# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/1/25

# Helpful or Heartless Toward Others?



It is Christ…who also makes intercession for us….the Spirit…makes intercession for the saints… —[Romans 8:34, 27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+8%3A34%2C+27)

Do we need any more arguments than these to become intercessors– that Christ “always lives to make intercession” ([Hebrews 7:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+7:25)), and that the Holy Spirit “makes intercession for the saints”? Are we living in such a relationship with others that we do the work of intercession as a result of being the children of God who are taught by His Spirit? We should take a look at our current circumstances. Do crises which affect us or others in our home, business, country, or elsewhere, seem to be crushing in on us? Are we being pushed out of the presence of God and left with no time for worship? If so, we must put a stop to such distractions and get into such a living relationship with God that our relationship with others is maintained through the work of intercession, where God works His miracles.

Beware of getting ahead of God by your very desire to do His will. We run ahead of Him in a thousand and one activities, becoming so burdened with people and problems that we don’t worship God, and we fail to intercede. If a burden and its resulting pressure come upon us while we are not in an attitude of worship, it will only produce a hardness toward God and despair in our own souls. God continually introduces us to people in whom we have no interest, and unless we are worshiping God the natural tendency is to be heartless toward them. We give them a quick verse of Scripture, like jabbing them with a spear, or leave them with a hurried, uncaring word of counsel before we go. A heartless Christian must be a terrible grief to our Lord.

Are our lives in the proper place so that we may participate in the intercession of our Lord and the Holy Spirit?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of isolation; beware of the idea that you have to develop a holy life alone. It is impossible to develop a holy life alone; you will develop into an oddity and a peculiarism, into something utterly unlike what God wants you to be. The only way to develop spiritually is to go into the society of God’s own children, and you will soon find how God alters your set. God does not contradict our social instincts; He alters them.  Biblical Psychology, 189 L

# CCEL – 4/1/25

**The fruit of the Spirit is joy.**—[GAL. 5:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

Joy in the Holy Ghost.—Unspeakable and full of glory.

Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; . . . exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.—We glory in tribulations.

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; . . . for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.—These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be fuIl.—As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.—The joy of the Lord is your strength.

In thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.—For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

[Rom. 14:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.17). -[I Pet. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html#iPet.1.8).[II Cor. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html#iiCor.6.10);[7:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.7.html#iiCor.7.4). -[Rom. 5:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3).[Heb. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.2). -[John 15:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.11). -[II Cor. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.5).[Phi. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.4). -[Neh. 8:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.8.html" \l "Neh.8.10).[Psa. 16:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.11). -[Rev. 7:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.17).

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” **[Song of Solomon 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.2)**

For several days we have been dwelling upon the Saviour’s passion, and for some little time to come we shall linger there. In beginning a new month, let us seek the same desires after our Lord as those which glowed in the heart of the elect spouse. See how she leaps at once to him; there are no prefatory words; she does not even mention his name; she is in the heart of her theme at once, for she speaks of him who was the only him in the world to her. How bold is her love! It was much condescension which permitted the weeping penitent to anoint his feet with spikenard—it was rich love which allowed the gentle Mary to sit at his feet and learn of him—but here, love, strong, fervent love, aspires to higher tokens of regard, and closer signs of fellowship. Esther trembled in the presence of Ahasuerus, but the spouse in joyful liberty of perfect love knows no fear. If we have received the same free spirit, we also may ask the like. By kisses we suppose to be intended those varied manifestations of affection by which the believer is made to enjoy the love of Jesus. The kiss of reconciliation we enjoyed at our conversion, and it was sweet as honey dropping from the comb. The kiss of acceptance is still warm on our brow, as we know that he hath accepted our persons and our works through rich grace. The kiss of daily, present communion is that which we pant after to be repeated day after day, till it is changed into the kiss of reception, which removes the soul from earth, and the kiss of consummation which fills it with the joy of heaven. Faith is our walk, but fellowship sensibly felt is our rest. Faith is the road, but communion with Jesus is the well from which the pilgrim drinks. O lover of our souls, be not strange to us; let the lips of thy blessing meet the lips of our asking; let the lips of thy fulness touch the lips of our need, and straightway the kiss will be effected.

# Word Live – 4/1/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/1/25

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# Today in the Word – 4/1/25

# Spoiler Alert

A picture of a cave with a cross on it

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**Read: John 11 :1-27**

**The Death of Lazarus**

**11**Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2**Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. **3**So the sisters sent a message to Jesus,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26516a)] ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’ **4**But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’ **5**Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, **6**after having heard that Lazarus[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26519b)] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

**7**Then after this he said to the disciples, ‘Let us go to Judea again.’ **8**The disciples said to him, ‘Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?’ **9**Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. **10**But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.’ **11**After saying this, he told them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.’ **12**The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.’ **13**Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. **14**Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. **15**For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’ **16**Thomas, who was called the Twin,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26529c)] said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’

**Jesus the Resurrection and the Life**

**17**When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26530d)] had already been in the tomb for four days. **18**Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26531e)] away, **19**and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. **20**When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. **21**Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22**But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ **23**Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ **24**Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ **25**Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26538f)] Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, **26**and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ **27**She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26540g)] the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’

**Footnotes**

1. [John 11:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26516) Gk *him*
2. [John 11:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26519) Gk *he*
3. [John 11:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26529) Gk *Didymus*
4. [John 11:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26530) Gk *he*
5. [John 11:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26531) Gk *fifteen stadia*
6. [John 11:25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26538) Other ancient authorities lack *and the life*
7. [John 11:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011%20%3A1-27&version=NRSVA#en-NRSVA-26540) Or *the Christ*

I am the resurrection and the life. John 11:25

Have you ever read a book or watched a movie and noticed subtle clues as to how the story might end? This technique is called foreshadowing. In a similar way, through words and actions, Jesus foreshadowed His resurrection from the dead, preparing His followers for what would happen next.

In a way, all of Jesus' miracles served this purpose. His disciple John emphasized seven of these “c1ues" in his Gospel, beginning with the miracle at the wedding in Cana and climaxing with the raising of Lazarus. These signs revealed Jesus' glory to His followers and to His enemies (see also John 2:11). The raising of Lazarus also set in motion the final events that would lead to Jesus' crucifixion.

When Lazarus became seriously ill, his sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, the one you love is sick" (v. 3). But instead of returning immediately, Jesus remained on the east side of the Jordan for the next two days (vv. 6-7). It's not that Jesus was underestimating His friend's illness. His delay was intentional. Jesus could have left sooner or even healed Lazarus from a distance (see Matt. 8:13). Yet He allowed Lazarus to die in order to prove the point He expressed in verse 25: ”I am the resurrection and the life."

The miraculous resurrection of Lazarus points forward to Christ's own resurrection. But this miracle was meant to show more than the fact that Jesus could restore the dead to life. According to Jesus, it identified Him as the source of eternal life. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. This truth is the central theme for this study. We will be looking at what the Bible teaches about the resurrection of Christ along with its importance to the gospel and the implications it has for our Christian life.

**Go Deeper**

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important to the Christian faith? What does it mean to say that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?

**Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, what a joy to start this month's study with Your words of hope, “I am the resurrection and the life:" Give us a deeper understanding of the wonder of Your resurrection and the glory of eternal life with You.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/1/25

**TRIUMPH OF KINDNESS IN CHRIST**



**Read: 1 PETER 3:8-11**

**Suffering for Doing Good**

**8**Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9**Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. **10**For,

“Whoever would love life  
    and see good days  
must keep their tongue from evil  
    and their lips from deceitful speech.  
**11**They must turn from evil and do good;  
    they must seek peace and pursue it.

When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us. TITUS 3:4-5

When Jackie Robinson, the first Black player in modern-day Major League Baseball, played at Shibe Park in Philadelphia on May 9, 1947, ten-year-old Doris was in the upper-deck stands with her father. When an elderly Black man made his way down the aisle to a seat next to them, her father led the way in getting acquainted. Doris said their conversation about scorekeeping made her feel "grown up." She later reflected, "I've never forgotten that man and his smiling face." The delightful interaction between

Doris, a young White girl, and the kind, elderly man, who was the son of slaves, was a bright spot that day.

