

Hebrews 1-4 Sermon Illustrations

HEBREWS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS OUR DAILY BREAD, et. al.

- Hebrews 1-4 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 5-8 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 9-10 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 11 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 12 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 13 Sermon Illustrations

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Hebrews 1:2-3 May Day

When I was a young girl in West Michigan, we always celebrated spring and the blooming of the first flowers on May 1. I'd make a basket out of construction paper and fill it with any flowers I could find—mostly daffodils and violets. Then I would place the basket on my neighbor's doorstep, knock on her door, and quickly hide behind a bush. I'd peek out to watch her as she opened the door and picked up her surprise. When she went inside, I'd run home.

The beauty of springtime flowers and the regular changing of the seasons reminds us of God's faithfulness. When Noah and his family and the animals came out of the ark after the flood waters receded, God gave them this promise: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). And He's been faithful to keep that promise ever since. God "made the worlds," and He continues to uphold "all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:2-3).

Let's thank God today for His beautiful creation and for His faithfulness in sustaining His world and us.—Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For the beauty of each hour

Of the day and of the night,

Hill and vale and tree and flower,

Sun and moon and stars of light,

Lord of all, to Thee we raise

This our hymn of grateful praise. —Pierpoint

Look at the wonder of creation and say, "What a wonderful God!"

Hebrews 1:1-14

Found: The Missing Piece

The caption in USA Today read, "Physicists find the missing piece in a universal puzzle." The "tau neutrino," an incredibly tiny particle, was the last-theorized member of the family of particles that make up the universe. It has now been proven to exist.

Phillip Schewe of the American Institute of Physics said, "It's like finding the Z in the alphabet of fundamental particles... [This study] doesn't save lives or fill stomachs, but it does investigate the most fundamental structures ... out of which everything, including ourselves, is made."

Imagine finding the smallest known piece of the universe! It's even more amazing to know the Designer of the universe—the Creator of those tiny bits of matter—and the reason they hold together. In Colossians 1:17 we read that Jesus "is before all things, and in Him all things consist." One Bible scholar defines the word consist as the "principle of cohesion," adding that Jesus makes the universe "a cosmos instead of a chaos."

Jesus Christ is more vital to our existence than the "tau neutrino." He feeds us spiritually, as well as physically. He saves us from our sins, as well as protects us from evil. He brings order to our inner chaos. May we ever worship the One who holds everything together. —Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My times are in His hand,

A hand so safe and strong,

A hand which holds the sea

And guides the stars along. —Anon.

When your world seems to be falling apart, look to Jesus who holds everything together.

Hebrews 1:1-2 A Message From God

Read: Hebrews 1:1-9

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. —Hebrews 1:1-2

In 1971, Ray Tomlinson was experimenting with ways people and computers could interact. When he sent a message from his computer through a network to a different unit in his office, he had sent the first e-mail. Now decades later, more than a billion e-mails are sent every day. Many contain important news from family and friends, but others may carry unwanted advertising or a destructive virus. A basic rule governing e-mail use is: "Don't open it unless you trust the sender."

God has sent us a message in the Person of His Son, and we can trust the Sender. In the Old Testament, God spoke to His people through the prophets and many rejected God's Word. But it was all leading to this: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2).

We may be awed by the inexplicable mystery of Almighty God entering our world as a baby, yet remain hesitant to embrace Christ fully and place our lives in His hands.

Christmas is the unforgettable message of love, redemption, and hope sent by God. Will you trust the Sender and open His message today?

Mild He lays His glory by,

Born that man no more may die.

Born to raise the sons of earth,

Born to give them second birth. —Wesley

God's timeless message of hope is waiting to be received.

By David C. McCasland

Hebrews 1:1-2 Our Mysterious God

In today's Scripture, we read that a mysterious and awesome visitor appeared to Manoah and his wife (Samson's parents). When Manoah asked, "What is Your name?" the visitor didn't answer the question directly but instead "ascended in the flame of the altar" (Judges 13:17-20). Then Manoah knew he had seen God in human form.

Who can understand such a God—the God who wrote the 3-billion-letter software code in the DNA molecule of every human cell? Who can fully comprehend the God who knows everything, even our inner thoughts? Yet many Old Testament saints knew and loved this God. They experienced the joy of His grace and forgiveness, even though they didn't completely understand how a holy God could forgive their sins.

As Christians, we too stand in awe before the majesty and mystery of an incomprehensible God. But we have a great advantage because we see Him revealed in Jesus, who said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). And when Jesus hung on the cross, He revealed God's compassion and love, for He died there for us.

A mystery? Yes. But how wonderful that we can know the love of this incomprehensible God!—Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily](#)

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Immortal, invisible, God only wise,

In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,

Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,

Almighty, victorious—Thy great name we praise. —Smith

To understand God is impossible—to worship Him is imperative.

Hebrews 1:3

Unlimited Power

Why don't the stars fall down?" A child may ask that question, but so does an astronomer. And they both get essentially the same answer: A mysterious power or energy upholds everything and prevents our cosmos from collapsing into chaos.

Hebrews 1:3 tells us that it is Jesus who upholds all things by the word of His power. He is the source of all the energy there is, whether the explosive potential packed inside an atom or the steaming kettle on the kitchen stove.

That energy is not simply a mindless force. No, God is the personal power who created everything out of nothing, including the stars (Genesis 1; Isaiah 40:26); who divided the Red Sea and delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 14:21-22); who brought to pass the virgin birth of Jesus (Luke 1:34-35); and who raised Him from the dead and conquered death (2 Timothy 1:10). Our God, the one and only true God, has the power to answer prayer, meet our needs, and change our lives.

So when life's problems are baffling, when you face some Red Sea impossibility, call upon the wonder-working God who upholds all things. And remember that with our almighty God, nothing is impossible.—Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thou art coming to a King—

Large petitions with thee bring;

For His grace and power are such

None can ever ask too much. —Newton

God is greater than our greatest problem

Hebrews 1:8

Jesus: Unique In All The World

A new Christian sent an e-mail to a Web site that answers questions about faith. She said, "I struggle with the claim of other Christians that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and to God. What will happen to those who believe otherwise?"

This kind of question challenges us to examine our view of Jesus. A scriptural review of Jesus and His uniqueness can help us stand strong in our belief that He is the only way.

Jesus is unmatched in history—His very being cries out for us to entrust our lives to Him. Jesus Christ is:

Unique in substance: He alone is both God and man (John 10:30). Unique in prophecy: No other leader's life was foretold so clearly and accurately (Micah 5:2). Unique in mission: Jesus alone came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). Unique in birth: Only Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). Unique in ability: No one but Jesus has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). Unique in existence: Jesus alone existed before the beginning of time (John 1:1-2). Unique in position: No one else is equal with God (Philippians 2:5-6). Unique in reign: Only Jesus reigns forever (Hebrews 1:8).

No one in history is like Jesus. He alone deserves our trust, and He alone is the path to God. —Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No other name can save me,

No other name beside,

But Jesus Christ the risen Lord,

Who once was crucified. —Brandt

Only one road leads to heaven—Jesus Christ is the way.

Hebrews 1:12 Thou are the same.

Thou art the same, when contrasted with nature. — The solid bases of the hills were laid in their sockets by thy hands. The blue tapestry of the sky was woven by thy fingers; and it is as easy for Thee to lay it aside and substitute new heavens as for us to lay aside a worn-out dress and take another. And as the change of dress does not affect the nature of the wearer, neither will all the changes of creation or nature affect the power of thine hand or the tenderness of thy heart. Thou art the same!

