God is with us and hears our prayers.

### **Apply the Word**

When we are in a difficult situation, it is easy to fall into one of two traps. First, we can work to resolve the trouble while ignoring God. Or, second, we can pray for God to fix the situation while doing nothing. This psalm encourages us to cry out to God for help and to use our thinking and resources in the strength the Lord provides.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord God, we cry out to you for help—no matter the season of life or the situation we may be in. We pray we will always have the desire to “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed the one who takes refuge in him” (Ps. 34:8).

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/26/19

# Faith-Stand

# Devotional Image Read: [John 19:38–42](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/26/faith-stand)

### **The Burial of Jesus**

38Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. 39He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+19%3A38%E2%80%9342" \l "fen-NIV-26865a" \o "See footnote a)] 40Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 19:39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+19%3A38%E2%80%9342#en-NIV-26865) Or about 34 kilograms

Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. [John 19:40](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=John+19%3A40)

Desmond Doss enlisted to serve in World War II as a non-combatant. Though his religious beliefs prevented him from carrying a gun, Doss ably served as a combat medic. In one battle, he withstood intense and repeated enemy fire to pull seventy-five soldiers in his unit to safety after they had been injured. His story is told in the documentary The Conscientious Objector and dramatized in the film Hacksaw Ridge.

A roll call of the heroes of Christian faith includes such courageous characters as Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, and Paul. Yet there are some unsung heroes like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who risked their standing with the Jewish leaders to take Christ’s crucified body and give Him a decent burial (John 19:40–42). This was a bold move from a fearful, secret disciple of Jesus and another, Nicodemus, who had previously dared to visit Him only at night (vv. 38–39). Even more impressive is that they took their faith-stand before Jesus rose victorious from the grave. Why?

Perhaps the manner of Jesus’s death and the events that immediately followed (Matthew 27:50–54) crystallized the fledgling faith of these fearful followers. Maybe they learned to focus on who God is rather than what man could do to them. Whatever the inspiration, may we follow their example and exhibit courage to take risks of faith in our God—for others today.

By:  [Remi Oyedele](https://odb.org/author/remioyedele/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

In what ways have you lived courageously for your faith in Jesus? What can you do differently that might show your faith to the world?

Courage [is] not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. Nelson Mandela

#### **Insight**

Jewish burial customs required that the dead be buried within twenty-four hours. Jewish law dictated that a crucified body must be taken down and not left exposed overnight (Deuteronomy 21:22–23; John 19:31). Jesus would have been buried with the other two convicted criminals in a common grave if Joseph hadn’t asked Pilate for His body (John 19:38). Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy and influential leader of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish judicial body. He was a good and upright man who was waiting for the kingdom of God. Though he was a secret disciple of Jesus, he wasn’t afraid to disagree with the Sanhedrin’s decision to put the Savior to death (Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50–52). Joseph places Christ’s body “in his own new tomb” (Matthew 27:60). That Jesus was buried in a rich man’s tomb was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9.

# God Calling – 9/26/19

# Serve All

I am among you as one that serveth.

Yes! remember to serve all.  Be ready to prove your Sonship by service.  Look on all you meet as guests in your Father's House, to be treated with Love, with all consideration, with gentleness.

As a servant of all think no work beneath you.  Be ever ready to do all you can for others.  Serve. Serve. Serve.

There is a gladness in service, a Joy in doing My Will for others, in being My expression of all good for them.

Remember that, when you serve others, you are acting for your Master and Lord who washed His disciples' feet.  So, in service for others, express your Love for Me.

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.  Matthew 20:27

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/27/19

# The “Go” of Renunciation



…someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." —[Luke 9:57](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:57&version=KJV)

Our Lord’s attitude toward this man was one of severe discouragement, “for He knew what was in man” ([John 2:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+2:25)). We would have said, “I can’t imagine why He lost the opportunity of winning that man! Imagine being so cold to him and turning him away so discouraged!” Never apologize for your Lord. The words of the Lord hurt and offend until there is nothing left to be hurt or offended. Jesus Christ had no tenderness whatsoever toward anything that was ultimately going to ruin a person in his service to God. Our Lord’s answers were not based on some whim or impulsive thought, but on the knowledge of “what was in man.” If the Spirit of God brings to your mind a word of the Lord that hurts you, you can be sure that there is something in you that He wants to hurt to the point of its death.

[Luke 9:58](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:58&version=KJV). These words destroy the argument of serving Jesus Christ because it is a pleasant thing to do. And the strictness of the rejection that He demands of me allows for nothing to remain in my life but my Lord, myself, and a sense of desperate hope. He says that I must let everyone else come or go, and that I must be guided solely by my relationship to Him. And He says, “…the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

[Luke 9:59](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:59&version=KJV). This man did not want to disappoint Jesus, nor did he want to show a lack of respect for his father. We put our sense of loyalty to our relatives ahead of our loyalty to Jesus Christ, forcing Him to take last place. When your loyalties conflict, always obey Jesus Christ whatever the cost.

[Luke 9:61](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%209:61&version=KJV). The person who says, “Lord, I will follow You, but…,” is the person who is intensely ready to go, but never goes. This man had reservations about going. The exacting call of Jesus has no room for good-byes; good-byes, as we often use them, are pagan, not Christian, because they divert us from the call. Once the call of God comes to you, start going and never stop.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Beware of pronouncing any verdict on the life of faith if you are not living it. Not Knowing Whither, 900 R

# CCEL – 9/27/19

**Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.**—[I PET. 5:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.6)

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see we beseech thee, we are all thy people.—Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.—It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

[Prov. 16:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.16.html" \l "Prov.16.5).[Isa. 64:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.64.html" \l "Isa.64.8). -[Jer. 31:18,19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.31.html" \l "Jer.31.18). -[Lam. 3:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.27).[Job 5:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.5.html" \l "Job.5.6).

“Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!” [Deuteronomy 33:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.33.html" \l "Deut.33.29)

He who affirms that Christianity makes men miserable, is himself an utter stranger to it. It were strange indeed, if it made us wretched, for see to what a position it exalts us! It makes us sons of God. Suppose you that God will give all the happiness to his enemies, and reserve all the mourning for his own family? Shall his foes have mirth and joy, and shall his home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Shall the sinner, who has no part in Christ, call himself rich in happiness, and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars? No, we will rejoice in the Lord always, and glory in our inheritance, for we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it worketh for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness; and therefore by the aid of the divine Comforter, we, the “people saved of the Lord,” will joy in the God of our salvation. We are married unto Christ; and shall our great Bridegroom permit his spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto him: we are his members, and though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in him. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Inheritors of joy forever, we have foretastes of our portion. There are streaks of the light of joy to herald our eternal sunrising. Our riches are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?”

# Word Live – 9/27/19

# Clash of kingdoms

## Prepare

Jesus meets us where he finds us and bids us to follow him. Our commitment is not to an idea, or a set of doctrines, but to a living person who is the King of all creation. We’re either for him or against him.



## Bible passage: Luke 11:14–28

##### **Jesus and Beelzebub**

14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. 15 But some of them said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.” 16 Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. 18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

21 “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.

23 “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.

24 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ 25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”

28 He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

## Explore

**Verbal sparks fly**

In the prayer given to his disciples (11:2–4), Jesus taught them to align themselves with God’s coming kingdom. In this reading, an incident of exorcism allows Jesus to address the differences between God’s kingdom and Satan’s. As the verbal sparks fly, Jesus is accused by some of being a practitioner of the dark arts whilst others goad him into giving further ‘signs’. Jesus’ defence of his actions is vivid, drawing on a strange episode in the life of Aaron, Moses’ brother.

**No middle way**

In [Exodus 8:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+8%3A19&version=NIV), the magicians of Pharaoh describe Aaron’s miraculous power as the finger of God at work – his intimate actions visible before their very eyes. Jesus says the same finger is now at work in his ministry. The kingdom is now coming close to them; in fact it’s breaking in on them. At a time when the prevailing world view around us is largely secular, this incendiary encounter between Jesus and his critics reminds us of the realities of evil and God’s goodness. There is no middle way.

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

## Respond

How do we view the world around us? Are we surrounded by political, social, scientific forces that shape us all or do we see the finger of God at work?

## Deeper Bible study

**For 'Deeper Bible study' today, please also read Luke 11:29–36**

It is sometimes said that people do not change their minds easily. We may ask for evidence, but how we interpret that evidence can depend on our prejudices. We have seen much evidence so far of Jesus’ power to heal and to save and of his mighty acts, but here comes an alternative explanation: Jesus does what he does because he is empowered by ‘the prince of demons’ (v 15). Likewise, Jesus was sometimes regarded as a magician and a deceiver ([John 7:47](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+7%3A47&version=NIV)). Behind these claims lies the obvious fact that people did not, and do not, want to recognise the ‘finger of God’ and the coming of the kingdom in Jesus (v 20).