This was in stark contrast, however, to the hateful conduct Robinson had experienced at another game that season. He recounted that "in terms of race, they yelled everything at me; it was quite vicious”

Vicious conduct isn't limited to sports fields. Homes, neighborhoods, workspaces, and even our churches can be places where ugliness wins. Those who believe in the God who displayed kindness through His Son (SEE TITUS 3:4), however, are called to do the same. Peter writes: “Be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult" (1 PETER 3:8-9). Kindness triumphs when those who've received it from God share it generously with others as the Spirit helps them.

**ARTHUR JACKSON**

**Reflect and Pray**

When are you tempted to be unkind? How have you been the recipient of kindness?

Dear Father, I'm grateful for the kindness You've given through Jesus.

**INSIGHT**

In 1 Peter 3:10-12, Peter strengthens his point on how to respond to suffering by quoting from Psalm 34:12-16; a psalm that came out of one of David's frightening experiences. Having escaped King Saul's murderous pursuit, David ended up in Gath-the home of his former Philistine opponent, Goliath. When David's identity is exposed, he pretends to be insane (1 SAMUEL 21:10-1 5) and escapes from Gath. The account in 1 Samuel focuses on David's apparent ingenuity in cleverly escaping danger, but in Psalm 34, as he reflects on the event, he sees that his rescue came from God, not his own scheme (V. 17). Peter's use of this psalm captures the hopeful optimism of David, whose trust in God's kind protection and care had been rewarded in his escape from Gath.

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

# God Calling – 4/1/25

# Shut Out From God

Do you not see, My children, that you have not yet learned all? Soon, very soon, you will have mastered your lesson, and then you will truly be able to do all things through Me and My Strength. Did you not see it with My Disciples? Timid, faithless followers, and then, so soon, themselves leaders, healers, conquerors, through Me.

All knowledge was Mine, given Me of My Father, and Mine in manhood's years on earth. You understand this, My children, I know you do.

Thousands of My servants have gone to their betrayal and death, and others, who knew Me not, with no agony before it.

Had I not been Son of God, bearing man's weight of sin, voluntarily bearing it until of My own free will -- for that moment's horror, I was shut out from His sight with man, the sinner, for one short space -- had I not been God, had not this been My suffering -- then I was but a craven mortal.

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/2/25

# The Glory That’s Unsurpassed



…the Lord Jesus…has sent me that you may receive your sight… —[Acts 9:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+9%3A17)

When Paul received his sight, he also received spiritual insight into the Person of Jesus Christ. His entire life and preaching from that point on were totally consumed with nothing but Jesus Christ— “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” ([1 Corinthians 2:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+2:2)). Paul never again allowed anything to attract and hold the attention of his mind and soul except the face of Jesus Christ.

We must learn to maintain a strong degree of character in our lives, even to the level that has been revealed in our vision of Jesus Christ.

The lasting characteristic of a spiritual man is the ability to understand correctly the meaning of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life, and the ability to explain the purposes of God to others. The overruling passion of his life is Jesus Christ. Whenever you see this quality in a person, you get the feeling that he is truly a man after God’s own heart (see [Acts 13:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13:22)).

Never allow anything to divert you from your insight into Jesus Christ. It is the true test of whether you are spiritual or not. To be unspiritual means that other things have a growing fascination for you.

Since mine eyes have looked on Jesus,  
I’ve lost sight of all beside,  
So enchained my spirit’s vision,  
Gazing on the Crucified.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/2/25

**If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only.**—[I SAM. 7:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.7.html" \l "iSam.7.3)

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.—Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.—Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.—Serve him with a perfect heart with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.

Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.—Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

[I John 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.21). -[II Cor. 6:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17). -[Matt. 6:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.24).[Exo. 34:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.34.html" \l "Exod.34.14). -[I Chr. 28:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.28.html" \l "iChr.28.9).[Psa. 51:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.6). -[I Sam. 16:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.16.html" \l "iSam.16.7). -[I John 3:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.21).

“He answered him to never a word.” **[Matthew 27:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.27.html" \l "Matt.27.14)**

He had never been slow of speech when he could bless the sons of men, but he would not say a single word for himself. “Never man spake like this man,” and never man was silent like him. Was this singular silence the index of his perfect self-sacrifice? Did it show that he would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of his sacred person, which he had dedicated as an offering for us? Had he so entirely surrendered himself that he would not interfere in his own behalf, even in the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim? Was this silence a type of the defencelessness of sin? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and, therefore, he who bore its whole weight stood speechless before his judge. Is not patient silence the best reply to a gainsaying world? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with a grand example of wisdom? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will ere long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom. Evidently our Lord, by his silence, furnished a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. A long defence of himself would have been contrary to Isaiah’s prediction: “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” By his quiet he conclusively proved himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute him this morning. Be with us, Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of thy love.

# Word Live – 4/2/25

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# Scripture Union – 4/2/25

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# Today in the Word – 4/2/25

# Tears at the Grave

A painting of a person kneeling on the ground

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read John 11:28-44**

**Jesus Weeps**

**28**When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, ‘The Teacher is here and is calling for you.’ **29**And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. **30**Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. **31**The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. **32**When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ **33**When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. **34**He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ **35**Jesus began to weep. **36**So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ **37**But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’

**Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life**

**38**Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39**Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, ‘Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.’ **40**Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ **41**So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me. **42**I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ **43**When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ **44**The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’

Jesus wept.-John 11:35

Sometimes, it seems as if grief has been banned from funerals. We don't even like to call them funerals anymore. They are "celebrations of life." But changing the label does not remove the element of grief. Jesus shed tears at the grave of Lazarus. Why did He weep, and for whom? Jesus' tears are a puzzle for some, especially since He planned to raise Lazarus from the dead!

In his Gospel, John says Jesus' miracles are signs that revealed His glory (John 2:11). The raising of Lazarus is the crowning sign that set the stage for the ultimate revelation of this glory through the miracle of Christ's resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus was the ultimate display of Christ's divine nature (Rom. 1:4). Yet the tears of Jesus reveal an equally important dimension of Jesus' nature. They show His humanity and prove that He is our Great High Priest who is able to "empathize with our weaknesses' (Heb. 4:15).

It did not embarrass Jesus to weep at the grave of Lazarus. The Greek word the NIV translates as “troubled" in verse 33 is a word that, in other contexts, describes a strong feeling of indignation. Emotions like these are not out of place in the presence of death. Scripture calls death "the last enemy to be destroyed" (1 Cor. 15:26). Even though He knew Lazarus would soon be alive again, Jesus was not ashamed to share in the grief His friends felt. Some commentators believe that Jesus was also deeply moved by the prospect of His own impending death.

This passage should comfort us in grief. Those who know Christ will still feel sorrow, but we “do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13). There is no need to hide our tears from Jesus. The one who wept at the grave of Lazarus will not despise them.

**Go Deeper**

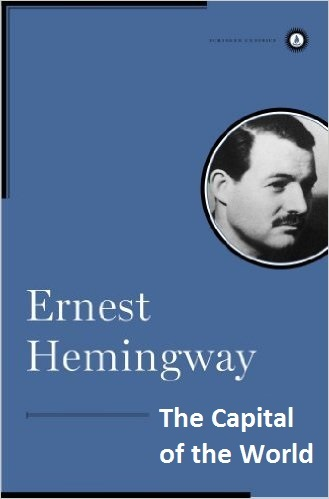
Are you struggling with grief or sorrow today? How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus wept?