Thou art the same, when contrasted with men. — They come and go. The great ones of the past — Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah — stood with Thee for a moment on the earth, and then passed into the great silence. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, wrought for Thee and with Thee, and passed away. Our own teachers and friends have not been suffered to continue by reason of death. One by one they have passed from us; but Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail!

Thou art the same, when contrasted with our own moods and impulses. — They are too fitful; like the morning dew; like the evening wind. Sometimes we feel we could die for Thee; at other times we sleep amid thy sorrows. Emotions, resolutions, methods of thought and action, are permanent only in their changefulness. But Thou art the same — changeless and timeless, our Rock of Ages, our impregnable Fortress and Home!

This was the import of the Burning Bush which flamed out on the hillside in the dark night, but did not burn to the ground. Steadily, constantly, fiercely, the fire shone, but needed no fuel from the tree — symbol of the I AM. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 1:14 Seeing the Unseen

In a materialistic world like ours, we are tempted to conclude that the only real things are those we experience with our five senses. Yet "there are things we cannot see: things behind our backs or far away and all things in the dark," said C. S. Lewis.

There is another realm of reality, just as actual, just as factual, just as substantial as anything we see, hear, touch, taste, or smell in this world. It exists all around us—not out there "somewhere," but "here." There are legions of angels helping us, for which the world has no counter-measures (Hebrews 1:14). The psalmist David referred to them as a force of thousands of thousands of chariots (Psalm 68:17). We cannot see God nor His angels with our natural eyes. But they are there, whether we see them or not. I believe the world is filled with them.

Faith is the means by which we are able to "see" this invisible world. That is belief's true function. Faith is to the spiritual realm what the five senses are to the natural realm. The writer of Hebrews says that faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). By faith we recognize the existence of the spiritual world and learn to depend on the Lord for His help in our daily life. Our goal, then, as George MacDonald once said, is to "grow eyes" to see the unseen. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

At times our fears may loom so large,

We long for proof that God is near;

It's then our Father says to us,

"Have faith, My child, and do not fear." —DJD

Faith sees things that are out of sight.

Hebrews 1:14 Morning and evening : Daily readings (October 3 AM)

Angels are the unseen attendants of the saints of God; they bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone. Loyalty to their Lord leads them to take a deep interest in the children of his love; they rejoice over the return of the prodigal to his father's house below, and they welcome the advent of the believer to the King's palace above. In olden times the sons of God were favoured with their visible appearance, and at this day, although unseen by us, heaven is still opened, and the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of man, that they may visit the heirs of salvation. Seraphim still fly with live coals from off the altar to touch the lips of men greatly beloved. If our eyes could be opened, we should see horses of fire and chariots of fire about the servants of

the Lord; for we have come to an innumerable company of angels, who are all watchers and protectors of the seed-royal. Spenser's line is no poetic fiction, where he sings—

"How oft do they with golden pinions cleave

The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant

Against foul fiends to aid us militant!"

To what dignity are the chosen elevated when the brilliant courtiers of heaven become their willing servitors! Into what communion are we raised since we have intercourse with spotless celestials! How well are we defended since all the twenty- thousand chariots of God are armed for our deliverance! To whom do we owe all this? Let the Lord Jesus Christ be for ever endeared to us, for through him we are made to sit in heavenly places far above principalities and powers. He it is whose camp is round about them that fear him; he is the true Michael whose foot is upon the dragon. All hail, Jesus! thou Angel of Jehovah's presence, to thee this family offers its morning vows. (Spurgeon, C. H.).

Hebrews 1:14 Guardian Angels

Curtis Sliwa's Guardian Angels first showed up in the Bronx in 1979. Known initially as The Rock Brigade, the volunteer citizens group started as a neighborhood anti-litter squad. A short time later, the 23-year-old Sliwa, who was night manager of a fast-food restaurant, expanded the group to The Magnificent Thirteen. They began riding New York subways to protect riders from muggings. Seven months later they took the name Guardian Angels and adopted the identifying marks of red berets and T-shirts bearing the logo of a winged eye. Today the Angels have almost 70 chapters and 7,000 members.

We know more about Sliwa's group than we do about the angels they are named after. While the Bible has many references to spirits who worship God and do His will, there is reason for the mystery that surrounds them. Even though they serve us on behalf of God, our ultimate well-being is not in their hands. They are examples to us of the obedience and worship God deserves, but they are not to distract us from the One who is their Lord and ours.

The message of Hebrews 1 is clear. Jesus is far superior to the angels (v.4). Their worship of Christ teaches us that He alone deserves our trust and worship. --MRD II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The angels show us what it means

To serve God and obey;

Their constant worship of the Lord

Inspires us to pray. --Sper

Angels are examples of worship, not objects of worship.

Hebrews 1:14 Our Unseen Helpers

At one point in Martin Luther's stormy career, he received some discouraging news. But he responded by saying, "Recently I have been looking up at the night sky, spangled and studded with stars, and I found no pillars to hold them up. Yet they did not fall." Luther was encouraged as he reminded himself that the same unseen God who was upholding the universe was caring for him.

There is another unseen source of help from which God's children can take courage when facing a physical or spiritual crisis—angels! Those heavenly hosts are called "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14), and they are instantly responsive to God's command. Little do we know what powerful protection and help they provide. When Jesus was enduring agony in Gethsemane, "an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43).

But you say, "I've never seen an angel." No need of that! It's enough to know that they do their quiet, protecting work beyond the realm of physical sight. They call no attention to themselves, lest we focus on them instead of Jesus. But their presence is real. Just knowing that these unseen helpers are on our side strengthens our trust in God, whom they faithfully serve. —Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The angels of God assist the people of God as they do the work of God.

HEBREWS 2

Hebrews 2:1-9 Demonstrating For God

We can't put God in a box. He shows the world His supernatural power according to His own will, not ours--and sometimes in ways that don't look miraculous.

In the film based on the novel *The Robe*, a Roman centurion named Marcellus was mystified as he watched a crippled woman playing a lyre and singing praises to God. He was told that when she was 15 she was stricken with paralysis and became severely embittered. When she met Christ, though, she was transformed into a joyful woman. "But she still can't walk," Marcellus protested angrily. "If Jesus had such great power, why didn't He cure her?" "He did!" was the reply.

A modern-day disciple named Michael has a similar testimony. Although paralyzed and bound to a wheelchair, he travels the world in the energizing power of Christ and for His cause. Whenever people ask why God hasn't healed him, he replies, "I am healed. I just can't walk!"

In the past, God authenticated His messengers with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:4). Today, the greatest demonstration of God's power is the miracle of new birth and changed lives. Does a watching world see in us that He is a miracle-working God? --JEY ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

New life in Christ--miraculous

That we're no longer bound by sin;

The power of God--how glorious

That we've been healed and changed within! --Sper

When Jesus makes a difference in you, you'll make a difference in your world.

Hebrews 2:1-10 OF CRABS AND DOGS AND MEN

The well-known evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould wrote, "A crab is not lower or less complex than a human being in any meaningful way." But would Mr. Gould carry out his theory to its logical conclusion? I doubt it. It's likely that he'd think nothing of dining at a fine restaurant and enjoy eating crabmeat. But I'm sure he would be appalled if the same menu offered a dinner of grilled human flesh served with French fries.

Evolutionists can say what they will, but there is a fundamental difference between man and animals. I explained this to a woman once, but she was irritated because I wouldn't assure her that dogs go to heaven when they die. She said they have just as much right

to go there as we do. I told her that we deserve it less; we are sinners. Dogs aren't. They don't make bad moral choices as we do. But neither are they capable of making good choices. Furthermore, we think about God, eternity, and right and wrong. No dog has that capacity.