It is in this context that Jesus makes the claim that those who are not for him are against him (v 23), seemingly in contradiction to 9:49,50. The contradiction is only apparent, though. The person driving out demons was doing so ‘in your name’ and so had in his heart a sympathy towards Jesus. In this section there is no such sympathy, only hostility. Until they get over it, there is not much to be done. It is like throwing your pearls to pigs for them to be trampled underfoot ([Matt 7:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+7%3A6+&version=NIV)). Likewise the demand for a sign from heaven (v 16) was insincere. Jesus was not playing games with his mighty acts for the sake of the cynical; he was healing the oppressed.

There was one sign that would be given, however: the ‘sign of Jonah’ (vs 29–32). Jonah preached judgement and repentance and was a sign of resurrection on the third day ([Matt 12:40](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt+12%3A40&version=NIV)). However, there is not much that can be done about hard hearts until people repent. There has to be a crack, a little bit of space for the light to get in and the darkness to be dispelled (vs 35,36).

Pray for the hard of heart, for a crack in their defences where the light can get in.

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

## Divided kingdom



## You are enough for me

<https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W230811A2.mp3>

It’s all too easy to look for signs and wonders from God, but do we really need any more? After all, we’re surrounded by them.

[Transcript](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W230811A2%20transcript.pdf)

OK Lord, so I know you’re the Son of God. And I know that you love me. All I need to do is look in the Bible.

But that’s not enough for me. I want more proof, please.

I know that you put the stars into the sky, and created the sunshine and the rain. The trees and the flowers are all examples of your handiwork too. All I need to do is look out of the window.

But that’s not enough for me. I want more proof, please.

I know that you’re with us during our triumphs and disasters – a constant source of strength and support. All I need to do is look at history.

But that’s not enough for me. I want more proof, please.

I know that you’re a God of blessing. You look after your children, and guide them like the loving Father you are. All I need to do is look at my life.

But that’s not enough for me. I want more proof, please.

I know that you died for me in order to give me life in all its fullness, which means that I don’t need to fear anything. All I need to do is look at the cross.

Oh Lord, I’ve been a fool. I’m surrounded by your signs and wonders. They’re all the proof I need. You are enough for me.

Andy Evans for WordLive www.wordlive.org.uk© Scripture Union 2011

# Today in the Word – 9/27/19

# Be Not Proud

**Read:** [**Psalms 35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336)

#### **Of David.**

1Contend, Lord, with those who contend with me;  
    fight against those who fight against me.  
2Take up shield and armor;  
    arise and come to my aid.  
3Brandish spear and javelin[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-14414a)]  
    against those who pursue me.  
Say to me,  
    “I am your salvation.”

4May those who seek my life  
    be disgraced and put to shame;  
may those who plot my ruin  
    be turned back in dismay.  
5May they be like chaff before the wind,  
    with the angel of the Lord driving them away;  
6may their path be dark and slippery,  
    with the angel of the Lord pursuing them.

7Since they hid their net for me without cause  
    and without cause dug a pit for me,  
8may ruin overtake them by surprise—  
    may the net they hid entangle them,  
    may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.  
9Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord  
    and delight in his salvation.  
10My whole being will exclaim,  
    “Who is like you, Lord?  
You rescue the poor from those too strong for them,  
    the poor and needy from those who rob them.”

11Ruthless witnesses come forward;  
    they question me on things I know nothing about.  
12They repay me evil for good  
    and leave me like one bereaved.  
13Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth  
    and humbled myself with fasting.  
When my prayers returned to me unanswered,  
14    I went about mourning  
    as though for my friend or brother.  
I bowed my head in grief  
    as though weeping for my mother.  
15But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;  
    assailants gathered against me without my knowledge.  
    They slandered me without ceasing.  
16Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked;[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336" \l "fen-NIV-14427b" \o "See footnote b)]  
    they gnashed their teeth at me.

17How long, Lord, will you look on?  
    Rescue me from their ravages,  
    my precious life from these lions.  
18I will give you thanks in the great assembly;  
    among the throngs I will praise you.  
19Do not let those gloat over me  
    who are my enemies without cause;  
do not let those who hate me without reason  
    maliciously wink the eye.  
20They do not speak peaceably,  
    but devise false accusations  
    against those who live quietly in the land.  
21They sneer at me and say, “Aha! Aha!  
    With our own eyes we have seen it.”

22Lord, you have seen this; do not be silent.  
    Do not be far from me, Lord.  
23Awake, and rise to my defense!  
    Contend for me, my God and Lord.  
24Vindicate me in your righteousness, Lord my God;  
    do not let them gloat over me.  
25Do not let them think, “Aha, just what we wanted!”  
    or say, “We have swallowed him up.”

26May all who gloat over my distress  
    be put to shame and confusion;  
may all who exalt themselves over me  
    be clothed with shame and disgrace.  
27May those who delight in my vindication  
    shout for joy and gladness;  
may they always say, “The Lord be exalted,  
    who delights in the well-being of his servant.”

28My tongue will proclaim your righteousness,  
    your praises all day long.

### **Read: Psalm 36[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#fen-NIV-14440c)**]**

#### **For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord.**

1I have a message from God in my heart  
    concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336" \l "fen-NIV-14440d" \o "See footnote d)]  
There is no fear of God  
    before their eyes.

2In their own eyes they flatter themselves  
    too much to detect or hate their sin.  
3The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;  
    they fail to act wisely or do good.  
4Even on their beds they plot evil;  
    they commit themselves to a sinful course  
    and do not reject what is wrong.

5Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,  
    your faithfulness to the skies.  
6Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,  
    your justice like the great deep.  
    You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.  
7How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
    People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
8They feast on the abundance of your house;  
    you give them drink from your river of delights.  
9For with you is the fountain of life;  
    in your light we see light.

10Continue your love to those who know you,  
    your righteousness to the upright in heart.  
11May the foot of the proud not come against me,  
    nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.  
12See how the evildoers lie fallen—  
    thrown down, not able to rise!

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 35:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-14414) Or and block the way
2. [Psalm 35:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-14427) Septuagint; Hebrew may mean Like an ungodly circle of mockers,
3. [Psalm 36:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-14440) In Hebrew texts 36:1-12 is numbered 36:2-13.
4. [Psalm 36:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+35%e2%80%9336#en-NIV-14440) Or A message from God: The transgression of the wicked / resides in their hearts.

In his masterpiece, Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote perceptively about pride. He said, “As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Psalm 36:5

In a similar way, the wicked have a skewed view of themselves and of God. The psalms often paint a contrasting portrait of the righteous and the wicked. The main difference is not that one is sinless and the other sinful. In fact, the righteous often openly confess their sin to God. Rather, the main distinction between the two is that the righteous fear God and recognize their dependence upon Him; the wicked do not.

Psalm 36 focuses on the contrast between the wicked and God. Because the wicked do not fear God, they look to themselves as the most important reality in the universe. This leads them to flatter and deceive themselves (vv. 2–3). Their willful self-deception results in failure to “act wisely or do good” (v. 3). Instead, they become busy plotting and scheming against others (v. 4).

In marked contrast, the Lord’s attributes of love, faithfulness, righteousness, and justice are celebrated (vv. 5–6). They are as important and as impressive as the “heavens,” “skies,” “highest mountains,” and “great deep” (vv. 5–6). Instead of plotting the destruction of others, the Lord preserves “both people and animals” (v. 6). The Lord provides food, shelter, and protection to all who take refuge in Him (v. 7). The proper response to the Lord’s remarkable care and provision is one of humility, gratitude, and trust. This sense of dependence on God is beautifully stated in verse 9: “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”

### **Apply the Word**

It bothers us when we see the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. But Psalm 36 encourages us to focus instead on the greatness of God. Reflect on ways in which you have experienced God’s faithfulness, love, care, and provision. Celebrate your dependence on Him and remember that one day, God’s justice will be accomplished (v. 12).

### **Pray with Us**

Jim Elliott, vice president of Stewardship, and his staff work diligently to cultivate relationships with our donors. Your prayers will be an encouragement for them, as they strive to meet the needs of MBI for His great glory.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/27/19

# Live Like Jesus Is Coming

 **Read:** [**Matthew 25:1–13**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/27/live-like-jesus-is-coming)

### **The Parable of the Ten Virgins**

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

7“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

13“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. [Matthew 25:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Matthew+25%3A13)

I’m inspired by country singer Tim McGraw’s song “Live Like You Were Dying.” In it he describes some of the exciting “bucket list” things a man did after receiving some bad news about his health. He also chose to love and forgive people more freely—speaking to them more tenderly. The song recommends that we live well, as if knowing our lives will end soon.

This song reminds us that our time is limited. It’s important for us to not put off for tomorrow what we can do today, because one day we’ll run out of tomorrows. This is particularly urgent for believers in Jesus, who believe that Jesus may return at any moment (perhaps in the very second you’re reading this sentence!). Jesus urges us to be ready, not living like the five “foolish” virgins who were caught unprepared when the bridegroom returned (Matthew 25:6–10).