**Pray with Us**

Christ our Lord, You are the almighty God, and yet You wept at the grave of Your friend Lazarus. You revealed to us Your grief and humanity. Thank You that we can bring all our tears and sadness to You and find comfort.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/2/25

# ALL IS FORGIVEN

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**Read: LUKE 15:17-24**

**17**“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18**I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19**I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ **20**So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

**21**“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

**22**“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23**Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24**For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

This son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. LUKE 15:24

In one of his short stories, Ernest Hemingway tells a tale about a Spanish father who longs to reunite with his estranged son. He places an advertisement in a local newspaper: PACO, MEET ME AT HOTEL MONTANA AT NOON TUESDAY. ALL IS FORGIVEN. When the father arrives, he finds a crowd waiting. Eight hundred Pacos had responded to his advertisement, longing to be forgiven by their fathers.

It's a touching story that speaks to our own deep desire for forgiveness, and it reminds me of a story Jesus told. There, a young man leaves his father on a hunt for "wild living" but soon finds himself in trouble (LUKE 15:13·14). When he "[comes] to his senses" and returns home (v. 17), his estranged father rushes to embrace him before he's even had a chance to apologize (v. 20). "This son of mine was dead and is alive again," the father cries in joy; "he was lost and is found" (v. 24). In this story, the father represents God, the son represents us, and heaven's joy is glimpsed when we too return to our heavenly Father.

Forgiveness lifts a weight off a guilty soul. But like a gift, what's offered to us must be received. Hemingway never tells us if the father in this story finds his own Paco. Will the Father in Jesus' story have His sons and daughters return? His arms are outstretched, awaiting our response.

**SHERIDAN VOYSEY**

**Reflect and Pray**

How would you feel if you were Paco's father? What can hold you back from receiving divine forgiveness?

Father, knowing what I've done, Your offer of forgiveness is overwhelming. I receive it, thank You!

For further study, read A Child's Compassion at DiscoverODB.org.

**INSIGHT**

Luke 15 contains three related parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. The common theme in all is God's great love' for the lost. Why were these parables told in this sequence? Some have suggested it's a matter of proportion (from smallest to largest): First, one out of a hundred sheep is lost; second, one out of ten coins, lastly, one out of two sons. No matter the reason, the last parable is the longest and most moving. Later In Luke, we read: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (19:10). The message is clear: God pursues and longs for us to turn to Him and be saved-to receive the forgiveness and salvation He offers through His Son's sacrifice for our sins. Why? Because He loves us: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends" (JOHN 15:13).

**ALYSON KIEDA**

# God Calling – 4/2/25

# The Priceless Blessing

I am here. Here is truly as I was with My Disciples of old. Here to help and bless you. Here to company with you. Do you know, even yet, My children, that this is the priceless blessing of your lives? I forgive you, as you have prayed Me to, for all neglects of My commands, but start anew from today.

Study My words and carry them out unflinchingly, unflinching. As you do this, you will find that you are miracle-workers, workers together with Me -- for Me. Remember this, not what you do, but what you are -- that is the miracle-working power.

Changed by My Spirit, shedding one garment of Spirit for a better; in time throwing that aside for a yet finer one, and so on from character to character, gradually transformed into My likeness.

Joy, Joy, Joy.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John 14:21

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/3/25

# “If You Had Known!”



If you had known…in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. —[Luke 19:42](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+19%3A42)

Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly and the city was stirred to its very foundations, but a strange god was there– the pride of the Pharisees. It was a god that seemed religious and upright, but Jesus compared it to “whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” ([Matthew 23:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23:27)).

What is it that blinds you to the peace of God “in this your day”? Do you have a strange god– not a disgusting monster but perhaps an unholy nature that controls your life? More than once God has brought me face to face with a strange god in my life, and I knew that I should have given it up, but I didn’t do it. I got through the crisis “by the skin of my teeth,” only to find myself still under the control of that strange god. I am blind to the very things that make for my own peace. It is a shocking thing that we can be in the exact place where the Spirit of God should be having His completely unhindered way with us, and yet we only make matters worse, increasing our blame in God’s eyes.

“If you had known….” God’s words here cut directly to the heart, with the tears of Jesus behind them. These words imply responsibility for our own faults. God holds us accountable for what we refuse to see or are unable to see because of our sin. And “now they are hidden from your eyes” because you have never completely yielded your nature to Him. Oh, the deep, unending sadness for what might have been! God never again opens the doors that have been closed. He opens other doors, but He reminds us that there are doors which we have shut– doors which had no need to be shut. Never be afraid when God brings back your past. Let your memory have its way with you. It is a minister of God bringing its rebuke and sorrow to you. God will turn what might have been into a wonderful lesson of growth for the future.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The fiery furnaces are there by God’s direct permission. It is misleading to imagine that we are developed in spite of our circumstances; we are developed because of them. It is mastery in circumstances that is needed, not mastery over them. The Love of God—The Message of Invincible Consolation, 674 R

# CCEL – 4/3/25

**Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.**—[II PET. 3:8,9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.8)

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall acomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

[Isa. 55:8-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html#Isa.55.8).[Rom. 11:32,33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.32).

“They took Jesus, and led him away.” **[John 19:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.19.html" \l "John.19.16)**

He had been all night in agony, he had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, he had been hurried from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate; he had, therefore, but little strength left, and yet neither refreshment nor rest were permitted him. They were eager for his blood, and therefore led him out to die, loaded with the cross. O dolorous procession! Well may Salem’s daughters weep. My soul, do thou weep also.

What learn we here as we see our blessed Lord led forth? Do we not perceive that truth which was set forth in shadow by the scapegoat? Did not the high-priest bring the scapegoat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat, and cease from the people? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people, so that if they were sought for they could not be found. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce him guilty; God himself imputes our sins to him, “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;” “He was made sin for us;” and, as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin upon his shoulders, represented by the cross; we see the great Scapegoat led away by the appointed officers of justice. Beloved, can you feel assured that he carried your sin? As you look at the cross upon his shoulders, does it represent your sin? There is one way by which you can tell whether he carried your sin or not. Have you laid your hand upon his head, confessed your sin, and trusted in him? Then your sin lies not on you; it has all been transferred by blessed imputation to Christ, and he bears it on his shoulder as a load heavier than the cross.

Let not the picture vanish till you have rejoiced in your own deliverance, and adored the loving Redeemer upon whom your iniquities were laid.

# Word Live – 4/3/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/3/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/3/25

# Darkness at Noon

A framed picture of a hill with crosses and a sun

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**Read Matthew 27:45-66**

**The Death of Jesus**

**45**From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. **46**About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *“Eli, Eli,*[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24176a)] *lema* *sabachthani?”* (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24176b)]

**47**When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

**48**Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. **49**The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

**50**And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

**51**At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split **52**and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53**They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24183c)] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

**54**When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

**55**Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. **56**Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24186d)] and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

**The Burial of Jesus**

**57**As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. **58**Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. **59**Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, **60**and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. **61**Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

**The Guard at the Tomb**

**62**The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. **63**“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ **64**So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

**65**“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” **66**So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

**Footnotes**

1. [Matthew 27:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#en-NIV-24176) Some manuscripts *Eloi, Eloi*
2. [Matthew 27:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#en-NIV-24176) Psalm 22:1
3. [Matthew 27:53](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#en-NIV-24183) Or *tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they*
4. [Matthew 27:56](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027%3A45-66&version=NIV#en-NIV-24186) Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph*

Surely he was the Son of God!-Matthew 27:54

Those followers of Jesus who watched the events described in Matthew 27 must have felt like they were in a nightmare. Even though Jesus had told them about His coming death, this was not how they expected the story to unfold. Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion were horrific enough. But from noon until three in the afternoon, “darkness came over all the land" (v. 45). Modern readers are intrigued by the phenomenon. What caused this darkness? Was it an eclipse? A storm? Did some kind of supernatural fog envelop the area where the crucifixion took place?

Matthew does not give us details about the cause, perhaps because the language he uses provides enough of a clue to identify its ultimate source. The story of Israel's Exodus tells how the Lord caused "darkness" to descend over the land of Egypt which lasted for three days (Ex. 10:21-22). Similarly, the prophet Amos spoke of a day when the lord would "make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight" (Amos 8:9). Matthew frames it as a theological rather than a meteorological event. The darkness is evidence that a great judgment has taken place.