God created us in His image. That's why we are responsible to worship and serve Him. We can do this by admitting that we are sinners, receiving Jesus as our Savior, and growing in Christlikeness. Then we truly show the difference between crabs and men.-- Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Man's crowning glory lies in this:

God stamped on him His image rare;

No other creatures have that gift

Nor living things with man compare.-- Dennis J. De Haan

Just because man has similarities to animals doesn't make an animal out of a man.

Hebrews 2:3 A Solemn Question! - James Smith, 1855

This is a most solemn question. It requires our closest attention. It is proposed for our good. It should be immediately and seriously considered. We are by nature, lost sinners. That such sinners might be saved, God became incarnate. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." In our nature he did and suffered what law and justice required for our salvation. He finished his work. He ascended to glory. He sent his gospel to all nations. He has sent it to us. It is the good news of salvation. It informs us that we may be saved — and how we may be saved. It points out the way of life. Exhorts us to escape from eternal death. Invites us to receive and enjoy this invaluable blessing.

Gospel salvation is represented, as a sovereign remedy for all our moral maladies. It is that which will restore us to spiritual health — and will make us holy, happy, and honorable. It is compared to a splendid feast. It presents all that we can need to revive, refresh, and delight us. It contains . . .

a free, full, and immediate pardon, for all our sins,
a title to everlasting life and happiness,
a complete deliverance from sin, Satan, death, and Hell.

It is a great salvation!

God alone could devise it.

It required that God should become man to procure it.

It is the richest gift that God could confer on sinners.

It is great beyond expression — beyond conception! Consider . . .

1. The price it cost:

the labors,
the sufferings, and
the death of the Son of God!

2. The evils it prevents:

banishment from God,
the endless lashings of a guilty conscience,
the torments of eternal despair in Hell.

3. The blessings it secures:

the presence of God,
the perfection of our nature, and
the unspeakable glories and joys of Heaven!

4. The glory it confers — it makes us . . .

the sons of God,
joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ,
temples of the Holy Spirit, and
mirrors in which the glory of God will be reflected forever!

5. The extent to which it reaches — the uttermost. No sinner can be too vile to be pardoned through the blood of Jesus. No creature can be too depraved to be sanctified by the Spirit of God. It reaches to the most desperate cases. None are excluded. None should despair. It is salvation to the uttermost! Until . . .

omnipotence can be conquered,
infinite wisdom be baffled, or
the merit of the blood of Jesus fail
— there is hope for the vilest of sinners!

6. Its duration is forever! It is everlasting salvation. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation, unto all those who obey him. Once saved by Jesus, we are saved for evermore. Put these things together, and say — Is it not a great salvation? It is the salvation of great sinners, from the greatest evils, to the enjoyment of the greatest blessings.

Must it not then be an inexcusable sin, to neglect such a great salvation? Yet there are thousands who do so. It is constantly preached — yet many never give themselves the trouble to go to hear of it. It is published in the Bible and other good books — yet they seldom if ever carefully read of it. They treat it as if it was a matter of minor importance, or of no consequence at all. How astonishing!

They think they may neglect it in times of health, and quiet their consciences by promising to attend to it in sickness. But they are comparatively few, who having neglected salvation in health, do seek and enjoy it in sickness and death.

And many who do read the bible with tolerable regularity, and who go often to hear the gospel preached — who still neglect this great salvation. They do not give it that sincere and hearty attention which it demands. It does not fill their thoughts, awaken their desires, and engage their powers. They hear the message — but do not cordially embrace it. They listen to the proclamation — but do not exercise faith in it. They have the blessing presented to them as a gift from God — but they do not receive it. They postpone the serious consideration of it. They prefer the pleasures, or follies, or fashions of this life to it: and in effect say with Felix, "Go your way for this time, when I have a convenient season — I will send for you."

But whom do they put off? The great, the glorious, the infinite God.

What do they treat with neglect? The present, future, eternal salvation of their souls.

What do they prefer to this blessing? Vanity, lies, the merest trash!

Why do they neglect this great salvation? Because sin has hardened the heart, blinded the eyes, and perverted all their mental powers.

What will be the consequence if they persevere in this course? They must be condemned by God — and must suffer forever the due punishment of their deeds in eternal Hell!

Reader! how is it with you? Are you enjoying this great salvation? Are you seeking to possess it? Or, are you treating it with neglect? If you have neglected it hitherto, if you are neglecting it now — let me exhort you to attend to the question proposed to you by God himself. How shall you escape, if you neglect such a great salvation?

It is kindness,

it is love to your soul,

it is concern for your everlasting welfare,

it is a desire to see you holy and happy

— which leads us to ask, "How shall you escape — if you neglect such a great salvation?" How will you escape? Death will soon summon you into the presence of God. The judgment will soon commence. You must stand alone at the bar of God. You must give an account of yourself to God. You cannot avoid this. The decree is past. The facts are made known in God's book. Heaven and earth may pass away — but his word which declares these things shall not pass away. How then, will you escape?

Do you imagine that you can flee from God? How can you escape from the grasp of omnipotence? Where can you flee from the eye of the Omniscient? How will you escape?

Do you think that you can bribe God? Can you bribe the most just God? Or, what can you offer when you stand naked before your judge? How will you escape?

Do you imagine that you can escape by deception? In vain will you try your ingenuity! Your folly will be manifest to all! How will you escape?

Do you imagine that you can escape by your strength? "Have you an arm like God?" Can you overcome the Almighty! How will you escape?

Do you imagine that you can escape by concealment? What will conceal you? Then shall be fulfilled that solemn scripture, "They called to the mountains and the rocks: Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Revelation 6:16-17. What a solemn scene! What a dreadful picture! What a solemn scene! What an dreadful picture! And if you neglect this great salvation — such will be your condition!

Now you may escape, then there will be no possibility of escape. Once more we ask the question: How will you escape? Do you ask, "Escape what?" Ruin. Total Ruin. Eternal ruin. The ruin of body and soul. The ruin of your entire person forever. Ruin merited by sin. Ruin secured by your folly. Ruin preferred to the joys of the blessed, and the riches of glory.

My beloved friend, think. Think seriously upon this subject. Let it sink down deep into your heart. You can think of nothing else half so important. I beseech you, do not put it away from you, and so judge or pronounce yourself unworthy of everlasting life. Ask yourself: Am I saved? Salvation is come near unto you. You are not far from the kingdom of God. Will that salvation be received? Will that kingdom be entered by you.

- Beware of trifling!

- Beware of delays!
- Your life hangs upon a thread!
- You may be within one hour of eternity!

Satan will try to induce you to postpone the matter. But do not allow him to deceive you. He has deceived you too often. He is the enemy of your soul. He seeks your destruction. Yield not to him — but at once direct your most serious thoughts to this all-important subject.

- Embrace the message of mercy at once.
- Accept the kind invitation of your God without delay.
- The arms of Jesus are open to embrace you.
- The ears of God are open to listen to your earnest prayers.
- The fountain of Christ's blood is open which will cleanse you from sin.
- The gospel feast is prepared which will satisfy your soul.
- The best robe is ready which will clothe and adorn your person.
- All things are ready, Come!