But McGraw’s song doesn’t tell the whole story. We who love Jesus will never run out of tomorrows. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die” (John 11:25–26). Our life in Him never ends.

So don’t live like you’re dying. Because you’re not. Rather, live like Jesus is coming. Because He is!

By:  [Mike Wittmer](https://odb.org/author/mwittmer/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How will you live today like Jesus is coming soon? How does knowing He could return any day affect your choices?

Jesus, I look forward to the day You’ll return. May I use the time I’ve been given to honor You and to serve others well.

#### **Insight**

What is the “kingdom of heaven” referred to in Matthew 25:1? This phrase occurs thirty-one times in the New Testament—only in Matthew. It’s first used by John the Baptist: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (3:2). Just as these are the first recorded words of John when he begins his ministry, they’re also Christ’s first words after He initiates His own ministry (4:17). Most scholars consider this phrase another name for the kingdom of God. Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible defines it as “the sovereign rule of God, initiated by Christ’s earthly ministry and to be consummated when ‘the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ’ (Revelation 11:15).”

# God Calling – 9/27/19

# Divine Restraint

Is My Hand shortened that it cannot save?  No! My power to save increases as your power to understand My Salvation increases.  So from Strength to Strength, from Power to Power, we go in Union.

Limitless is My miracle-working Power in the Universe, though it has limitations in each individual life, but only to the extent of the lack of vision of that individual.  There is no limit to My Power to save.  Also there is no limit to My desire and longing to save.  My Hand is not shortened and it is "stretched out still," longing and waiting to be allowed to bless and help and save.

Think how tenderly I respect the right of each individual soul.  Never forcing upon it My Help, My Salvation.  Perhaps in all My suffering for humanity that is the hardest, the restraining of the Divine Impatience and longing to help, until the call of the soul gives Me My right to act.

Think of Love shown in this. Comfort My waiting, loving, longing Heart by claiming My Help, Guidance, and Miracle-working Power.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.  Isaiah 9:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/28/19

# The “Go” of Unconditional IdentificationThe

Jesus…said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor…and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." —[Mark 10:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+10%3A21%C2%A0)

The rich young ruler had the controlling passion to be perfect. When he saw Jesus Christ, he wanted to be like Him. Our Lord never places anyone’s personal holiness above everything else when He calls a disciple. Jesus’ primary consideration is my absolute annihilation of my right to myself and my identification with Him, which means having a relationship with Him in which there are no other relationships. [Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26) has nothing to do with salvation or sanctification, but deals solely with unconditional identification with Jesus Christ. Very few of us truly know what is meant by the absolute “go” of unconditional identification with, and abandonment and surrender to, Jesus.

“Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him…” ([Mark 10:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10:21)). This look of Jesus will require breaking your heart away forever from allegiance to any other person or thing. Has Jesus ever looked in this way at you? This look of Jesus transforms, penetrates, and captivates. Where you are soft and pliable with God is where the Lord has looked at you. If you are hard and vindictive, insistent on having your own way, and always certain that the other person is more likely to be in the wrong than you are, then there are whole areas of your nature that have never been transformed by His gaze.

“One thing you lack….” From Jesus Christ’s perspective, oneness with Him, with nothing between, is the only good thing.

“…sell whatever you have….” I must humble myself until I am merely a living person. I must essentially renounce possessions of all kinds, not for salvation (for only one thing saves a person and that is absolute reliance in faith upon Jesus Christ), but to follow Jesus. “…come…and follow Me.” And the road is the way He went.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Christianity is not consistency to conscience or to convictions; Christianity is being true to Jesus Christ.  Biblical Ethics, 111 L

# CCEL – 9/28/19

**They shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.**—[NUM. 6:27.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Num.6.html" \l "Num.6.27)

O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.—We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

All people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.—The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.—Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?—The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

[Isa. 26:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.26.html" \l "Isa.26.13). -[Isa. 63:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.63.html" \l "Isa.63.19).[Deut. 28:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.28.html" \l "Deut.28.10). -[I Sam. 12:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.12.html#iSam.12.22).[Dan. 9:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Dan.9.html" \l "Dan.9.19). -[Psa. 79:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.79.html" \l "Ps.79.9). -[Prov. 18:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.18.html" \l "Prov.18.10).

“The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.” [Psalm 33:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.33.html" \l "Ps.33.13)

Perhaps no figure of speech represents God in a more gracious light than when he is spoken of as stooping from his throne, and coming down from heaven to attend to the wants and to behold the woes of mankind. We love him, who, when Sodom and Gomorrah were full of iniquity, would not destroy those cities until he had made a personal visitation of them. We cannot help pouring out our heart in affection for our Lord who inclines his ear from the highest glory, and puts it to the lip of the dying sinner, whose failing heart longs after reconciliation. How can we but love him when we know that he numbers the very hairs of our heads, marks our path, and orders our ways? Specially is this great truth brought near to our heart, when we recollect how attentive he is, not merely to the temporal interests of his creatures, but to their spiritual concerns. Though leagues of distance lie between the finite creature and the infinite Creator, yet there are links uniting both. When a tear is wept by thee, think not that God doth not behold; for, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Thy sigh is able to move the heart of Jehovah; thy whisper can incline his ear unto thee; thy prayer can stay his hand; thy faith can move his arm. Think not that God sits on high taking no account of thee. Remember that however poor and needy thou art, yet the Lord thinketh upon thee. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.

Oh! then repeat the truth that never tires;

No God is like the God my soul desires;

He at whose voice heaven trembles, even he,

Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me.

# Word Live – 9/28/19

# Sign of the times

## Prepare

Rapidly changing technology means that products go out of date, even obsolete, within a very short period. The new is better than the old. As we follow Jesus into the future, we commit ourselves to keep our eyes on him.



## Bible passage: Luke 11:29–36

##### **The Sign of Jonah**

29 As the crowds increased, Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. 31 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.

##### **The Lamp of the Body**

33 “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”

## Explore

**Whatever the cost**

Jesus never shies away from confrontation, bringing things out into the open that are unspoken (see also 11:17; 9:47). It’s easy to imagine him as a kind of dreamy, reticent Messiah, whereas he often forces issues into the public space. He never seems to shut down difficult subjects, whatever the cost. This demand for a sign surfaced in 11:16 and it comes again in verse 29. The miracles and parables are not enough; the people want more.

**Looking for repentance**

Jesus’ response is rich again in Old Testament imagery but it’s the reference to Jonah that’s fascinating. We expect the reference to land on the three days in the whale’s belly, taking us then to the cross and resurrection. But that’s not how it works here. Jonah, the reluctant missionary, brings good news to his ethnic enemies. In the same way, Jesus is implying here that his work will take him beyond the Jewish people and towards the Gentiles. God is looking for repentance wherever he can find it. The ‘generation’ who heard these words was blind to the sign now facing it.

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

## Respond

Jesus is God’s sign to the world and the sign of my discipleship is daily repentance – turning towards Christ and following him. Now is the time to repent and follow.

## Deeper Bible study

**For 'Deeper Bible study' today, please also read Luke 11:37–54**

Jesus was a proponent of heart religion: it is our inner engagement with God, rather than outward ritual, that matters most. In this, he was directly in line with the Old Testament prophets. In this passage he identifies some of those inner qualities: generosity to the poor, justice and the love of God. This does not mean that the outward is unimportant: both are required (v 42).

It is widely believed that the Pharisees get a bad press from Jesus – we can see it in his various condemnations. This could be a case of the fiercest debates being with people with whom we are closest. Pharisees were serious people, probably more in line with Jesus in many respects than other Jewish groups. They were mainly lay people who wanted to take the Law seriously. They were not all hostile to Jesus, as the invitation from this Pharisee indicates (v 37). Yet he gives them both barrels, on more than one occasion. Perhaps they could be irritating, with their scrupulous adherence to detail, and perhaps they took pleasure in judging others. They were worthy, but self-righteous.

More seriously, however, they illustrate a trap set for all religious people. They majored on the minor and minored on the major. They got things out of focus. They stood in judgement on people for minor offences, but lacked a generous spirit. We know the type, since they are still with us (and perhaps we belong to their number). The words in verses 47–51 are a fascinating insight into human psychology. Pharisees make heroes out of the prophets of the past, even while exhibiting the characteristics of those who killed them (v 47). It is the transformation of the heart that matters above all.

‘Good people bring good things out of the good stored up in their heart.’ (Luke 6:45, TNIV)

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

## Dark and light



‘… just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.’

# Today in the Word – 9/28/19

# Finding Significance

### **Read:** [**Psalm 37**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#fen-NIV-14452a)**]**

#### **Of David.**

1Do not fret because of those who are evil  
    or be envious of those who do wrong;  
2for like the grass they will soon wither,  
    like green plants they will soon die away.

3Trust in the Lord and do good;  
    dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
4Take delight in the Lord,  
    and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5Commit your way to the Lord;  
    trust in him and he will do this:  
6He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,  
    your vindication like the noonday sun.

7Be still before the Lord  
    and wait patiently for him;  
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,  
    when they carry out their wicked schemes.

8Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;  
    do not fret—it leads only to evil.  
9For those who are evil will be destroyed,  
    but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

10A little while, and the wicked will be no more;  
    though you look for them, they will not be found.  
11But the meek will inherit the land  
    and enjoy peace and prosperity.

12The wicked plot against the righteous  
    and gnash their teeth at them;  
13but the Lord laughs at the wicked,  
    for he knows their day is coming.

14The wicked draw the sword  
    and bend the bow  
to bring down the poor and needy,  
    to slay those whose ways are upright.  
15But their swords will pierce their own hearts,  
    and their bows will be broken.

16Better the little that the righteous have  
    than the wealth of many wicked;  
17for the power of the wicked will be broken,  
    but the Lord upholds the righteous.

18The blameless spend their days under the Lord’s care,  
    and their inheritance will endure forever.  
19In times of disaster they will not wither;  
    in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

20But the wicked will perish:  
    Though the Lord’s enemies are like the flowers of the field,  
    they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke.

21The wicked borrow and do not repay,  
    but the righteous give generously;  
22those the Lord blesses will inherit the land,  
    but those he curses will be destroyed.

23The Lord makes firm the steps  
    of the one who delights in him;  
24though he may stumble, he will not fall,  
    for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

25I was young and now I am old,  
    yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken  
    or their children begging bread.  
26They are always generous and lend freely;  
    their children will be a blessing.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37" \l "fen-NIV-14477b" \o "See footnote b)]

27Turn from evil and do good;  
    then you will dwell in the land forever.  
28For the Lord loves the just  
    and will not forsake his faithful ones.

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#fen-NIV-14479c)];  
    the offspring of the wicked will perish.  
29The righteous will inherit the land  
    and dwell in it forever.

30The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,  
    and their tongues speak what is just.  
31The law of their God is in their hearts;  
    their feet do not slip.

32The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,  
    intent on putting them to death;  
33but the Lord will not leave them in the power of the wicked  
    or let them be condemned when brought to trial.

34Hope in the Lord  
    and keep his way.  
He will exalt you to inherit the land;  
    when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

35I have seen a wicked and ruthless man  
    flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,  
36but he soon passed away and was no more;  
    though I looked for him, he could not be found.

37Consider the blameless, observe the upright;  
    a future awaits those who seek peace.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37" \l "fen-NIV-14488d" \o "See footnote d)]  
38But all sinners will be destroyed;  
    there will be no future[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#fen-NIV-14489e)] for the wicked.

39The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord;  
    he is their stronghold in time of trouble.  
40The Lord helps them and delivers them;  
    he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,  
    because they take refuge in him.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 37:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#en-NIV-14452) This psalm is an acrostic poem, the stanzas of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
2. [Psalm 37:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#en-NIV-14477) Or freely; / the names of their children will be used in blessings (see Gen. 48:20); or freely; / others will see that their children are blessed
3. [Psalm 37:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#en-NIV-14479) See Septuagint; Hebrew They will be protected forever
4. [Psalm 37:37](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#en-NIV-14488) Or upright; / those who seek peace will have posterity
5. [Psalm 37:38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37#en-NIV-14489) Or posterity

After experiencing a crushing political defeat and breaking off an engagement to be married in 1841, Abraham Lincoln was in a dark place. He later talked about how he had contemplated suicide, but refrained because he “had done nothing to make any human being remember that he had lived.” His desire to do something of lasting significance gave him the motivation he needed to persevere through difficult times.

Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked. Psalm 37:16

In Psalm 37, David instructs us on how to have a life of lasting significance. He encourages the reader to “Trust in the Lord​ and do good . . . Take delight in the Lord​ . . . Be still before the Lord​ and wait patiently for him” (vv. 3, 4, 7). Trusting in the Lord means knowing and obeying the word of God. As David puts it, “The law of their God is in their hearts” (v. 31). We are to embrace a life of obedience (v. 27). If we do, the Lord​ will “uphold” us and our “inheritance will endure forever” (vv. 24, 18).

By contrast, the wicked are in a perilous position. It may look like they are flourishing and succeeding in life, but “like the grass they will soon wither” (v. 2). The wicked plot against those who follow God and oppress the poor and vulnerable (vv. 12, 14). They will not escape justice: “the Lord​ laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming” (v. 13).

David is very honest about the struggle we feel when what we see in the world around us doesn’t match up with what we believe. It may look to us like the wicked are winning. However, David tells us not to be anxious about their momentary success. We are to wait patiently for God to act at the right time and in the right way.

### **Apply the Word**

We all have a desire to live a life that has lasting significance. We want to be engaged in meaningful work and offer a legacy to those who come behind us. David reminds us that one of the best legacies we can leave is to model a life that waits upon the Lord and trusts in His judgment even when circumstances seem to be against us.

### **Pray with Us**

Our undergrads have a special opportunity to spend a semester overseas in Ireland, Germany, Greece, or other countries. Miriam Smith from International Study Programs who coordinates these trips welcomes your prayers today.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/28/19

# “Just the Office”?

 **Read:** [**Ephesians 1:15–23**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/28/just-the-office)

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

15For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, 16I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Ephesians+1%3A15%E2%80%9323+#fen-NIV-29224a)] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Ephesians 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Ephesians+1%3A15%E2%80%9323+#en-NIV-29224) Or a spirit

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you. [Ephesians 1:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Ephesians+1%3A18)

I gazed out at the rolling, green hills in Lancashire in northern England, noticing the stone fences enclosing some sheep dotted around the hills. Puffy clouds moved across the bright sky, and I inhaled deeply, drinking in the sight. When I remarked about the beautiful scene to the woman working at the retreat center I was visiting, she said, “You know, I never used to notice it before our guests would point it out. We’ve lived here for years; and when we were farmers, this was just the office!”

We can easily miss the gift of what’s right in front of us, especially beauty that’s part of our everyday lives. We can also easily miss the beautiful ways God works in and around us daily. But believers in Jesus can ask God’s Spirit to open our spiritual eyes so we can understand how He’s at work, as the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesian believers. Paul yearned that God would give them the wisdom and revelation to know Him better (Ephesians 1:17). He prayed that their hearts would be enlightened so that they’d know God’s hope, promised future, and power (vv. 18–19).

God’s gift of the Spirit of Christ can awaken us to His work in us and through us. With Him, what may have once seemed like “just the office” can be understood as a place that displays His light and glory.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

Where do you see God at work around you? How does seeing the world through spiritual eyes help?

Jesus, shine Your light on me and open my eyes and my heart to better understand Your goodness and Your grace. I want to receive Your love.

#### **Insight**

Paul’s prayer in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians (vv. 15–23) works hand-in-hand with the prayer of the third chapter (3:14–21). Together they show what it takes to sense something of the astonishing, inexpressible, and expansive purposes, power, and love of God. Both prayers remind us that growing in the immeasurable love and boundless scope of God’s plans require more than our desire and capacity to believe (1:17–19; 3:14–21). Such “knowing” is a gift and evidence of the Holy Spirit who is with us and in us. Both prayers give us reason to consciously draw near to God. And both lead us into an understanding of what it takes to prayerfully counter the strategies of our spiritual enemy—by drawing near to and relying on the Spirit (1:15–17; 6:18).

# God Calling – 9/28/19

# The Secret Path

Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.  Matthew 3:15

Upon this I founded My three years' Mission on earth -- on the acceptance of the difficulty and discipline of life so as to share that human life with My followers in all the ages.

Much that you both must accept in life is not to be accepted as being necessary for you personally, but accepted, as I accepted it, to set an example, to share in the sufferings and difficulties of mankind.

In this "to share" means "to save."  And there, too, for you both ... the same must be true as was so true of Me.  "He saved others.  Himself He cannot save."

Beloved, you are called to save and share in a very special way.  The way of sorrows if walked with Me, the Man of Sorrows, is a path kept sacred and secret for My nearest and dearest, those whose one desire is to do all for Me, to sacrifice all for Me, to count, as My servant Paul did, "all things but loss so that they might gain Me."

But, dreary as that Path must look to those who view if only from afar, it has tender lights and restful shades that no other walk in life can give.

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.  For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass form the law, till all be fulfilled.  Matthew 5:17,18

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/29/19

# The Awareness of the Call



…for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! —[1 Corinthians 9:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+9%3A16)

We are inclined to forget the deeply spiritual and supernatural touch of God. If you are able to tell exactly where you were when you received the call of God and can explain all about it, I question whether you have truly been called. The call of God does not come like that; it is much more supernatural. The realization of the call in a person’s life may come like a clap of thunder or it may dawn gradually. But however quickly or slowly this awareness comes, it is always accompanied with an undercurrent of the supernatural— something that is inexpressible and produces a “glow.” At any moment the sudden awareness of this incalculable, supernatural, surprising call that has taken hold of your life may break through— “I chose you…” ([John 15:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15:16)). The call of God has nothing to do with salvation and sanctification. You are not called to preach the gospel because you are sanctified; the call to preach the gospel is infinitely different. Paul describes it as a compulsion that was placed upon him.