Verse 46 notes that after three hours, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" With this quotation of Psalm 22:1, Jesus not only identifies Himself with the suffering it describes (see v. 18), but also with the hope of resurrection promised in Psalm 22:22-31. At the moment of Jesus' death, the curtain of the Temple was torn from top to bottom and a great earthquake split open the tombs "of many holy people" who “were raised to life" (v. 52). The earthquake occurred as Jesus spoke His final words, but the resurrection of these saints probably took place after that of Jesus (v. 53).

**Go Deeper**

What conclusion did the Centurion and those who were with him draw from all these events, according to verse 54? What do you think persuaded them?

**Pray with Us**

The darkness, the earthquake, the pain, the suffering- Father, the narrative of Your Son's death is difficult. But we know that the Cross leads to resurrection. We praise You for this truth, which changes everything.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/3/25

# NOT GRUMBLING AGA.INST GOD



**Read: EXODUS 15:22-27**

**The Waters of Marah and Elim**

**22**Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. **23**When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2015%3A22-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1944a)]) **24**So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What are we to drink?”

**25**Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink.

There the Lord issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. **26**He said, “If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.”

**27**Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

**Footnotes**

1. [Exodus 15:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2015%3A22-27&version=NIV#en-NIV-1944) *Marah* means *bitter.*

Moses cried out to the LORD. EXODUS 15:25

As an answer to prayer, unexpected funds from Alex's insurance had already paid for his dental treatment. Now, another treatment was necessary. *Where willi get the money for that?* Alex grumbled. Resentful thoughts of heavy expenses filled his mind.

At the time when a deposit to the dentist was due however a cash gift from a relative suddenly arrived. "I felt ashamed" Alex said. "I’d already seen how God had provided for me with the insurance payment. I shouldn't have grumbled but asked Him for help instead.",

When the Israelites entered the Desert of Shur, they'd just experienced God's deliverance at the Red Sea (EXODUS 14). His miraculous help, however, now seemed forgotten as they grumbled over the absence of drinkable water in the desert (15:22-24). The Hebrew word for "grumbling" refers to rebellion against God. The resentful response of the Israelites was very different from Moses', who asked God for help (v. 25). Later, God graciously provided water

for His people (w. 25-27).

In times of need, we can avoid grumbling by asking God for help as Moses did. Whether His help comes in miraculous ways, practical provision, people's assistance, or the strength to endure, we can trust that He hears us and cares for us.

**KAREN HUANG**

**Reflect and Pray**

In the past, what may have caused you to grumble in times of need? How can you remind yourself to always turn to God for help just as Moses did?

Faithful God, You're my provider. Please help me to look to You in trust and to rely on You in times of need.

Visit ODBU.org/OT234 to find comfort and strength in this deep dive into Moses' struggles in the book of Exodus.

**INSIGHT**

In the early phases of the exodus, God reintroduced Himself to His chosen people, who'd clearly drifted from Him after more than four hundred years in slavery in Egypt. In the miracle plagues, God had shown His superiority over the gods of Egypt, and at the Red Sea, He'd displayed His superiority over Pharaoh and his armies. Now, in the wilderness between the Red Sea and Mount Sinai, God showed His superiority over the harsh desert conditions by cleansing the bitter waters of Marah for the people. In the piece of wood mentioned in Exodus 15:25 (translated as "tree" or "tog" in some versions), some see a picture of the cross, which can sweeten a bitter life. At Mount Sinai, God would continue revealing Himself to His grumbling people through signs, wonders, and the law, but His ultimate revelation would come many centuries later in Jesus (HEBREWS 1:1-4).

**BILL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 4/3/25

# Greatness is Service

My children, I am here, your waiting Lord, ready at your call. I am among you as one that serveth, Meek and Holy, ready to be used and commanded. Remember that is the finest quality of greatness -- service. I, who could command a universe -- I await the commands of My children. Bring Me into everything.

You will find such Joy as the time goes on in speaking to each other of Me, and together climbing higher. Always humble, meek, and lowly in heart.

Learn this -- no position -- just a servant.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" Philippians 4:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/4/25

# The Way to Permanent Faith



Indeed the hour is coming…that you will be scattered… —[John 16:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+16%3A32)

Jesus was not rebuking the disciples in this passage. Their faith was real, but it was disordered and unfocused, and was not at work in the important realities of life. The disciples were scattered to their own concerns and they had interests apart from Jesus Christ. After we have the perfect relationship with God, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, our faith must be exercised in the realities of everyday life. We will be scattered, not into service but into the emptiness of our lives where we will see ruin and barrenness, to know what internal death to God’s blessings means. Are we prepared for this? It is certainly not of our own choosing, but God engineers our circumstances to take us there. Until we have been through that experience, our faith is sustained only by feelings and by blessings. But once we get there, no matter where God may place us or what inner emptiness we experience, we can praise God that all is well. That is what is meant by faith being exercised in the realities of life.

“…you…will leave Me alone.” Have we been scattered and have we left Jesus alone by not seeing His providential care for us? Do we not see God at work in our circumstances? Dark times are allowed and come to us through the sovereignty of God. Are we prepared to let God do what He wants with us? Are we prepared to be separated from the outward, evident blessings of God? Until Jesus Christ is truly our Lord, we each have goals of our own which we serve. Our faith is real, but it is not yet permanent. And God is never in a hurry. If we are willing to wait, we will see God pointing out that we have been interested only in His blessings, instead of in God Himself. The sense of God’s blessings is fundamental.

“…be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” ([John 16:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:33)). Unyielding spiritual fortitude is what we need.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The sympathy which is reverent with what it cannot understand is worth its weight in gold.  Baffled to Fight Better, 69 L

# CCEL – 4/4/25

Fear not; I am the first and the last.—[REV. 1:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.1.html" \l "Rev.1.17)

Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, but ye are come unto mount Sion, . . . to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.—Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.—We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.—The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?—Who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God?

[Heb. 12:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.18),[22-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.22). -[Heb. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html#Heb.12.2). -[Heb. 4:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.15).[Isa. 44:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.44.html" \l "Isa.44.6). -[Isa. 9:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.9.html" \l "Isa.9.6).[Hab. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hab.1.html" \l "Hab.1.12). -[II Sam. 22:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.22.html" \l "iiSam.22.32).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” [2 Corinthians 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21)

Mourning Christian! why weepest thou? Art thou mourning over thine own corruptions? Look to thy perfect Lord, and remember, thou art complete in him; thou art in God’s sight as perfect as if thou hadst never sinned; nay, more than that, the Lord our Righteousness hath put a divine garment upon thee, so that thou hast more than the righteousness of man—thou hast the righteousness of God. O thou who art mourning by reason of inbred sin and depravity, remember, none of thy sins can condemn thee. Thou hast learned to hate sin; but thou hast learned also to know that sin is not thine—it was laid upon Christ’s head. Thy standing is not in thyself—it is in Christ; thine acceptance is not in thyself, but in thy Lord; thou art as much accepted of God today, with all thy sinfulness, as thou wilt be when thou standest before his throne, free from all corruption. O, I beseech thee, lay hold on this precious thought, perfection in Christ! For thou art “complete in him.” With thy Saviour’s garment on, thou art holy as the Holy one. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Christian, let thy heart rejoice, for thou art “accepted in the beloved”—what hast thou to fear? Let thy face ever wear a smile; live near thy Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when thy time has come, thou shalt rise up where thy Jesus sits, and reign at his right hand; and all this because the divine Lord “was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

# Word Live – 4/4/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/4/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/4/25

# He Is Not Here

A light coming out of a cave

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**Read Matthew 28:1-10**

**Jesus Has Risen**

**28**After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

**2**There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3**His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4**The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

**5**The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6**He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7**Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

**8**So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9**Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10**Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

He is not here; he has risen. Matthew 28:6

On the day my father died, I visited his hospital room. The bed was empty. When I asked the nurse where he was, she looked alarmed and said, "Didn't anyone call you?" I looked again at the empty bed, hoping my eyes had played a trick on me. But my father was gone.