You have delayed too long — delay no longer. You have neglected too long — but yet there is hope, neglect no longer. Cast yourself at once at the feet of Jesus, seek and obtain mercy of God — and everlasting life is yours. Life in the favor of God. Life in the enjoyment of God. Life, as like the life of God as the life of a creature can be. Life which comprises every blessing, which includes everything that is desirable. Life which has cost the Son of God the labors of his life, and the sufferings of his death to procure. O look to Jesus and live, believe in the Son of God and eternal life is yours!

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life!" 1 John 5:11-12

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever **rejects** the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him!" John 3:36

(Another version - He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.)

Hebrews 2:3 The Problem with Neglect

The devil and his cohorts were devising plans to get people to reject the Gospel. "Let's go to them and say there is no God," proposed one. Silence prevailed. Every devil knew that most people believe in a supreme being. "Let's tell them there is no hell, no future punishment for the wicked." offered another. That was turned down, because men obviously have consciences which tell them that sin must be punished. The concave was going to end in failure when there came a voice from the rear: "Tell them there is a God, there is a hell and that the Bible is the Word of God. But tell them there is plenty of time to decide the question. Let them 'neglect' the Gospel, until it is too late." All hell erupted with ghoulish glee, for they knew that if a person procrastinated on Christ, they usually never accept Him. ([10000 Sermon Illustrations. Dallas: Biblical Studies Press](#))

An incident from the American Revolution illustrates what tragedy can result from neglect. Colonel Rahl, commander of the British troops in Trenton, New Jersey, was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River. Rahl put the letter in his pocket and didn't bother to read it until the game was finished. Then, realizing the seriousness of the situation, he hurriedly tried to rally his men to meet the coming attack, but his neglect was his undoing. He and many of his men were killed and the rest of the regiment were capture. Nolbert Quayle said, "Only a few minutes' delay cost him his life, his honor, and the liberty of his soldiers." Earth's history is strewn with the wrecks of half-finished plans and unexecuted resolutions. 'Tomorrow' is the excuse of the lazy and refuge of the incompetent. (Adapted from Our Daily Bread)

The Cost of Not Putting a Finger in the Dike - For most of the last decade, Chicagoans who worked in the Loop, the booming downtown business district, could easily ignore the city's budget crisis; Washington's cutback of aid to cities didn't seem to hurt business. Last week, they learned one price of neglecting the underpinnings of all that economic growth. A quarter billion gallons of murky Chicago River water gushed into a 60-mile network of turn-of-the-century freight tunnels under the Loop and brought nearly all businesses to a soggy halt. It turned out that a top city official had known about the leak, but, acting for a cash-strapped government, had delayed repairs costing only about \$50,000. The final cost of the damage caused by this

neglect was estimated to be more than \$1 billion. (From U.S. News & World Report, April 27, 1992.)

We often fail to consider the gradual, cumulative effect of sin in our lives. In Saint Louis in 1984, an unemployed cleaning woman noticed a few bees buzzing around the attic of her home. Since there were only a few, she made no effort to deal with them. Over the summer the bees continued to fly in and out the attic vent while the woman remained unconcerned, unaware of the growing city of bees. The whole attic became a hive, and the ceiling of the second-floor bedroom finally caved in under the weight of hundreds of pounds of honey and thousands of angry bees. While the woman escaped serious injury, she was unable to repair the damage of her accumulated neglect. (Robert T Wenz)

A 64-year-old woman, whose decomposed body was found in her dilapidated Houston home recently, was discovered frozen to death for five months. She was forgotten (neglected) all winter and spring by neighbors and family members. Neighbors described her as someone who "didn't have anything to do with anybody, and nobody had anything to do with her." This occurred after her children had grown up and moved away, and then her husband's death. She had two children, one of whom lived about 10 miles from his mother's house.

"The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it."

Here is a poem that originally was written by Gloria Pitzer (*neglect* has been substituted for *procrastination*)...

Neglect is my sin
It brings me naught but sorrow.
I know that I should stop it
In fact, I will... tomorrow!

Hebrews 2:8-9 Look Up

We do not yet see all things put under [man]. But we see Jesus (Hebrews 2:8-9).

The disasters, heartbreaks, and injustices all around us prove the truth of Hebrews 2:8. We live in an imperfect world in which many things are beyond our control. A thirty-year-old farmer, unable to make his mortgage payments, wishes something could be done to prevent drought. A young mother of three children, widowed by the crash of a commercial airplane, can't understand why modern technology can't prevent such tragedies. A well-educated, successful professional man, convinced that we are headed for a nuclear holocaust, talks about suicide.

It is obvious that we humans are not properly exercising dominion over the earth, as we were created to do. But knowing this does not fill Christians with dismay and hopelessness. We look up and "see" Jesus at God's right hand. We know that He possesses "all authority" in heaven and on earth because of what He did almost 2,000 years ago. He lived here as a man, overcame sin, paid the price for our transgressions on the cross, and broke death's power. He is in ultimate control of everything—even now. Someday He will return to earth and make everything right. Now, however, we see Him through the eye of faith, and we experience inner joy and peace no matter what happens.—H.V.L. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we can't see out, we can still look up.

Hebrews 2:9 We See Jesus - James Smith 1860

"We see Jesus!" Hebrews 2:9

Some people are very fond of sight-seeing. Many miles will they travel, and much money will they spend--to see anything new and rare! And yet after all they prove the truth of Solomon's words, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing." Besides which, we soon weary of looking upon any created object--however grand, magnificent, or beautiful.

Well, I am fond of using my eyes too. I love to look upon the wondrous works of God, and the ingenious works of man. I can enjoy a beautiful landscape, or a sight of the starry Heavens, as well as most people. But some years ago, one object . . .

- attracted my eye,
- fixed my attention,
- and feasted my soul;
- and it has done so ever since.

I have never wearied of it, nor do I believe I ever shall. That object is Jesus.

Jesus--who is the brightness of God's glory;
Jesus--who is the only begotten of the Father;
Jesus--who is the only and all-sufficient Savior;
Jesus--who is full of grace and truth.

To see Jesus--is to enjoy the greatest, the best, the most glorious sight in the universe! For he is the visible Jehovah, the express image of his Father, who in his person, work, and word--reveals his Father's mind.

Jesus is the sinner's best, and often, the sinner's only friend. He took our nature, to become our High Priest; and he became our High Priest, that he might offer a sacrifice to God, which would be sufficient to atone for our sin, and save any sinner. Having taken our nature, and in that nature met and satisfied all the claims of divine justice, and paid the penalty of God's Holy law--he has carried that nature to Heaven, and in it he mediates and intercedes for us, being our righteous advocate.

Once he was seen by the eye of the body, for in flesh he tabernacled among us. But now he can only be seen by the eye of the mind, through the medium of a living faith. That faith sees Jesus in all the types and ceremonies of the Levitical law; in all the prophecies and predictions of ancient times; in all the precious promises which grace has given and recorded in the book of God; in all the ordinances of the house of God. But especially in the everlasting gospel which as a mirror reflects him, and places him immediately before our eyes. On his throne of grace--we see him exalted to show mercy; and on his throne of glory--we expect to see him to administer judgment in uprightness.

He is not to be seen now by the eye of sense, for the Heavens have received him, until the times of the restitution of all things; nor should we expect, or even wish for any fanciful or visionary view of Jesus. He manifests himself to the soul in a spiritual manner, by his Holy Spirit; and when the soul sees him--it is filled with love to him, and with an ardent desire to be like him. It desires a close, intimate, and eternal union to him; and everything else loses its beauty, value, and importance--in comparison with him. To see Jesus, under the revealing influences of the Spirit, is to commit the soul to him, resting the whole weight of its salvation upon him, and to decide to be his, wholly his, only his, and his forever. These effects are always produced by a sight of Christ.