If you have ignored, and thereby removed, the great supernatural call of God in your life, take a review of your circumstances. See where you have put your own ideas of service or your particular abilities ahead of the call of God. Paul said, “…woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” He had become aware of the call of God, and his compulsion to “preach the gospel” was so strong that nothing else was any longer even a competitor for his strength.

If a man or woman is called of God, it doesn’t matter how difficult the circumstances may be. God orchestrates every force at work for His purpose in the end. If you will agree with God’s purpose, He will bring not only your conscious level but also all the deeper levels of your life, which you yourself cannot reach, into perfect harmony.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We begin our Christian life by believing what we are told to believe, then we have to go on to so assimilate our beliefs that they work out in a way that redounds to the glory of God. The danger is in multiplying the acceptation of beliefs we do not make our own. Conformed to His Image, 381 L

# CCEL – 9/29/19

**Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.**—[I JOHN 3:16.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.16)

The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.—Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.—Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.—Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.—For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Christ . . . suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.—We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

[Eph. 3:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html" \l "Eph.3.19). -[John 15:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.13). -[II Cor. 8:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.8.html" \l "iiCor.8.9). -[I John 4:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.4.html" \l "iJohn.4.11). -[Eph. 4:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.32). -[Col. 3:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.13). -[Mark 10:45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.10.html" \l "Mark.10.45). -[I Pet. 2:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.21).[John 13:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.13.html" \l "John.13.14). -[I John 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html#iJohn.3.16).

“Behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague.” **[Leviticus 13:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lev.13.html" \l "Lev.13.13)**

Strange enough this regulation appears, yet there was wisdom in it, for the throwing out of the disease proved that the constitution was sound. This morning it may be well for us to see the typical teaching of so singular a rule. We, too, are lepers, and may read the law of the leper as applicable to ourselves. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, covered all over with the defilement of sin, and no part free from pollution; when he disclaims all righteousness of his own, and pleads guilty before the Lord, then is he clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God. Hidden, unfelt, unconfessed iniquity is the true leprosy, but when sin is seen and felt it has received its death blow, and the Lord looks with eyes of mercy upon the soul afflicted with it. Nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, or more hopeful than contrition. We must confess that we are “nothing else but sin,” for no confession short of this will be the whole truth, and if the Holy Spirit be at work with us, convincing us of sin, there will be no difficulty about making such an acknowledgment—it will spring spontaneously from our lips. What comfort does the text afford to those under a deep sense of sin! Sin mourned and confessed, however black and foul, shall never shut a man out from the Lord Jesus. Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out. Though dishonest as the thief, though unchaste as the woman who was a sinner, though fierce as Saul of Tarsus, though cruel as Manasseh, though rebellious as the prodigal, the great heart of love will look upon the man who feels himself to have no soundness in him, and will pronounce him clean, when he trusts in Jesus crucified.

Come to him, then, poor heavy-laden sinner,

Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;

You can't come too filthy—come just as you are.

# Word Live – 9/29/19

# Age to age

## Prepare

Flavour and taste are often intensified through age. Wine, cheese, meat release complex flavours if given the chance to mature. So it is with us. Faith in later years is different, tried and proven through experience. Bring your flavours to God now.



## Bible passage: Psalm 71

1 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge;   
       let me never be put to shame.

2 Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness;   
       turn your ear to me and save me.

3 Be my rock of refuge,   
       to which I can always go;   
       give the command to save me,   
       for you are my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,   
       from the grasp of evil and cruel men.

5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD,   
       my confidence since my youth.

6 From birth I have relied on you;   
       you brought me forth from my mother's womb.   
       I will ever praise you.

7 I have become like a portent to many,   
       but you are my strong refuge.

8 My mouth is filled with your praise,   
       declaring your splendor all day long.

9 Do not cast me away when I am old;   
       do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

10 For my enemies speak against me;   
       those who wait to kill me conspire together.

11 They say, "God has forsaken him;   
       pursue him and seize him,   
       for no one will rescue him."

12 Be not far from me, O God;   
       come quickly, O my God, to help me.

13 May my accusers perish in shame;   
       may those who want to harm me   
       be covered with scorn and disgrace.

14 But as for me, I will always have hope;   
       I will praise you more and more.

15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness,   
       of your salvation all day long,   
       though I know not its measure.

16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD;   
       I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.

17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,   
       and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

18 Even when I am old and gray,   
       do not forsake me, O God,   
       till I declare your power to the next generation,   
       your might to all who are to come.

19 Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God,   
       you who have done great things.   
       Who, O God, is like you?

20 Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter,   
       you will restore my life again;   
       from the depths of the earth   
       you will again bring me up.

21 You will increase my honor   
       and comfort me once again.

22 I will praise you with the harp   
       for your faithfulness, O my God;   
       I will sing praise to you with the lyre,   
       O Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips will shout for joy   
       when I sing praise to you—   
       I, whom you have redeemed.

24 My tongue will tell of your righteous acts   
       all day long,   
       for those who wanted to harm me   
       have been put to shame and confusion.

## Explore

**Changes and opportunities**

In his book, Falling Upward (SPCK, 2012), Richard Rohr addresses the subject of Christian discipleship in the second half of life. He challenges us that the ‘containers’ that held our theology, practice and understanding in earlier years may need to be exchanged for ones that reflect changes and opportunities.

**Audacity of faith**

This psalm echoes something of the realism that comes with ageing. The psalmist is anxious that God may overlook him in his old age (vs 9,18) and reminds God that he has been a disciple since he was young (v 17). In a wider culture that often celebrates and notices young people, so with church. I know from first-hand knowledge that there are many people of mature years who feel overlooked and forgotten. Their prayer is this psalm. Maybe it’s your prayer too. And like the psalmist we need to capture the audacity of faith. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts… I will proclaim (v 16).

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

## Respond

‘Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again’ (v 20). ‘Father, I have lived through different seasons, but today I turn to you for a fresh encounter and ask that you would bless the generations after me. Amen.’

## Deeper Bible study

How subjective ought our worship to be? There is a trend in Christian worship from the use of objective, corporate hymns, prayers and readings to more person-centred, ‘I’-based expressions. Is this good or bad? Certainly, we do well in shared worship to construct services that enable a broad spread of people to participate and to celebrate the great objective realities of creation and redemption. However, as the gospel is deeply personal, so should our worship be.

The psalms, Israel’s hymn book, are profoundly personal: ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’ language abounds. God is my refuge, righteousness, rock, fortress, hope. My lips will praise him, my tongue will tell of his righteous acts, my mouth will be filled with praise. My God is my honour and my life. Correspondingly, of God, this psalm speaks of your righteous and marvellous deeds, your saving acts, your righteousness, your power. You will restore my life, you will comfort me. This is the ultimate I-Thou relationship. It speaks of a deep intimacy between the psalmist and God, one that has lasted throughout life. It has extended from birth (v 6) and will reach into fragile old age (vs 9,18). It is the kind of loving closeness that Jesus knew when he prayed to Abba, Father.

We see how the psalmist is nourished by this relationship. It sustains him when there are those who despise and conspire against him (v 4). Because God is close to him, he is confident that those who wish to harm him will not succeed (vs 13,24). The personal knowledge that God is near to us in all circumstances can heal us when we are inwardly wounded and assailed. We might also say that unless the objective reality of a gracious and caring God also becomes a subjective, personally felt reality we have yet to get the point.

‘Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.’ ([Ps 34:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps+34%3A8&version=NIV))

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

# Today in the Word – 9/29/19

# Life Is Short

### **Read:** [**Psalms 38**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-14492a)**]**

#### **A psalm of David. A petition.**

1Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger  
    or discipline me in your wrath.  
2Your arrows have pierced me,  
    and your hand has come down on me.  
3Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;  
    there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.  
4My guilt has overwhelmed me  
    like a burden too heavy to bear.

5My wounds fester and are loathsome  
    because of my sinful folly.  
6I am bowed down and brought very low;  
    all day long I go about mourning.  
7My back is filled with searing pain;  
    there is no health in my body.  
8I am feeble and utterly crushed;  
    I groan in anguish of heart.

9All my longings lie open before you, Lord;  
    my sighing is not hidden from you.  
10My heart pounds, my strength fails me;  
    even the light has gone from my eyes.  
11My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds;  
    my neighbors stay far away.  
12Those who want to kill me set their traps,  
    those who would harm me talk of my ruin;  
    all day long they scheme and lie.

13I am like the deaf, who cannot hear,  
    like the mute, who cannot speak;  
14I have become like one who does not hear,  
    whose mouth can offer no reply.  
15Lord, I wait for you;  
    you will answer, Lord my God.  
16For I said, “Do not let them gloat  
    or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip.”

17For I am about to fall,  
    and my pain is ever with me.  
18I confess my iniquity;  
    I am troubled by my sin.  
19Many have become my enemies without cause[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-14510b)];  
    those who hate me without reason are numerous.  
20Those who repay my good with evil  
    lodge accusations against me,  
    though I seek only to do what is good.