Mary Magdalene "and the other Mary" (the wife of Alphaeus and the mother of James) must have felt similarly disoriented when they came to Jesus' tomb, only to find its massive stone already rolled away. They had come to complete the burial rites and wondered how they would remove the stone (Mark 16:2). Upon arriving, they found the tomb open but not empty. However, instead of seeing the body of Jesus, they were greeted by an angel whose "appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were while as snow" (v. 3). The angel invited the women to inspect the place where Jesus had been laid, then commanded them to "go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him'" (v. 7).

This testimony laid the foundation for the Apostles' gospel and is still the bedrock upon which it stands today. These women had watched Jesus die and were the first of His disciples to enter the empty tomb (see Mark 15:40). They were also the first to see the risen Christ (v. 9). The apostles and other disciples did not immediately accept their good news. According to Luke 24:11, " their words seemed to them like nonsense." We should not be surprised or discouraged when others are put off by the gospel and express skepticism about its message. Even Jesus' own disciples were slow in accepting what seemed too good to be true.

**Go Deeper**

What made it so hard for the others to accept the women's testimony? Why shouldn't you let fear of disbelief stop you from sharing this good news?

**Pray with Us**

Lord God, at the empty tomb, You chose to appear first to the women. In response, they started to fearlessly proclaim the good news of Your resurrection. May we follow their example and share the gospel boldly.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/4/25

# OUR FATHER'S TREASURES



**Read: REVELATION 5:7-14**

**7**He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. **8**And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. **9**And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll  
    and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
    and with your blood you purchased for God  
    persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.  
**10**You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,  
    and they will reign[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=REVELATION%205%3A7-14&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30791a)] on the earth.”

**11**Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. **12**In a loud voice they were saying:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
    to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
    and honor and glory and praise!”

**13**Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
    be praise and honor and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!”

**14**The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

**Footnotes**

1. [Revelation 5:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=REVELATION%205%3A7-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-30791) Some manuscripts *they reign*

They were holding golden bowls full of ... the prayers of God's people. REVELAT ION 5:8

It's just an old pocketknife, worn and tarnished with time. The blade is chipped and the handle notched, but it was one of my father's treasures, kept in a box on his dresser until he gave it to me. "It's one of the few things I have from your grandfather," he told me. My grandfather died when my father was young, and Dad treasured the knife because he treasured his father.

The Bible tells us that God also has an unlikely treasure, something we might not expect. In Revelation, we see a throne in heaven encircled by "four living creatures" and "twenty-four elders," bowing before Jesus in worship (CHS. 4-5). Each one is holding "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people" (5:8). In ancient times, incense was something precious, used by kings (think of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh offered to Jesus in Matthew 2:11). Our prayers may not seem like much to us at times, but God wants them lifted before Him always.

Revelation 5 emphasizes the worthiness of Jesus because of His sinless life and loving death for us. Jesus' worthiness points us to why God values our prayers. Our prayers are precious to God because we're precious to Him. Because He loves us with such selfless, priceless, and merciful love, He longs for us to stay close to Him in prayer.

**JAMES BANKS**

**Reflect and Pray**

How will you love God with your prayers today? Who and what can you bring before Him in loving prayer?

Loving Savior, You're worthy "to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (REVELATION 5:12).

Visit ODBU.org/SF120 to discover more about the life-enriching power of prayer.

**INSIGHT**

In Revelation 4, the apostle John heard a voice that said, "Come up here and I will show you what must take place" (V. 1). Immediately, he was taken to heaven "in the Spirit" (V. 2), where he saw an incredible vision of heaven's throne room (vv.3-11). In chapter 5, Christ is introduced as "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (V. 5). Almost immediately, though, He's described as "a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain" (V. 6). This one who lovingly receives our prayers will also one day open the scroll we read of in today's passage (VV. 7-14).

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

# God Calling – 4/4/25

# Divine Efficiency

I am all-powerful and all-knowing and I have all your affairs in My Hands. Divine efficiency as well as Divine power is being brought to bear on them. All miracle-work is not the work of a moment as so often men imagine.

My servant Peter was not changed in a flash from a simple fisherman to a great leader and teacher, but through the very time of faithlessness -- through the very time of denial -- I was yet making him all that he should be. Impetuous spokesman as he always was, ready to lead the other disciples, Peter could never have been the after power he was, had he not learned his weakness. No man can save, unless he understands the sinner.

The Peter who was a mighty force for Me afterwards, who, more than all others, founded My church, was not even first the Peter who said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but the Peter who denied Me. He who had tested My forgiveness in his moment of abject remorse, he could best speak of Me as the Savior.

The Kingdom of Heaven can only be preached by those who have learned to prize the authority of its Kingdom. A many-sided training My Apostles need. Oh! joy. Oh, rejoice. I love you. Not one test too much will I lay on you.

"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." 1 Peter 11:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/5/25

# His Agony and Our Access



Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples…."Stay here and watch with Me." —[Matthew 26:36, 38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+26%3A36%2C+38)

We can never fully comprehend Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, but at least we don’t have to misunderstand it. It is the agony of God and man in one Person, coming face to face with sin. We cannot learn about Gethsemane through personal experience. Gethsemane and Calvary represent something totally unique— they are the gateway into life for us.

It was not death on the cross that Jesus agonized over in Gethsemane. In fact, He stated very emphatically that He came with the purpose of dying. His concern here was that He might not get through this struggle as the Son of Man. He was confident of getting through it as the Son of God— Satan could not touch Him there. But Satan’s assault was that our Lord would come through for us on His own solely as the Son of Man. If Jesus had done that, He could not have been our Savior (see [Hebrews 9:11-15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+9:11-15)). Read the record of His agony in Gethsemane in light of His earlier wilderness temptation— “…the devil…departed from Him until an opportune time” ([Luke 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+4:13)). In Gethsemane, Satan came back and was overthrown again. Satan’s final assault against our Lord as the Son of Man was in Gethsemane.

The agony in Gethsemane was the agony of the Son of God in fulfilling His destiny as the Savior of the world. The veil is pulled back here to reveal all that it cost Him to make it possible for us to become sons of God. His agony was the basis for the simplicity of our salvation. The Cross of Christ was a triumph for the Son of Man. It was not only a sign that our Lord had triumphed, but that He had triumphed to save the human race. Because of what the Son of Man went through, every human being has been provided with a way of access into the very presence of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/5/25

I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—[GEN. 32:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.32.html" \l "Gen.32.26)

Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.—According to your faith be it unto you.—Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

They drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and [Jesus] made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: . . . he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?—I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight.—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

[Isa. 27:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.27.html" \l "Isa.27.5).[Matt. 15:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.15.html" \l "Matt.15.28). -[Matt. 9:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.9.html" \l "Matt.9.29). -[Jas. 1:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.6).[Luke 24:28,29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.28),[31,32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.31). -[Exo. 33:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.13). -[Exo. 33:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.14).

“On him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.” [Luke 23:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.26)

We see in Simon’s carrying the cross a picture of the work of the Church throughout all generations; she is the cross-bearer after Jesus. Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer.

But let us comfort ourselves with this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's, it is not our cross, but Christ’s cross which we carry. When you are molested for your piety; when your religion brings the trial of cruel mockings upon you, then remember it is not your cross, it is Christ's cross; and how delightful is it to carry the cross of our Lord Jesus!

You carry the cross after him. You have blessed company; your path is marked with the footprints of your Lord. The mark of his blood-red shoulder is upon that heavy burden. 'Tis his cross, and he goes before you as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Take up your cross daily, and follow him.