Who may expect to be indulged with this sight? All who are weary of looking at themselves, at their own works, and at the law of God, for life and peace. All who having heard of this privilege, ardently desire it, humbly plead for it, and who cannot be satisfied without it. Such, while they feel that they are utterly unworthy of it, nevertheless cry, "Jesus, reveal yourself to me!" and groan from the depths of the heart. "Holy Spirit, manifest Jesus to me!" and sigh, until in the language of David, the soul breaks for the longing that it has, to "see Jesus."

Such often find it long before they are indulged, and doubt--and fear that they shall never enjoy the privilege; and this may be, because they refuse to take God's Word and rest upon it, and act as if something sensible was necessary prior to it. Now it is on the Word that we are to rest--in an unseen Christ we are to believe for life and salvation, and when we do so, then Jesus reveals himself to us, filling us with joy and peace. Thus the only ground of our hope is, what Christ is in himself, and what Christ has done for us; not our sight of Christ, or enjoyment of Christ, nor yet even what we receive from Christ.

Beloved, have you seen Jesus? There are many fine sights in our world, and finer still in Heaven--but all together are not to be compared to a sight of Jesus. And yet, if the mind is spiritual, this glorious sight may be enjoyed every day.

Other sights are expensive--this is free.

To see other sights we must travel far--this may be seen from any spot where we are.

Other sights in time become common, and fail to impress us--but this sight is always fresh, always new, always a celestial feast to the soul.

Holy Spirit, show us ourselves--and then give us a sight of Jesus! May we see him as the man, in our nature; as God, in the nature of his Father; as the God-man, possessing both natures in union and perfection. May we see him as the man of sorrows, and as crowned with glory and honor. May we see him every day, and many times in the day. Seeing Jesus, we rise above our fears, above our troubles, above death itself!

Hebrews 2:15 Fear of Death - James Smith 1865

"Free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death." Hebrews 2:15

There is always something solemn, and generally something appalling — in DEATH. We cannot love it. It is the effect of sin. It is the enemy of our nature. All the circumstances connected with it are painful and trying — and then there is the unseen, the unknown, the

eternal world beyond it! When we reflect on these things, the thoughts will arise, "What if I am deceived! What if I should be wrong! What if I should find out my mistake too late!" Dwelling upon such thoughts, naturally makes us sad — they weaken our faith, they dim the eye of hope, and they give Satan an occasion against us. To dwell on them is to strengthen them, and to deepen the gloomy impression which they make. Some dwell on them so much, and so frequently — that they can seldom enjoy their present mercies, and can never look forward to their departure from this world without gloom; it embitters life, and renders the idea of death dreadful. This is wrong, decidedly wrong!

We should look from death — to Jesus; and never look at death — but through Jesus. He has conquered death for us, and has deprived the monster of his sting. Nothing can make death dreadful — but sin; and if sin is pardoned, even that cannot. But if we believe in Jesus, if we have committed our souls to him, if we are living to promote his glory — our sins are most certainly pardoned. God has blotted them out in the blood of his dear Son, and he assures us that they shall never be mentioned against us. We have his word for our security, and he has added his oath, that we might have strong consolation. We should trust in God's faithful word, and do honor to the blood of Jesus by believing that it will save us from all condemnation.

"But my faith is weak!" So it may be — and yet weak faith will lay hold on an omnipotent Savior, and bring everlasting salvation to the soul.

"But my fears are strong." Yes, and so they will be — as long as you nurse them, and look at yourself or at death — instead of looking to Jesus.

"But I find it so hard to believe." So it is, while we attempt it in our own strength — but when we seek the Holy Spirit's aid it is easy enough.

"But I have no assurance of a saving interest in Christ." Perhaps not, nor is it likely that you will, while you look into self, at your sins, or at death: nor even if you make assurance your principal object. Faith is giving credit to God's word, exercising confidence in God's faithfulness, and relying on the perfect work of Christ for life and salvation. Out of this grows our assurance of our saving interest in Christ. Now if, instead of giving credit to God's word, placing confidence in God's faithfulness, and relying on the finished work of Christ — you are hunting about for the sense of your interest in Christ, or for what you call assurance — you are not likely to obtain it. You must renounce self, rely simply on Jesus, and expect him to save you, because he has promised to save all who trust in his name; so doing you are safe, you have nothing to fear from death, and you will be happy. But the moment you look away from Christ to self; place confidence in your evidences; or think of death apart from the infinite sacrifice of Jesus — you get into bondage!

It must be so. It always will be so. Death can do no harm to a believer in Christ. It ought not to be the object of his dread.

His sins are pardoned,
God is his Father,
the Lord Jesus is his Advocate,
the Holy Spirit is his Guide, and
Heaven is his Father's house, and his home.

God is always, and everywhere, his Father; no matter, therefore, whether in the body or out of it, whether in this world or another, he is safe! Death cannot affect his state, it can make no alteration in the relationship. Believe, then, in Jesus, look to Jesus, place your entire dependance on Jesus — and never trouble about death until it comes; it is no business of yours today, it belongs to tomorrow; and when death comes, Jesus will come with it — and he will give you grace to die as a Christian, as he has given you grace to live like one.

But some, from the weakness of the nerves, or a naturally melancholy temperament, or from bad training — are always in bondage from the fear of death. Some fear dying, and some fear the consequences of death. They never look forward but with gloom, thus making themselves sad, and all around them. Now, such seldom fear death when it comes; it is never found to be what they feared. The fear of death is gone — before they come to it; and the dreaded act of dying is comparatively easy.

I have often known this to be true, and my friend Mrs. Chin, who was lately called home to be forever with the Lord, was a remarkable instance of it. She was always fearing death. In vain I told her that Jesus had conquered death, that he would be with her in it, that she would be disappointed when she came to it. In vain I directed her to look to the cross, and not to the grave; to Jesus, and not death; or assured her that at evening-time, it would be light. A gleam of light would sometimes irradiate her dark mind, a little joy would occasionally drop into her troubled soul; but generally a deep sigh would say, "I am in bondage still."

Nothing that I could say, no prayer that I could offer, would give her more than transient relief. But how was it with her at last? A letter from her daughter, in whose house she died, which now lies before me, says, "The fear of death had been removed from her mind for some time past, and she longed," as she said, "To go home to Heaven!" Often and often had I told her that this would be the case — but she could not believe me; she feared that I had mistaken her character, that all her past experience was a delusion, and

that her Christian friends thought too well of her. Sad were her days, and often sorrowful her nights, and all for lack of one thing, and what was that? Just giving Jesus credit for being true to his character, and faithful to his word.

But she often feared dying too, and how was it with her in that respect? The same letter says, "She had been ill for nearly a two weeks — but a day or two previous to her decease, we thought her better. She was rising to dress to have her bed made, when she suddenly fell back and said, 'I am faint;' she never spoke after, and in about half an hour after this she ceased to breath, and entered into the presence of that Savior she so many years loved, and whom she so much longed to see."

Reader, are you harassed with the fears of death? Do not encourage them — but confide in the care, kindness, and grace of your Savior, "who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Live upon him now by faith, live for him, endeavoring to promote his cause — and he will never leave you in the article of death, or allow you to be deceived. Thousands have found their fears groundless, and have realized deliverance from them before called to contend with that last enemy. Satan loves to harass you; it is often his suggestions that direct your attention to death — when you ought to be looking to Jesus, and to be rejoicing in his dear name.