21Lord, do not forsake me;  
    do not be far from me, my God.  
22Come quickly to help me,  
    my Lord and my Savior.

### **Read: Psalm 39[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#fen-NIV-14514c)**]**

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

1I said, “I will watch my ways  
    and keep my tongue from sin;  
I will put a muzzle on my mouth  
    while in the presence of the wicked.”  
2So I remained utterly silent,  
    not even saying anything good.  
But my anguish increased;  
3    my heart grew hot within me.  
While I meditated, the fire burned;  
    then I spoke with my tongue:

4“Show me, Lord, my life’s end  
    and the number of my days;  
    let me know how fleeting my life is.  
5You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
    the span of my years is as nothing before you.  
Everyone is but a breath,  
    even those who seem secure.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339" \l "fen-NIV-14518d" \o "See footnote d)]

6“Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;  
    in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth  
    without knowing whose it will finally be.

7“But now, Lord, what do I look for?  
    My hope is in you.  
8Save me from all my transgressions;  
    do not make me the scorn of fools.  
9I was silent; I would not open my mouth,  
    for you are the one who has done this.  
10Remove your scourge from me;  
    I am overcome by the blow of your hand.  
11When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,  
    you consume their wealth like a moth—  
    surely everyone is but a breath.

12“Hear my prayer, Lord,  
    listen to my cry for help;  
    do not be deaf to my weeping.  
I dwell with you as a foreigner,  
    a stranger, as all my ancestors were.  
13Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again  
    before I depart and am no more.”

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 38:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-14492) In Hebrew texts 38:1-22 is numbered 38:2-23.
2. [Psalm 38:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-14510) One Dead Sea Scrolls manuscript; Masoretic Text my vigorous enemies
3. [Psalm 39:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-14514) In Hebrew texts 39:1-13 is numbered 39:2-14.
4. [Psalm 39:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+38%e2%80%9339#en-NIV-14518) The Hebrew has Selah (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 11.

Would it be better to win a silver medal or a bronze? In 1995, psychologists from Cornell University studied the reaction of Olympic silver and bronze medalists. They found that bronze medalists were significantly happier with their achievement than silver medalists. The reason is that silver medalists compared themselves with those who won gold, while the bronze medalists were happy to have medals at all.

Show me, LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. Psalm 39:4

In Psalm 39, David is desperately trying to find the right perspective on life. He was in the middle of a challenging situation. He was suffering because of sin (vv. 8, 11). In addition, he was surrounded by wicked people (v. 1). So, after a sustained period of silence, David embraced two realizations that helped him gain a glimmer of hope.

First, David realizes life is short. He says “You have made my days a mere handbreadth” (v. 5). A handbreadth in ancient Israel was the width of four fingers, the smallest measurement available. He then shifts the image to compare life to a vapor, or breath (v. 5). In language foreshadowing Ecclesiastes, he describes how the pursuit of wealth and brevity of life are meaningless (v. 6). David realizes what matters most is his relationship to the Lord, “But now, Lord​, what do I look for? My hope is in you” (v. 7).

Second, David realizes that his sin has estranged him from God. “I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were” (v. 12). He mourns deeply over his sin and longs for God to hear his cry (v. 12). While this psalm does not come to a full resolution of these difficulties, David is well on his way toward restoration.

### **Apply the Word**

The Bible often calls us to think about the brevity of life. In Psalm 90:12, Moses asks God to “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Today, why not make a spiritual bucket list? What two or three things would you most like to accomplish for God during the time you have left on earth?

### **Pray with Us**

Jesus, we acknowledge we tend to lose perspective and forget what’s important in life. Teach us, Lord, to speak with you honestly and look to you always seeking the truth in your Word. We ask for wisdom and discernment.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/29/19

# Who Am I?

 **Read:** [**Exodus 3:10–17**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/29/who-am-i-3)

10So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

11But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317#fen-NIV-1592a)] will worship God on this mountain.”

13Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

14God said to Moses, “I am who I am.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317" \l "fen-NIV-1594b" \o "See footnote b)] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

15God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317" \l "fen-NIV-1595c" \o "See footnote c)] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever,  
    the name you shall call me  
    from generation to generation.

16“Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 17And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.’

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Exodus 3:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317#en-NIV-1592) The Hebrew is plural.
2. [Exodus 3:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317#en-NIV-1594) Or I will be what I will be
3. [Exodus 3:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A10%E2%80%9317#en-NIV-1595) The Hebrew for Lord sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for I am in verse 14.

“I am who I am.” [Exodus 3:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Exodus+3%3A14)

Dave enjoyed his job, but for a long time he’d sensed a pull toward something else. Now he was about to fulfill his dream and step into mission work. But strangely, he began to have serious doubts.

“I don’t deserve this,” he told a friend. “The mission board doesn’t know the real me. I’m not good enough.”

Dave has some pretty good company. Mention the name of Moses and we think of leadership, strength, and the Ten Commandments. We tend to forget that Moses fled to the desert after murdering a man. We lose sight of his forty years as a fugitive. We overlook his anger problem and his intense reluctance to say yes to God.

When God showed up with marching orders (Exodus 3:1–10), Moses played the I’m-not-good-enough card. He even got into a lengthy argument with God, asking Him: “Who am I?” (v. 11). Then God told Moses who He was: “I am who I am” (v. 14). It’s impossible for us to explain that mysterious name because our indescribable God is describing His eternal presence to Moses.

A sense of our own weaknesses is healthy. But if we use them as an excuse to keep God from using us, we insult Him. What we’re really saying is that God isn’t good enough.

The question isn’t Who am I? The question is Who is the I am?

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When has thinking you’re not good enough kept you from serving God? How does it encourage you to look at Bible characters God used despite their flaws?

Eternal God, so often we doubt that You could ever use people like us. But You sent Your Son to die for the likes of us, so please forgive our doubts. Help us accept the challenges You bring our way.

#### **Insight**

When Moses asked “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” (Exodus 3:11), God reassured him of His presence. “I will be with you” (v. 12) corresponds to the statement “I am who I am” (v. 14), which identifies God as an existing being. He expanded on this when He called Himself “The Lord” (v. 15), from the Hebrew Yěhovah, which means “self-existing.” Regardless of abilities Moses possessed, the self-existing Sustainer of the universe would be with him.

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

# God Calling – 9/29/19

# I Touch Your Arm

**Thy touch has still its ancient Power**

Yes!  when you are quiet before Me I lay My Hand upon each head, and Divine Spirit flows through that healing, powerful Touch into your very beings.  Wait in silence before Me to feel that.

When you look to Me for guidance My Hand is laid upon your arm, a gentle Touch to point the way.  When in mental, physical, or spiritual weakness you cry to Me for healing, My Touch brings Strength and Healing, the renewal of your youth, the power to climb and strive.

When you faint by the way, and stumbling footsteps show human strength is waning, My Touch of the Strong and Helping Hand supports you on your Way.

Yes!  My Children, My touch has still its ancient Power and that Power is promised to you.  So go forward into the future bravely and unafraid.

And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.  Matthew 14:36

# My Utmost for His Highest – 9/30/19

# The Assigning of the Call



I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church… —[Colossians 1:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Colossians+1%3A24)

We take our own spiritual consecration and try to make it into a call of God, but when we get right with Him He brushes all this aside. Then He gives us a tremendous, riveting pain to fasten our attention on something that we never even dreamed could be His call for us. And for one radiant, flashing moment we see His purpose, and we say, “Here am I! Send me” ([Isaiah 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+6:8)).

This call has nothing to do with personal sanctification, but with being made broken bread and poured-out wine. Yet God can never make us into wine if we object to the fingers He chooses to use to crush us. We say, “If God would only use His own fingers, and make me broken bread and poured-out wine in a special way, then I wouldn’t object!” But when He uses someone we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we said we would never submit, to crush us, then we object. Yet we must never try to choose the place of our own martyrdom. If we are ever going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed—you cannot drink grapes. Grapes become wine only when they have been squeezed.

I wonder what finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you? Have you been as hard as a marble and escaped? If you are not ripe yet, and if God had squeezed you anyway, the wine produced would have been remarkably bitter. To be a holy person means that the elements of our natural life experience the very presence of God as they are providentially broken in His service. We have to be placed into God and brought into agreement with Him before we can be broken bread in His hands. Stay right with God and let Him do as He likes, and you will find that He is producing the kind of bread and wine that will benefit His other children.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

The truth is we have nothing to fear and nothing to overcome because He is all in all and we are more than conquerors through Him. The recognition of this truth is not flattering to the worker’s sense of heroics, but it is amazingly glorifying to the work of Christ. Approved Unto God, 4 R

# CCEL – 9/30/19

**He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.**—[JOB 23:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.23.html" \l "Job.23.10)

He knoweth our frame.—He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

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. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.—I . . . will refine them as silver is refined, . . . they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, the Lord is my God

.