Do not forget, also, that you bear this cross in partnership. It is the opinion of some that Simon only carried one end of the cross, and not the whole of it. That is very possible; Christ may have carried the heavier part, against the transverse beam, and Simon may have borne the lighter end. Certainly it is so with you; you do but carry the light end of the cross, Christ bore the heavier end.

And remember, though Simon had to bear the cross for a very little while, it gave him lasting honour. Even so the cross we carry is only for a little while at most, and then we shall receive the crown, the glory. Surely we should love the cross, and, instead of shrinking from it, count it very dear, when it works out for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

# Word Live – 4/5/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/5/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/5/25

# Slow to Believe

An open book on a table

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read John 20:1-10**

**The Empty Tomb**

**20**Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. **2**So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

**3**So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. **4**Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5**He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. **6**Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, **7**as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. **8**Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. **9**(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) **10**Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus had to rise from the dead. -John 20:9

On the surface, faith seems like it should be easy. The old chorus that urges us to "only believe" may make faith sound like something we can turn on like a light switch. To have faith, one needs only to believe. But simple does not mean easy. Those who first heard the news that Jesus had risen did not accept this news easily.

In chapter 20 of John's Gospel, we read what seems to be an expansion of an incident Matthew describes only briefly in Matthew 28:9. Upon arriving at the tomb in the darkness, Mary Magdalene saw that the stone had been rolled away and realized the tomb was empty (v. 2). She ran back to the disciples and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" It seems that Mary and the other two women separated for a time as she rushed back to report this news to the disciples and then returned to the tomb. When we compare John's account to Matthew's, we can speculate that she encountered Jesus before reentering the tomb to hear the angel's announcement (v. 2).

John and Peter raced to the tomb. John was the first to arrive, but instead of going in, he bent down and saw the strips of linen from the grave clothes. Peter hurried past him and saw the graveclothes as well as the piece that had been wrapped around Jesus' head lying in a separate place. When John finally entered, he saw all this and "believed" (v. 8). Yet, according to verse 9, he did not fully grasp what had happened. John accepted the fact that the tomb was empty. Perhaps even that Jesus had risen from the dead. However, neither he nor Peter understood "that Jesus had to rise from the dead" (v. 9).

**Go Deeper**

What eyewitness evidence does John offer for the resurrection of Jesus? If you struggle with faith, have you asked for God's help?

**Pray with Us**

Today's reading reminds us that even the apostles were slow to believe. Merciful God, give us a genuine, childlike faith, full of dedication, perseverance, and hope.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/5/25

# A SPIRITUAL DILEMMA

### **Read: PSALM 145:1-8** [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%20145%3A1-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16322a)]

**A psalm of praise. Of David.**

**1**I will exalt you, my God the King;  
    I will praise your name for ever and ever.  
**2**Every day I will praise you  
    and extol your name for ever and ever.

**3**Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;  
    his greatness no one can fathom.  
**4**One generation commends your works to another;  
    they tell of your mighty acts.  
**5**They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—  
    and I will meditate on your wonderful works.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%20145%3A1-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-16326b)]  
**6**They tell of the power of your awesome works—  
    and I will proclaim your great deeds.  
**7**They celebrate your abundant goodness  
    and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

**8**The Lord is gracious and compassionate,  
    slow to anger and rich in love.

**Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 145:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%20145%3A1-8&version=NIV#en-NIV-16322) This psalm is an acrostic poem, the verses of which (including verse 13b) begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
2. [Psalm 145:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%20145%3A1-8&version=NIV#en-NIV-16326) Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text *On the glorious splendor of your majesty / and on your wonderful works I will meditate*

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise. PSALM 145:3

The average person checks his or her phone 150 times a day. Let that sink in a minute. Something has our attention and it may not be for our good. Tristan Harris believes this. He's one of the voices in a film that features some of the top names in technology, people who ushered us into "social media." But instead of praise, their voices are sounding an alarm, calling our reality (and the film) *The Social Dilemma.* "We're the product. Our attention is the product being sold to advertisers." We give our attention to what we believe is valuable or worthy. And in a very real sense, what we give attention to, we can find ourselves worshiping.

That word *dilemma* indicates a situation where a choice has to be made. Believe it or not, we face such a dilemma in our spiritual lives, a choice we have to make daily: *Who or what will I give my attention to?* In other words, *Who or what will I worship?* Thepsalmist clearly made his choice: "Every day I will praise you (God) and extol your name for ever and ever" (PSALM 145:2). The verse that follows gives his rationale: "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom" (v. 3).

The psalmist believed nothing compares to God's greatness, and so he focused his attention there. God and God alone is worthy of our praise.

**JOHN BLASÉ**

**Reflect and Pray**

In contrast to time for praying or reading Scripture, what vies for your attention? What changes can you make to keep technology from becoming an idol?

Dear God, You alone are worthy of my praise. Nothing compares to You.

**INSIGHT**

In Psalm 145, the psalmist David extols the name and character of God, who is "worthy of praise" (V. 3). He praises His mighty acts, glorious splendor, wonderful and awesome works, great deeds, abundant goodness, and righteousness (vv. 4-7). And in verse 8, he lists characteristics of God that are repeated throughout the Old Testament: "The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love" (SEE EXODUS 34:6; 2 CHRONICLES 30:9; NEHEMIAH 9:17; PSALM 86:15: 103:8; 111:4: 112:4; JOEL 2:13; JONAH 4:2). David concludes, “I will praise the LORD, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever" (PSALM 145:21 NLT). One day, "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea*,* and all that is in them" will join in praise "to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" (REVELATION 5:13). We praise Him today as we anticipate what's to come!

Visit ODBU,org/OT020 to discover more about the book of Psalms.

**ALYSON KIEDA**

# God Calling – 4/5/25

# Heart's Interpreter

Rest in Me. Seek this evening time just to be with Me. Do not feel you have failed if sometimes I ask you only to rest together in My Presence.

I am with you, much with you both, not only at these times, at all times. Feel conscious of My Presence. Earth has no greater joy than that.

I am the heart's great Interpreter. Even souls who are the nearest together have much in their natures that remain a sealed book to each other, and only as I enter and control their lives, do I reveal to each the mysteries of the other.

Each soul is so different -- I alone understand perfectly the language of each, and I can interpret between the two.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Psalm 116:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/6/25

# The Collision of God and Sin



…who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree… —[1 Peter 2:24](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Peter+2%3A24)

The Cross of Christ is the revealed truth of God’s judgment on sin. Never associate the idea of martyrdom with the Cross of Christ. It was the supreme triumph, and it shook the very foundations of hell. There is nothing in time or eternity more absolutely certain and irrefutable than what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross— He made it possible for the entire human race to be brought back into a right-standing relationship with God. He made redemption the foundation of human life; that is, He made a way for every person to have fellowship with God.

The Cross was not something that happened to Jesus— He came to die; the Cross was His purpose in coming. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” ([Revelation 13:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+13:8)). The incarnation of Christ would have no meaning without the Cross. Beware of separating “God was manifested in the flesh…” from “…He made Him…to be sin for us…” ([1 Timothy 3:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+3:16) ; [2 Corinthians 5:21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5:21)). The purpose of the incarnation was redemption. God came in the flesh to take sin away, not to accomplish something for Himself. The Cross is the central event in time and eternity, and the answer to all the problems of both.

The Cross is not the cross of a man, but the Cross of God, and it can never be fully comprehended through human experience. The Cross is God exhibiting His nature. It is the gate through which any and every individual can enter into oneness with God. But it is not a gate we pass right through; it is one where we abide in the life that is found there.