Death is yours, if you are Christ's. It cannot injure you. It will only undress you, that you may be clothed with your house which is from Heaven. It will open the cage-door, and let the bird fly and enjoy its native element. It will knock off every fetter, bring you out of the dungeon of clay, and introduce you to the presence of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." Though your faith is weak — it connects you with the Savior, it preserves you from all the terrible consequences of death, and entitles you to everlasting life. If you cannot live without Christ — death will never be allowed to separate you from Christ. If you love Christ here, and long to enjoy his presence and his smile — you will rise to see Christ in glory, and so be forever with him.

Let not death terrify you, you will not find it what you fear; it will not be when near — what it appears in the distance. The grace that sustains you now — will sustain you then, and will make you more than a conqueror over death, through Jesus who has loved you. Jesus, who died for you, will be with you when you are dying, and will give you a glorious and eternal victory over death.

Hebrews 2:17 J C Philpot - "He had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:17

What heart can conceive or tongue express, the infinite depths of the Redeemer's condescension in thus being made like unto his brethren—that the Son of God should assume a finite nature, subject to the sinless infirmities necessarily connected with a time-state and a dwelling on earth; that he should leave the bosom of his Father in which he had lain before all worlds, and should consent to become a inhabitant of this world of tears; to breathe earthly air; to be an eye-witness of, and himself share in human sorrows; to have before his eyes the daily spectacle of human sins; to be banished so long from his native home; to endure hunger, weariness, and thirst; to be subject to the persecutions of men, the flight of all his disciples, and the treachery of one among them whose hand had been with him on the table; not to hide his face from shame and spitting, but to be mocked, struck, buffeted, and scourged, and at last to die an agonizing death between two malefactors, amid scorn and infamy, and covered, as men thought, with everlasting confusion and disgrace! O what infinite condescension and mercy are displayed in these sufferings and sorrows of an incarnate God! The Lord give us faith to look to him as suffering them for our sake!

Hebrews 2:9-18 THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

At the southern tip of Africa, a cape jutting out into the ocean once caused sailors great anxiety. Many who attempted to sail around it were lost in the swirling seas. Because adverse weather conditions so often prevailed there, the region was named the Cape of Storms. A Portuguese captain determined to find a safe route through those treacherous waters so his countrymen could reach Cathay and the riches of the East Indies in safety. He succeeded, and the area was renamed the Cape of Good Hope. We all face a great storm called death. But our Lord has already traveled through it safely and has provided a way for us to do the same. By His crucifixion and resurrection, Christ abolished eternal death for every believer and has permanently established our fellowship with Him in heaven. Although this "last enemy," physical death, can touch us temporarily, its brief control over our earthly body will end at the resurrection. The sting of death has been removed!

Now all who know Christ as Savior can face life's final voyage with confidence. Even though the sea may be rough, we will experience no terror as we pass through the "cape of good hope" and into heaven's harbor. The Master Helmsman Himself has assured our safe passage. Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Think of just crossing a river,

Stepping out safe on that shore,

Sadness and suffering over,

Dwelling with Christ evermore! Anon

Christ has charted a safe course through the dark waters of death.

Hebrews 2:10 - J C Philpot - "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." Hebrews 2:10

When, with believing eyes, we can view God the Son as the eternal salvation of all whom the Father gave unto him; when we can see him, by the eye of faith, coming down into this lower world, taking our nature into union with his own Divine Person; when, by faith, we can accompany the Man of Sorrows into the gloomy garden of Gethsemane, or behold him groaning, bleeding, and dying on the cross, an object of ignominy and shame, and believe that in this way, and this alone, salvation could be wrought out, O, what a view it gives us of the demerit and dreadful nature of SIN, that nothing short of the incarnation of God's only begotten Son, nothing short of such a tremendous sacrifice could put away sin, and bring the elect back unto God!

On the one hand, as we take a glance at the suffering and dying Lamb of God, how it shows us the dreadful and abominable nature of sin; and, on the other hand, when we can see by the eye of faith what that work is, by whom that work was wrought out, and how glorious and efficacious that work must be which the Son of God, equal with the Father in glory and majesty, undertook and went through to the uttermost--how it exalts SALVATION in our eyes!

Thus a believing sight of the Lord Jesus hanging upon Calvary's tree, not only, on the one hand, shows us the dreadful nature of sin, but, on the other, how full, how complete, how glorious, and how effectual must that salvation be, of which the expiring Son of God could say, "It is finished!"

Hebrews 2:10 THE FILE LEADER

FOUR TIMES in the New Testament our Lord is called Leader or Prince.

Originally the word means the First of a file of men, and therefore their Captain or Commanding Officer (see Acts 3:15; Acts 5:31; Heb 2:10; Heb 12:2).

Christ leads from death into Life. Probably Joshua was the first to pass over the dried bed of the Jordan, as the priests stood by bearing the Ark of the Covenant; but this, at least is true, that our Saviour has preceded us through the waters of death, and will hold them back until each of the ransomed has passed "clean over" (Jos3:17).

Christ leads His followers into victory. When our Lord was exalted to the right hand of power, He opened up a path to be trodden throughout the ages by a company which no man can number. As He overcame, we may overcome; as He reigns over all principality and power, so we believe that He will bruise Satan under our feet, and make us more than conquerors.

Christ leads those who suffer to perfection. Though He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and transformed suffering, showing that it was an emblem, a purifying furnace, a means of discipline, strength, and ennoblement. If we are thrust into the fiery furnace we shall find the Son of God walking at our side, and shall emerge without our bonds, and with no smell of fire upon us. Jesus is the Leader of a long procession of martyrs and sufferers. He leads through no darker rooms than He went through before; He knows exactly how much we can bear, and will not test us beyond our strength. He is with us "all the days," and will help us to learn obedience, faith, and hope, as we follow in His footsteps.

PRAYER - O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in Thy goodness: that walking with Thee and following Thee in all simplicity, we may possess quiet and contented minds; and may cast all our care on Thee, for Thou carest for us. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 2:10-11 OUR CAPTAIN

THE WORD translated in this passage "Author" or "Captain" might be rendered File-leader. It was thus used by Peter when he said, "Ye killed the Prince, i.e. the File-leader of life." Our Lord is beheld stepping up from the grave in Joseph's garden, to which, apparently, the hatred of His foes had brought Him; and as He passes forth, He is discovered to be the First, or Leader, of an endless procession, which, in single file, is ever ascending from the grave to stand with Him, and to follow Him through all the subsequent ages.

In the earlier part of that great procession, we can see the glorious company of the Apostles, behind them the goodly fellowship of

prophets and the noble army of martyrs. Polycarp and Ignatius are there, Chrysostom and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Spurgeon. Our ancestors follow, and our parents. We are there, and our children will follow. We follow Christ our Captain through Gethsemane to Calvary, through death to life, through the grave to the Ascension mount.

When Isaiah anticipated Christ's advent, he said that God had given Him to be a Leader and Commander to the people (Isa55:4). He has the pre-eminence, not only because of His original glory, as Son of God, but since He has won it in His obedience as Man. Never has the will of God been wrought out so perfectly as by our Lord; and in this we are called upon to obey and follow Him. He was made perfect through sufferings, so shall we be; and as He is now crowned with glory and honour, so shall we be.

The only way in which Christ could bring us to share in His glory was to submit to suffering and death. In no other way could He act as the Mediator of the Divine life to us who are His brethren. Similarly, if we would become the mediators of help and blessing to others, we also must be prepared to suffer. We must learn to do despite to our own will and way. The way of the Cross is the only path to the Throne. We can only reach our highest by the constant saying No to self-life. This will involve suffering and pain; but only so can we follow our Captain.