[Psa. 103:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.103.html" \l "Ps.103.14). -[Lam. 3:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Lam.3.html" \l "Lam.3.33).[II Tim. 2:19-21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiTim.2.html" \l "iiTim.2.19).[Mal. 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mal.3.html" \l "Mal.3.3). -[Zech. 13:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Zech.13.html" \l "Zech.13.9).

“Sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious.” **[Psalm 66:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.66.html" \l "Ps.66.2)**

It is not left to our own option whether we shall praise God or not. Praise is God’s most righteous due, and every Christian, as the recipient of his grace, is bound to praise God from day to day. It is true we have no authoritative rubric for daily praise; we have no commandment prescribing certain hours of song and thanksgiving: but the law written upon the heart teaches us that it is right to praise God; and the unwritten mandate comes to us with as much force as if it had been recorded on the tables of stone, or handed to us from the top of thundering Sinai. Yes, it is the Christian’s duty to praise God. It is not only a pleasurable exercise, but it is the absolute obligation of his life. Think not ye who are always mourning, that ye are guiltless in this respect, or imagine that ye can discharge your duty to your God without songs of praise. You are bound by the bonds of his love to bless his name so long as you live, and his praise should continually be in your mouth, for you are blessed, in order that you may bless him; “this people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise”; and if you do not praise God, you are not bringing forth the fruit which he, as the Divine Husbandman, has a right to expect at your hands. Let not your harp then hang upon the willows, but take it down, and strive, with a grateful heart, to bring forth its loudest music. Arise and chant his praise. With every morning’s dawn, lift up your notes of thanksgiving, and let every setting sun be followed with your song. Girdle the earth with your praises; surround it with an atmosphere of melody, and God himself will hearken from heaven and accept your music.

“E'en so I love thee, and will love,

And in thy praise will sing,

Because thou art my loving God,

And my redeeming King.”

# Word Live – 9/30/19

# Your authorised version

## Prepare

Barely a day goes by without some reference to fake news – fabricated information that passes as truth. But do we sometimes do the same in our spiritual lives, hiding behind a religious mask instead of living an authentic Christian life?



## Bible passage: Luke 12:1–12

##### **Warnings and Encouragements**

1 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 3 What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

4 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

8 “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. 9 But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

11 “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”

## Explore

**Religious hypocrisy**

It’s a massive crowd and Jesus, randomly it seems, addresses the issue of religious hypocrisy. It’s not been an explicit theme in our previous readings although Jesus has gone out of his way to expose hidden antagonisms against him. But this is different. This time he openly challenges a major religious grouping and warns others against their values.

**An authentic life**

In many ways the Pharisees had more in common with Jesus than other religious parties. They were not connected to the politics and practices of the Temple, believing the institution to be compromised with its associations with the Herods and the Romans. They loved the Bible, taught it faithfully and believed that ordinary people and not just priests could understand it for themselves. And yet, Jesus accuses them of play acting. Jesus promises a spirituality that will address the fear of death (v 4), offer assurance of eternal life (vs 8–10) and fill timid believers with the power of the Holy Spirit when called on to give a public account of personal faith (v 11). Jesus gives us the power to live an authentic life.

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

## Respond

‘Lord, I turn away from pleasing others and practising a fake spirituality. Help me to live in the power of the Spirit, expressed through my personality.’

## Deeper Bible study

Jesus often spoke about things we prefer to gloss over. We can cope with the insistence on transparency and integrity (vs 1–3); and we certainly like it when we are told how much we are worth to God (vs 6,7). We like it less, however, when he goes on to stress fear and the power of God to cast into ‘hell’ (or Gehenna, the place of exclusion and disintegration; v 5). It is striking that whenever Jesus speaks of Gehenna, it is to his disciples rather than the crowds (v 1) or even his enemies. Jesus is not a hell-fire preacher.

This is not the language of threat but of warning: living in certain ways has grave and destructive consequences. The severest consequence is to be disowned by the Son of Man because we are ashamed of him (v 9). When it comes to this, fear is both rational and well placed. Above all, avoid being disowned by the only one who can mediate between the Father and you! Rather, come to him and let him give you rest.

It is significant here that Jesus honours the Spirit even above himself – those who speak against himself will be forgiven, but not so with the Spirit. Occasionally there are disciples who fear that they may have excluded themselves from grace by inadvertently blaspheming against the Spirit (v 10). This kind of fear is based on misunderstanding. It is through the Spirit that forgiveness comes to us, so to reject the Spirit has consequences. It has been said, ‘Only the rejection of forgiveness is unforgivable’. This sin involves a hardened and persistent denial of the Spirit of God. Those sensitive souls who have even a hint of fear that they have done this are not likely actually to have done so.

‘In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.’ ([Rom 8:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom+8%3A26&version=NIV))

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

## Hypocrisy

[https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W260811A1 Hypocrisy.mp3](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W260811A1%20Hypocrisy.mp3)

It can be very easy to be hypocritical about sin when we look around us – but when we include God in the wider picture, we see where the real standards lie, and who exactly has the right to be judging anyone.  
  
Can you identify with any of the attitudes shown in this audio sketch by Steve Tilley? What do you need to do about it?

[Transcript](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W260811A1%20audio%20reuse.pdf)

Characters:

Assistant 1

Assistant 2

Door keeper

Passenger

Smelly man

Door keeper Welcome to Johnsons. The department store which treats all people equally, whatever their background or income.

The scene is the fragrance department of a large store. As the piece opens we hear a lift door, then the lift operator, then voices muttering:

Lift Operator Ground floor. Jewellery, gifts and cards, gloves, millinery, beauty and fragrances, going up.

Passenger (Clearing throat and breathing deeply) Gosh. Someone had a personal freshness problem now didn't they?

Lift Operator You're telling me. I get all sorts in this lift but that was a bit, er, high.

(General hubbub of department store crowd)

Assistant 1 Pooh. What's that smell?

Assistant2 Urrgh. Disgusting.

Assistant1 Horrid.

Assistant 2 Like rotting cabbage.

Assistant 1 Look. Over there? What's that bloke wearing?

Assistant2 He's covered in dirt and filth.

Assistant 1 Dressed in rags.

Assistant 2 He has no shoes on. In this weather.

Assistant1 Lowering the tone of the place. Hope he moves on quickly.

Assistant2 Not our sort of customer at all.

Assistant1 Not a Johnson's Department Store sort of person.

Assistant2 Too late. He's coming this way. Oh the smell is putrid.

Assistant1 Come on. Be professional. Smile and...

Assistant2 Can I help you sir?

Smelly Man Yes please. I'd like to buy some personal grooming products.

Assistant 2I'm not surprised er, I mean, of course sir, what sort of thing do you have in mind?

Smelly Man Well I don't really know much about them...

Assistant 1 (Off) You don't have to tell us that.

Smelly Man How much, for instance is this Aqua de brut alore givanchy channel number 62?

Assistant 2 Er, Sir has picked our most expensive line.

Assistant 1 (Off) No way you could afford it pal

Assistant 2 But it is extraordinarily luxurious

Assistant 1 (Off) But not 'Because your worth it.'

Smelly Man But how much is it?

Assistant 2 That bottle retails at £125 per 100 cc bottle

Smelly Man And do you have lots in stock?

Assistant 1(Off) More than you could ever afford mate. Why not spend £5 on a public bath?

Assistant 2 We have plenty available sir.

Smelly ManI'll take fifty bottles

Assistant 1&2 (Together) Fifty!

Smelly Man Yes please.

Assistant 2 And how would you like to pay for that?

Assistant 1 (Off) Probably in your wildest dreams

Smelly ManIs AMEX acceptable? Or Mastercard perhaps?

Assistant 2 You must have a large credit limit? Either will be fine sir.

Assistant 1 (Off) Since you probably nicked them off the same victim?

Assistant 2So that comes to £6,250. So if you'd just enter your pin Mr er... Sorry I don't know your name.

Smelly Man Johnson.

Assistant 1 No, (laughter) ha ha, relation?

Smelly Man Yes, actually. I own the company. When you've finished wrapping my family gifts perhaps you'd pop up to my office. Give me a few minutes for a shower first eh? I'd like to talk to you about our advertising slogan. You seem to have forgotten it. Good morning.

Door keeper Thank you for visiting Johnsons. The department store which treats all people equally, whatever their background or income.

Steve Tilley for WordLive www.wordlive.org.uk© Scripture Union 2011

## Fear

<https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W260811A2.mp3>

Consider the effects of fear on your life as you listen to this meditation.

[Transcript](https://www.wordlive.org/uploads/wordlight/resources/W260811A2%20audio.pdf)

FEAR. It gags. Binding mouth and preventing the torrent of speech from bursting forth.

It tramples. Forces you back into the dark corner from which you thought you’d broken free.

It traps. A straightjacket that squeezes out breath, squeezes out hope.

It hates dancing. It screams. And it whispers. A record on repeat playing back old insecurities.

It kills. Self withers and life leaks away.