The heart of salvation is the Cross of Christ. The reason salvation is so easy to obtain is that it cost God so much. The Cross was the place where God and sinful man merged with a tremendous collision and where the way to life was opened. But all the cost and pain of the collision was absorbed by the heart of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We can understand the attributes of God in other ways, but we can only understand the Father’s heart in the Cross of Christ.  The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 558 L

# CCEL – 4/6/25

He ever liveth to make intercession.—[HEB. 7:25.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.7.html" \l "Heb.7.25)

Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died . . . who also maketh intercession for us.—Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.—There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Seeing . . . that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—Through him we . . . have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

[Rom. 8:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.34). -[Heb. 9:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.9.html" \l "Heb.9.24).[I John 2:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.2.html" \l "iJohn.2.1). -[I Tim. 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.2.html" \l "iTim.2.5).[Heb. 4:14-16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.14). -[Eph. 2:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.2.html" \l "Eph.2.18).

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp.” [Hebrews 13:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.13.html" \l "Heb.13.13)

Jesus, bearing his cross, went forth to suffer without the gate. The Christian’s reason for leaving the camp of the world’s sin and religion is not because he loves to be singular, but because Jesus did so; and the disciple must follow his Master. Christ was “not of the world:” his life and his testimony were a constant protest against conformity with the world. Never was such overflowing affection for men as you find in him; but still he was separate from sinners. In like manner Christ’s people must “go forth unto him.” They must take their position “without the camp,” as witness-bearers for the truth. They must be prepared to tread the straight and narrow path. They must have bold, unflinching, lion-like hearts, loving Christ first, and his truth next, and Christ and his truth beyond all the world. Jesus would have his people “go forth without the camp” for their own sanctification. You cannot grow in grace to any high degree while you are conformed to the world. The life of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the highway of safety; and though the separated life may cost you many pangs, and make every day a battle, yet it is a happy life after all. No joy can excel that of the soldier of Christ: Jesus reveals himself so graciously, and gives such sweet refreshment, that the warrior feels more calm and peace in his daily strife than others in their hours of rest. The highway of holiness is the highway of communion. It is thus we shall hope to win the crown if we are enabled by divine grace faithfully to follow Christ “without the camp.” The crown of glory will follow the cross of separation. A moment’s shame will be well recompensed by eternal honour; a little while of witness-bearing will seem nothing when we are “forever with the Lord.”

# Word Live – 4/6/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/6/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/6/25

# The First Witness



**Read John 20:11-18**

**Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

**11**Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb **12**and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

**13**They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” **14**At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

**15**He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

**16**Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

**17**Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

**18**Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

I have seen the Lord!-John 20:18

On more than one occasion, the apostles argued amongst themselves about which of them was the greatest. If they had understood Jesus' statements about rising from the dead, they might also have argued about which of them would see Him first. It is doubtful they would have guessed it would be Mary Magdalene.

When Mary saw the risen Christ, she was weeping outside the tomb, after Peter and John had left. Two angels appeared, one at the head and the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been (John 20:11-12). The question they asked was sincere. From their perspective, her tears are inexplicable. Why should Christ's disciples weep since He had been raised from the dead just as He said? (Compare with Matt. 28:6.) But they were also meant to help her understand what had happened. Jesus' questions in verse 15 are as leading as the angels’. It is not hard to imagine that He asked them with a smile, especially when Jesus, whose body Mary was seeking. asks: "Who is it you are looking for?"

Mary did not recognize her Savior at first. Maybe her eyes were blinded by tears. Or perhaps it was simply due to the incongruity of seeing Him alive outside of His tomb. It is fitting that the sound of Jesus calling her name was what enabled Mary to recognize her risen Lord (v. 16). Jesus had said that the Good Shepherd's sheep follow Him "because they know his voice" (John 10:4). When He calls them by name, they respond in faith and follow Him (John 10:3).

John may have been the first to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, but Mary was the first disciple to see the risen Christ. She was also the first person to be commissioned by Christ to bear witness to what she had seen (vv. 17- 18).

**Go Deeper**

Have you sensed Jesus calling you to follow Him? Who needs to know that Jesus is alive?

**Pray with Us**

Almighty Father, keep us humble, we pray, and always eager to turn to You for help. Like the apostles, we are prone to argue about who is greater. May we remember that in You, there's no competition or rivalry.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/6/25

# HOSPITALITY IN JESUS



**Read: ACTS 16:11-15**

**Lydia’s Conversion in Philippi**

**11**From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12**From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ACTS%2016%3A11-15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27496a)] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

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

**Footnotes**

1. [Acts 16:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ACTS%2016%3A11-15&version=NIV#en-NIV-27496) The text and meaning of the Greek for *the leading city of that district* are uncertain.

When [Lydia) and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. ACTS 16:15

During the US civil rights movement, famed New Orleans cook Leah Chase did what she could. She prepared food and fed those who were marching for equal rights for all people. She said, "I was just feeding people. They were fighting for something, and they didn't know what they would find when they went out there. They didn't know what would happen to them on the streets. But when they were here, they knew I'd feed them. That's what I could do for them."

The gift of hospitality may sometimes be overlooked but it can be just as important as other forms of serving one another in Christ. A businesswoman named Lydia-"a dealer in purple cloth" (Acts 16:14) showed hospitality to Paul and the other preachers spreading the good news about Jesus to the people of Macedonia (vv. 11-15). She used what she had-her home-to help the traveling team. After accepting the gospel message, Lydia insisted on providing a place for the preachers to rest, saying, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, ... come and stay at my house" (V. 15). Much like the civil rights workers, Paul and his coworkers didn't need to worry about a meal due to Lydia's hospitality.

Gifts of hospitality can go a long way in helping all people-both fellow believers and those who still need Jesus. Let's serve others as God provides what we need to help them.

**KATARA PATTON**

**Reflect and Pray**

When has someone's hospitality helped you? How can you serve others today and help meet their practical needs?

Dear God, thank You for those who've shown hospitality to me.

Please show me how to serve others in love.

INSIGHT

Genuine, selfless expressions of hospitality and kindness can be used by Jesus to encourage His workers. In addition to the "open heart, open home" dynamic in play with Lydia in Acts 16:14-15, we see a similar pattern with the jailer in Philippi. Upon hearing and believing

what he and his household needed to do to be saved, he "washed (Paul and Silas') wounds" (v. 33). Then "the jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them" (v. 34). Acts 28 also records instances of extreme kindness. When Paul was sailing to Rome as a prisoner, a storm forced the ship to come ashore on the island of Malta. He exercised his apostolic gifts among the islanders, and their hospitality was a balm for him (vv.3-10).

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

# God Calling – 4/6/25

# Easter Joy

I lay My loving Hands on you in blessing. Wait in Love and longing to feel their tender pressure and, as you wait, courage and hope will flow into your being, irradiating all your lives with the warm sun of My Presence.

Let all go this Eastertide. Loosen your hold on earth, its care, its worries, even its joys. Unclasp your hands, relax, and then the tide of Easter Joy will come. Put aside all thought of the future, of the past. Relinquish all to get the Easter Sacrament of Spiritual Life.

So often man, crying out for some blessing, has yet such tight hold on some earth-treasure that he has no hand to receive Mine, as I hold it out in Love. Easter is the wonder-time of all the year. A blessing is yours to take. Sacrifice all to that.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow." Matthew 6:34

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/7/25

# Why We Lack Understanding



He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. — [Mark 9:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+9%3A9)

As the disciples were commanded, you should also say nothing until the Son of Man has risen in you— until the life of the risen Christ so dominates you that you truly understand what He taught while here on earth. When you grow and develop the right condition inwardly, the words Jesus spoke become so clear that you are amazed you did not grasp them before. In fact, you were not able to understand them before because you had not yet developed the proper spiritual condition to deal with them.

Our Lord doesn’t hide these things from us, but we are not prepared to receive them until we are in the right condition in our spiritual life. Jesus said, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” ([John 16:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:12)). We must have a oneness with His risen life before we are prepared to bear any particular truth from Him. Do we really know anything about the indwelling of the risen life of Jesus? The evidence that we do is that His Word is becoming understandable to us. God cannot reveal anything to us if we don’t have His Spirit. And our own unyielding and headstrong opinions will effectively prevent God from revealing anything to us. But our insensible thinking will end immediately once His resurrection life has its way with us.