PRAYER - Teach us, O Lord, not only to bear, but to love Thy Cross. As we take and carry it, may we find that it is carrying us. AMEN (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 2:11 Carried Along

A chorus of groans erupted after the announcement that our flight had been delayed an hour and a half because bad weather in Chicago was allowing only a few planes to land. But a short time later, another announcement caused those same people to cheer. We were told that a medical courier was transporting bone marrow needed for a transplant, and this gave our flight top priority to land in Chicago. In a few minutes we were on our way, "carried along" by the important mission of another person.

As we landed and taxied directly to the gate at O'Hare, one of the world's busiest airports, I thought of Jesus Christ, who through His death and resurrection has made it possible for us to enter the presence of God. By faith in His merit alone, we become identified with Him and partake of all that He secured for us. The writer of Hebrews said that "it was fitting for Him, ... in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one" (2:10-11).

Each day, let's thank God for the saving work of Jesus Christ, whose love and sacrifice have "carried us along" to God the Father. — David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To enter heaven when we die,

We have no merit on our own;

But if we've put our faith in Christ,

He'll take us to the Father's throne. —Sper

If we could merit our own salvation, Jesus would not have died to provide it.

Hebrews 2:14 Why Did He Leave?

As a young boy, I loved the story of Jesus ascending into heaven. I visualized Him slowly rising above the earth with hands outstretched in blessing. I remember wondering why He went up visibly instead of instantly disappearing as He had done at other times after His resurrection. I also wondered where heaven is located and what Jesus is doing there now.

Why did Jesus ascend visibly? Perhaps to show that His earthly ministry was completed and that He would no longer be seen by His disciples. He had paid the price for sin (Romans 5:8), defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14), and broken the power of death (Revelation 1:18). He had given His followers all the evidence and instruction they needed to live for Him (Acts 1:1-3).

What did He ascend to do? To give "gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8), to send the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33), to be our Intercessor (Romans 8:34) and Advocate (1 John 2:1), and to take up His role as Head of the church (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Where is heaven? I once thought of it as a place millions of miles away in outer space. Now I think of it as a realm near at hand but undetectable. I know Jesus is there, and someday I'll be there too. This fills my heart with gratitude and praise. How wonderful that we have an ascended Savior! —HVL —Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To the Father Christ ascended,

For His work on earth had ended;

Now in heaven interceding

By His Spirit He is leading. —Sper

The work Jesus accomplished for us the Spirit now accomplishes in us.

Hebrews 2:14 Already, But Not Yet

If Jesus has won the victory over sin, suffering, and death, why is it that we still sin, suffer, and die? To understand this seeming contradiction, we must recognize the “already, but not yet” tension of the gospel.

On the one hand, God’s kingdom has already come in the person of Jesus. As the incarnate God-man, He died on the cross so that through His death and resurrection He might destroy the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

On the other hand, the perfect kingdom toward which He pointed awaits His personal return to earth. We experience the tension of living between the “already, but not yet” aspects of God’s kingdom.

Luke 10 illustrates this tension. Upon returning from preaching, the disciples were jubilant. “Even the demons are subject to us in Your name,” they told Jesus (Luke 10:17). He replied that He had seen Satan “fall like lightning from heaven” (v.18). He also assured them that nothing would hurt them (v.19). Yet many of them suffered and died as martyrs, and evil is still rampant today.

Even so, we can face whatever comes, for someday we’ll enter fully into the victory Jesus has won. In the meantime, we can take comfort in knowing that nothing shall separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:35-39).—Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

God’s kingdom has come in Jesus the king,

He died and He rose, redemption to bring;

Yet still we await the glorious day

When Satan and sin no longer hold sway. —D. De Haan

Satan may win some battles, but he has already lost the war.

Hebrews 2:14 Morning and evening : Daily readings (April 20 AM).

O child of God, death hath lost its sting, because the devil’s power over it is destroyed. Then cease to fear dying. Ask grace from God the Holy Ghost, that by an intimate knowledge and a firm belief of thy Redeemer’s death, thou mayst be strengthened for that dread hour. Living near the cross of Calvary thou mayst think of death with pleasure, and welcome it when it comes with intense delight. It is sweet to die in the Lord: it is a covenant-blessing to sleep in Jesus. Death is no longer banishment, it is a return from exile, a going home to the many mansions where the loved ones already dwell. The distance between glorified spirits in heaven and militant saints on earth seems great; but it is not so. We are not far from home—a moment will bring us there. The sail is spread; the soul is launched upon the deep. How long will be its voyage? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail ere it shall be reefed in the port of peace? How long shall that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to that sea which knows no storm? Listen to the answer, “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” Yon ship has just departed, but it is already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like that ship of old, upon the Lake of Galilee, a storm had tossed it, but Jesus said, “Peace, be still,” and immediately it came to land. Think not that a long period intervenes between the instant of death and the eternity of glory. When the eyes close on earth they open in heaven. The horses of fire are not an instant on the road. Then, O child of God, what is there for thee to fear in death, seeing that through the death of thy Lord its curse and sting are destroyed? and now it is but a Jacob’s ladder whose foot is in the dark grave, but its top reaches to glory everlasting. (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 2:14-18 Feeling Our Sorrow

When Christ became a man, He showed His willingness to be tempted, tested, hated, and hurt. During His life on earth, He faced the same struggles we encounter. He had been sympathetic to man’s weaknesses before He came, but by taking a human body He identified with us in a dramatic way. His incarnation revealed the extent to which He would go to pay for our sin and to be touched by the trials and infirmities that make life so difficult for us.

On a smaller scale, people try to empathize with the sufferings of others. John Griffin, a white man, darkened his skin in an effort to understand what it meant to be black in a predominantly white society. He told about his experiences in a book titled *Black Like Me*. More recently, a thirty-year-old woman, an industrial designer, masqueraded as an elderly woman once a week for three years to find out how it feels to be old in America. What she learned is heartbreaking. She was robbed, insulted, and frightened by a world that isn't easy on its elderly.

As touching as these examples are, they are nothing compared with Christ's coming into our world. No one else left so high a position to feel what mortal man feels. Jesus gave up heaven's glory and was tempted in all points as we are, yet He did not sin. He bore our sins on the cross so that He could be merciful to us.

We have One who cares. When we face temptations and trials, we can go to Jesus. He knows the feeling. —M.R.D.II [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot feel.

Hebrews 2:14-15 THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

At the southern tip of Africa, a cape jutting out into the ocean once caused sailors great anxiety. Many who attempted to sail around it were lost in the swirling seas. Because adverse weather conditions so often prevailed there, the region was named the Cape of Storms. A Portuguese captain determined to find a safe route through those treacherous waters so his countrymen could reach Cathay and the riches of the East Indies in safety. He succeeded, and the area was renamed the Cape of Good Hope.

We all face a great storm called death. But our Lord has already traveled through it safely and has provided a way for us to do the same. By His crucifixion and resurrection, Christ abolished eternal death for every believer and has permanently established our fellowship with Him in heaven. Although this "last enemy," physical death, can touch us temporarily, its brief control over our earthly body will end at the resurrection. The sting of death has been removed!

Now all who know Christ as Savior can face life's final voyage with confidence. Even though the sea may be rough, we will experience no terror as we pass through the "cape of good hope" and into heaven's harbor. The Master Helmsman Himself has assured our safe passage. - H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Think of just crossing a river,

Stepping out safe on that shore,

Sadness and suffering over,

Dwelling with Christ evermore! -- Anon

Christ has charted a safe course through the dark waters of death.