It masks. Causes face to hide and self to turn inward, until you FORGET.

You forget what is true.

You forget the story of redemption in which there is a special part written just for you.

You forget that you are not forgotten. That someone knows every hair and every tear and every freckle and every syllable and every heartbeat.

You forget that he holds your soul in his hands. And he is kind.

You forget that his voice causes darkness to flee, and he has promised to give you words. And when the darkness flees, light breaks in and you realise that fear is often based on lies. Intricate webs woven from threads of deception and confusion. How easily we get caught in them. But when the truth is revealed, the chains shatter, because they have nothing to hold them together.

Katrina Pike for WordLive www.wordlive.org.uk© Scripture Union 2011

# Today in the Word – 9/30/19

# The Lord Hears

### **Read:** [**Psalms 40**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341)**[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14527a)**]**

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

1I waited patiently for the Lord;  
    he turned to me and heard my cry.  
2He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
    out of the mud and mire;  
he set my feet on a rock  
    and gave me a firm place to stand.  
3He put a new song in my mouth,  
    a hymn of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear the Lord  
    and put their trust in him.

4Blessed is the one  
    who trusts in the Lord,  
who does not look to the proud,  
    to those who turn aside to false gods.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14530b)]  
5Many, Lord my God,  
    are the wonders you have done,  
    the things you planned for us.  
None can compare with you;  
    were I to speak and tell of your deeds,  
    they would be too many to declare.

6Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—  
    but my ears you have opened[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14532c)]—  
    burnt offerings and sin offerings[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14532d)] you did not require.  
7Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—  
    it is written about me in the scroll.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14533e)]  
8I desire to do your will, my God;  
    your law is within my heart.”

9I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;  
    I do not seal my lips, Lord,  
    as you know.  
10I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;  
    I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.  
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness  
    from the great assembly.

11Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord;  
    may your love and faithfulness always protect me.  
12For troubles without number surround me;  
    my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.  
They are more than the hairs of my head,  
    and my heart fails within me.  
13Be pleased to save me, Lord;  
    come quickly, Lord, to help me.

14May all who want to take my life  
    be put to shame and confusion;  
may all who desire my ruin  
    be turned back in disgrace.  
15May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”  
    be appalled at their own shame.  
16But may all who seek you  
    rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who long for your saving help always say,  
    “The Lord is great!”

17But as for me, I am poor and needy;  
    may the Lord think of me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
    you are my God, do not delay.

### **Read: Psalm 41[**[**f**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14544f)**]**

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

1Blessed are those who have regard for the weak;  
    the Lord delivers them in times of trouble.  
2The Lord protects and preserves them—  
    they are counted among the blessed in the land—  
    he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.  
3The Lord sustains them on their sickbed  
    and restores them from their bed of illness.

4I said, “Have mercy on me, Lord;  
    heal me, for I have sinned against you.”  
5My enemies say of me in malice,  
    “When will he die and his name perish?”  
6When one of them comes to see me,  
    he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander;  
    then he goes out and spreads it around.

7All my enemies whisper together against me;  
    they imagine the worst for me, saying,  
8“A vile disease has afflicted him;  
    he will never get up from the place where he lies.”  
9Even my close friend,  
    someone I trusted,  
one who shared my bread,  
    has turned[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#fen-NIV-14552g)] against me.

10But may you have mercy on me, Lord;  
    raise me up, that I may repay them.  
11I know that you are pleased with me,  
    for my enemy does not triumph over me.  
12Because of my integrity you uphold me  
    and set me in your presence forever.

13Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
    from everlasting to everlasting.  
Amen and Amen.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 40:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14527) In Hebrew texts 40:1-17 is numbered 40:2-18.
2. [Psalm 40:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14530) Or to lies
3. [Psalm 40:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14532) Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts but a body you have prepared for me
4. [Psalm 40:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14532) Or purification offerings
5. [Psalm 40:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14533) Or come / with the scroll written for me
6. [Psalm 41:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14544) In Hebrew texts 41:1-13 is numbered 41:2-14.
7. [Psalm 41:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+40%e2%80%9341#en-NIV-14552) Hebrew has lifted up his heel

In February, Ryan Osmun went for a hike at Zion National Park in Utah. While freeing a fellow hiker trapped in quicksand, Ryan’s own leg became stuck. It took twelve hours before park rangers could get to the scene and rescue him.

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. Psalm 40:3

In yesterday’s passage, Psalms 38–39, David described in vivid detail a difficult situation he had faced. This experience led to his internal struggle, reflected in Psalm 39. In the first ten verses of Psalm 40, David gave thanks for answered prayer. We can feel his relief in verse 2 as he declared, “He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet upon a rock.” Like a man who has been rescued from quicksand, David finally felt free.

Notice that he does not hesitate to give God the praise for what He has done: “I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord​” (v. 9). David’s experience helped him recognize that God is not primarily pleased by external obedience, but by obedience that comes from the heart (vv. 6–8). When we give sacrifices and offerings to God, our motives matter. It is the combination of sacrifice with the right attitude that makes it valuable (see Jer. 6:20; Amos 5:22). David also recognized that the sacrifices outlined in the Mosaic Law pointed beyond themselves to the sacrificial work that would be done by Israel’s Messiah, Jesus (Heb. 10:5–10).

At the end of the psalm, David’s celebration over his rescue turns back to a plea for help. Once again, he has found himself in another difficult situation. He prays, “You are my help and my deliverer, you are my God, do not delay” (40:17).

### **Apply the Word**

Over and over in the psalms we saw David get into trouble, plead for help, be rescued, and then get into difficulty again. His cycle is familiar. But rather than being discouraged, the psalms give us words to engage with God honestly. These psalms are a precious gift to help us to communicate with God as we live the life of faith.

### **Pray with Us**

The Psalms remind us that you hear us, God, and listen to the deepest cries of our hearts. On the last day of this month’s prayer journey, let us come together in praise of our Father’s perfect goodness and pray that we will go deeper in our daily walk.

## BY Ryan Cook

# Our Daily Bread – 9/30/19

# A Ready Remedy

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 53:1–6**](https://www.odb.org/2019/09/30/a-ready-remedy)

53 Who has believed our message  
    and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
2He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
    and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
    nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.  
3He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
    a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces  
    he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4Surely he took up our pain  
    and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
    stricken by him, and afflicted.  
5But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
    he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
    and by his wounds we are healed.  
6We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
    each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
    the iniquity of us all.

The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. [Isaiah 53:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=Isaiah+53%3A5)

Following the park guide, I scribbled notes as he taught about the plants of the Bahamian primeval forest. He told us which trees to avoid. The poisonwood tree, he said, secretes a black sap that causes a painful, itchy rash. But not to worry! The antidote could usually be found growing right next it. “Cut into the red bark of the gum elemi tree,” he said, “and rub the sap on the rash. It will immediately begin to heal.”

I nearly dropped my pencil in astonishment. I hadn’t expected to find a picture of salvation in the forest. But in the gum elemi tree, I saw Jesus. He’s the ready remedy wherever the poison of sin is found. Like the red bark of that tree, the blood of Jesus brings healing.

The prophet Isaiah understood that humanity needed healing. The rash of sin had infected us. Isaiah promised that our healing would come through “a man of suffering” who would take our sickness upon Himself (Isaiah 53:3). That man was Jesus. We were sick, but Christ was willing to be wounded in our place. When we believe in Him, we are healed from the sickness of sin (v. 5). It may take a lifetime to learn to live as those who’re healed—to recognize our sins and to reject them in favor of our new identity—but because of Jesus, we can.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What other pictures in the natural world do you see of the salvation God offers us? What has the healing He offers meant to you?

Wherever sin is, Jesus is there, ready to save.

#### **Insight**

Isaiah 53 gives us the clearest description of the sacrifice of Christ in the Old Testament, describing His rejection (vv. 1–3), His suffering in our place (vv. 4–6), His sacrificial death and burial (vv. 7–9), and His reconciling atonement and resurrection (vv. 10–12). The chapter is the last of four messianic prophecies in the book of Isaiah (42:1–9; 49:1–13, 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12) known as the “Servant Songs” because they prophetically refer to Jesus the Messiah as Servant (42:1; 49:3; 50:10; 52:13), although Jewish scholars tend to identify the Servant as Israel itself.

In the New Testament, Isaiah is quoted or alluded to sixty-two times. New Testament writers unequivocally apply quotes from Isaiah 53 to Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:17; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37; John 12:38–41; Acts 8:32–35; Romans 10:16; 1 Peter 2:24).

# God Calling – 9/30/19

# Wisdom

**As thy days so shall thy strength be.**

I have promised that for every day you live, the strength shall be given you.  Do not fear.

Face each difficulty sure that the wisdom and strength will be given you for it.  Claim it.

Rely on Me to keep My Promise about this.  In My Universe, for every task I give one of My children, there is  set aside all that is necessary for its performance.  So why fear?  So why doubt?

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts into wisdom.  Psalm 90:12