“…tell no one….” But so many people do tell what they saw on the Mount of Transfiguration— their mountaintop experience. They have seen a vision and they testify to it, but there is no connection between what they say and how they live. Their lives don’t add up because the Son of Man has not yet risen in them. How long will it be before His resurrection life is formed and evident in you and in me?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/7/25

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.—[II COR. 6:10.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.10)

We . . . rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.—I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.—Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.—Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?—God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

[Rom. 5:2,3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.2). -[II Cor. 7:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.7.html" \l "iiCor.7.4). -[I Pet. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.8).[II Cor. 8:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.8.html" \l "iiCor.8.2). -[Eph. 3:8,9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.3.html" \l "Eph.3.8).[Jas 2:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.2.html" \l "Jas.2.5). -[II Cor. 9:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.9.html" \l "iiCor.9.8).

“O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?” [Psalm 4:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.4.html" \l "Ps.4.2)

An instructive writer has made a mournful list of the honours which the blinded people of Israel awarded to their long expected King.

1. They gave him a procession of honour, in which Roman legionaries, Jewish priests, men and women, took a part, he himself bearing his cross. This is the triumph which the world awards to him who comes to overthrow man’s direst foes. Derisive shouts are his only acclamations, and cruel taunts his only paeans of praise.

2. They presented him with the wine of honour. Instead of a golden cup of generous wine they offered him the criminal’s stupefying death-draught, which he refused because he would preserve an uninjured taste wherewith to taste of death; and afterwards when he cried, “I thirst,” they gave him vinegar mixed with gall, thrust to his mouth upon a sponge. Oh! wretched, detestable inhospitality to the King’s Son.

3. He was provided with a guard of honour, who showed their esteem of him by gambling over his garments, which they had seized as their booty. Such was the body-guard of the adored of heaven; a quaternion of brutal gamblers.

4. A throne of honour was found for him upon the bloody tree; no easier place of rest would rebel men yield to their liege Lord. The cross was, in fact, the full expression of the world’s feeling towards him; “There,” they seemed to say, “thou Son of God, this is the manner in which God himself should be treated, could we reach him.”

5. The title of honour was nominally “King of the Jews,” but that the blinded nation distinctly repudiated, and really called him “King of thieves,” by preferring Barabbas, and by placing Jesus in the place of highest shame between two thieves. His glory was thus in all things turned into shame by the sons of men, but it shall yet gladden the eyes of saints and angels, world without end.

# Word Live – 4/7/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/7/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/7/25

# Peace and Doubt

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**Read John 20:19-25**

**Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

**19**On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

**21**Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” **22**And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

**Jesus Appears to Thomas**

**24**Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020%3A19-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26892a)]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25**So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

**Footnotes**

1. [John 20:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020%3A19-25&version=NIV#en-NIV-26892) *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.

Unless I see ... I will not believe.-John 20:25

Empiricism is a philosophy that says truth is based on experience. The scientific method is an empirical approach that tests ideas through repeatable observations that produce the same result. The refusal of Thomas to believe the word of those who had seen and heard Jesus displays an empirical approach. It is also scientific in a way. Thomas devised a kind of "experiment" to test the claim that Jesus was alive: “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (v. 25).

Thomas was not alone in his doubt. According to Luke 24:11, the other disciples had difficulty accepting the testimony of Mary Magdalene and the other women who had seen

Jesus at the tomb. Their skepticism was only remedied by experience. Jesus appeared again on “the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors

locked for fear of the Jewish leaders" (v. 19). The picture John paints is not one of faith and courage. It shows the disciples hunkered down behind locked doors and terrified.

Jesus did not bother to knock and wait to be let in. He “came and stood among them." Nor did He chide them for their unbelief and fear. Instead, He greeted them with a customary "Shalom." Jesus breathed on them in anticipation of Pentecost, told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and commissioned them as His witnesses and messengers (vv. 21-22). This commission clarifies the nature of their gospel. The gospel promise is that all who accept the apostles' testimony about Jesus will find forgiveness. The peace that Jesus offers and the promise of the Holy Spirit do not belong only to those who have seen Him with their own eyes but to all who will believe.

**Go Deeper**

In what sense is the promise of the gospel based on empirical fact? What does Jesus promise? Have you experienced this peace?

**Pray with Us**

As we await Easter, we thank You, Lord, for the life, righteousness, and peace Your resurrection gives Your followers. Thank You for extending Your gifts and promises to us as well-those who didn't see You and yet believed.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/7/25

# GOD WITH US AGE TO AGE

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**Read: ISAIAH 46:3-9**

**3**“Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,  
    all the remnant of the people of Israel,  
you whom I have upheld since your birth,  
    and have carried since you were born.  
**4**Even to your old age and gray hairs  
    I am he, I am he who will sustain you.  
I have made you and I will carry you;  
    I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

**5**“With whom will you compare me or count me equal?  
    To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?  
**6**Some pour out gold from their bags  
    and weigh out silver on the scales;  
they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,  
    and they bow down and worship it.  
**7**They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;  
    they set it up in its place, and there it stands.  
    From that spot it cannot move.  
Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer;  
    it cannot save them from their troubles.

**8**“Remember this, keep it in mind,  
    take it to heart, you rebels.  
**9**Remember the former things, those of long ago;  
    I am God, and there is no other;  
    I am God, and there is none like me.

You whom I have upheld since your birth ....Even to your old age ... I am he who will sustain you. ISAIAH 46:3-4

A Danish study explored the phenomenon most of us have experienced: perceiving ourselves as younger than we really are. The findings suggest a constant-whatever our current age, we all see ourselves as 20 percent younger. A fifty-year-old tends to imagine herself as forty years old. (This conjures up a comical scenario in which a child thinks, "Wow, I'm five, but I feel I have the energy and looks of a four-year-old!")

It doesn't take a scientific study to state the obvious: We're all growing older. And Scripture has much to say about this. Isaiah's words were issued to an Israel that had aged and become weary, but as one commentator says, "This promise to Israel, enfeebled and grown old as a nation, is applicable to every aged follower of Christ."

The prophet reminds us of God's provision throughout the life of everyone who has been faithful to Him: "I have upheld [you] since your birth, and have carried [you] since you were. born" (ISAIAH 46:3).

So as we stew and fret about growing older, we're reminded that God is still with us. He promises: "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you" (v. 4). Whatever age you are (or the 20·percent·younger version you imagine yourself to be!), embrace today God's promise: "I have made you and I will carry you" (v. 4).

**KENNETH PETERSEN**

**Reflect and Pray**

In what ways do you wrestle with concerns about aging? How do you find comfort in Isaiah's words?

Dear God, I'm feeling weary and tired. Please give me Your strength. I ask that You sustain me and carry me.

**INSIGHT**

In Isaiah 46:5, God asks, "With whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?" The answer to this rhetorical question is that no one is like God. Often when the question "Who is like God?" is asked in the Bible, it's answered in part by reflecting on an aspect of His matchless character. For example, in Psalm 71:19, the psalmist reflects on God's surpassing righteousness, and in Micah 7:18, the prophet ponders God's "unfailing love" (NLT). Other verses in the Old Testament that ponder the character of God, the one who will be with us forever, include Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 3:24; 2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 86:8, 10; 89:6, 8; 113:5; and Isaiah 40:18, 25.

**BILL CROWDER**

# God Calling – 4/7/25

# Calvary

From the death of My Body on the Cross, as from the shedding of husks in seed-life, springs that New Life which is My Gift to every man who will accept it.

Die with Me to self -- to human life, and then you will know the rapturous Joy of Easter Resurrection.

A Risen Life so glad and free can be yours.

Mary left home and kindred, friends, all, that Easter morning in her search for Me, and not until the "Mary" had been followed by the glad triumphant rapture of her "Rabboni" was her search over.

So with each of you. Man speaks to you too of the buried Christ. Search until you meet Me face to face, and My tender uttering of your name awakes your glad "Rabboni."

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Galatians 2:20