Hebrews 2:17 Tale Of Two Goats

Two goats without blemish stood before the high priest in the bright Middle Eastern sun. Lots were cast, and the priest slowly led one to the altar to be killed as a sin offering for the people. Its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat. That goat was a sacrifice.

The other goat, known as the scapegoat, portrays another truth. The priest placed both his hands on its forehead and confessed the sins of Israel. Then the goat was led out into the desert and turned loose. As it wandered away, never to be seen again, it symbolically took Israel's sins along with it. They were gone. The people were reconciled to God. That goat was a substitute.

Both of these goats were pictures of what Christ would do for us. The cross became an upright altar, where the Lamb of God gave His life as a sacrifice for sin. And what the scapegoat symbolically portrayed for Israel—the removal of their sins—Jesus fulfilled in reality. He became our substitute. Because of our identification with Him as believers, our sins have been taken away completely.

Two goats representing two truths: sacrifice and substitution. Both were fulfilled in Christ when He died on the cross and made full atonement for our sins. Praise God! —David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Guilty, vile, and helpless we,

Spotless Lamb of God was He;

Full atonement! Can it be?

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

—Bliss

Jesus took our place to give us His peace.

Hebrews 2:17 A merciful and faithful High Priest.

The priesthood of Jesus stretches like the sky from the horizon of the past to that of the eternal future. It covers all we know of Him.

In the days that preceded his incarnation. — We are told that the priesthood of Melchizedek was made like that of the Son of God (Hebrews 7:3), from which it is clear that all the apparatus of priesthood within and without the Jewish system was some faint imagining forth of the priestly mediation and intercession of the Savior. The eternal temple was reared, the incense of intercession ascended, the sacrifice of the Lamb was slain, before the first thin spiral of smoke rose from Moriah's summit.

In the days of his earthly ministry. — At the Passover, when the High Priest had finished the sacred rites, he came forth to the people, and said "Now ye are clean." In John 15:3 Jesus addressed his disciples in the same words. His authority to forgive sins; his quick sympathy, and likeness to his brethren; his frequent prayers; his intercessions for sinners, as when He pleaded for his crucifiers; his intercessions for the tempted, as when He prayed for Peter; his intercessions for his own, as in the matchless John 17; his reference to the shedding of blood; the whole circumstances of his death — show his priestly attitude, which culminated in his passing within the veil.

In the days of the present dispensation. — The divine apostle tells us that he saw Christ clothed in a vesture to the foot, and employs this specific word for high-priestly dress. He saw Him engaged in priestly ministry; and in a subsequent vision tells us that he saw Him mingle much incense with the prayer of saints, and present them before God. (Meyer, F. B.. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 2:18

Irresistible Lures

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

We had everything set for the first bass fishing expedition of the year. We had exotic new lures that we knew would be irresistible to those big six-pounders lurking beneath the surface of our favorite fishing lake. We would tempt them with Sassy Shads, brightly colored new Hula Poppers, buzz baits, a "killer" red flatfish with a black stripe, and a white double spinner with long bright streamers. And, if all else failed, we had some fresh Canadian crawlers. Out at dawn, we hit all the best spots with our assortment of delectable temptations. But nothing happened. We worked the shore. We cast along the weeds. We tried every lure in the tackle box—even the crawlers. Finally we gave up. Heading back to the cabin, we concluded, "The fish just aren't hungry."

Satan has a whole "tacklebox" of alluring devices he uses to tempt us. Some are gaudy and exotic, easy to spot—yet oh, so tempting. Others whet our appetites in quiet and subtle ways, appearing harm-less until the hook is set. Whatever the temptation, we can best resist if we do not let our thoughts dwell on evil but on things that are true, noble, just, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8). With mental discipline and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can keep our hearts full of goodness. Then, in frustration, Satan will have to say, "They just aren't hungry."—D.C.E. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Every step away from the devil leads us one step closer to God.

Hebrews 2:18

Morning and evening : Daily readings (October 3 PM)

It is a common-place thought, and yet it tastes like nectar to the weary heart—Jesus was tempted as I am. You have heard that truth many times: have you grasped it? He was tempted to the very same sins into which we fall. Do not dissociate Jesus from our common manhood. It is a dark room which you are going through, but Jesus went through it before. It is a sharp fight which you are waging, but Jesus has stood foot to foot with the same enemy. Let us be of good cheer, Christ has borne the load before us, and the blood-stained footsteps of the King of glory may be seen along the road which we traverse at this hour. There is something sweeter yet—Jesus was tempted, but Jesus never sinned. Then, my soul, it is not needful for thee to sin, for Jesus was a man, and if one man endured these temptations and sinned not, then in his power his members may also cease from sin. Some beginners in the divine life think that they cannot be tempted without sinning, but they mistake; there is no sin in being tempted, but there is sin in yielding to temptation. Herein is comfort for the sorely tempted ones. There is still more to encourage them if they reflect that the Lord Jesus, though tempted, gloriously triumphed, and as he overcame, so surely shall his followers also, for Jesus is the representative man for his people; the Head has triumphed, and the members share in the victory. Fears are needless, for Christ is

with us, armed for our defence. Our place of safety is the bosom of the Saviour. Perhaps we are tempted just now, in order to drive us nearer to him. Blessed be any wind that blows us into the port of our Saviour's love! Happy wounds, which make us seek the beloved Physician. Ye tempted ones, come to your tempted Saviour, for he can be touched with a feeling of your infirmities, and will succour every tried and tempted one. (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 2:18

A Tender And Mighty God

God knows and numbers the stars, yet He is concerned about you and me, even though we're broken by sin. He binds our shattered hearts with sensitivity and kindness, and He brings healing into the depths of our souls. The greatness of God's power is the greatness of His heart. His strength is the measure of His love. He is a tender and mighty God.

The psalmist tells us that God "counts the number of the stars," and even "calls them all by name" (147:4). Would He care for the stars that are mere matter and not care for us, who bear His image? Of course not. He knows about our lonely struggles, and He cares. It is His business to care.

God, in the form of His Son Jesus, was subject to all our passions (Hebrews 2:18). He understands and does not scold or condemn when we fall short and fail. He leans down and listens to our cries for help. He gently corrects us. He heals through time and with great skill.

The stars will fall from the sky someday. They are not God's major concern—you are! He "is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24). And He will do it! —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The God who made the firmament,

Who made the deepest sea,

The God who put the stars in place

Is the God who cares for me. —Berg

Because God cares about us, we can leave our cares with Him.

Hebrews 2:18

Our Place Of Refuge

It is believed that David wrote Psalm 57 while fleeing from King Saul, who had hatred in his heart for the former shepherd boy. David ducked into a cave and barely escaped his pursuer. He was safe temporarily, but the threat was still there.

We've all been there. Maybe not in a cave, but pursued by something that strikes fear into our hearts. Perhaps it is the deep sorrow that follows the death of someone we love. Maybe it's the fear of an unknown future. Or it could be an oppressive physical illness that won't go away.

In such circumstances, God does not always remove the difficulty, but He is present to help us. We wish that He would swoop in and whisk us to safety—just as David may have wished for a quick end to Saul's pursuit. We plead with God to stop the pain and make the road to tomorrow smooth and straight. We beg Him to eliminate our struggle. But the difficulty remains. It is then that we have to take refuge in God as David did. While hiding in that cave, he said, "In the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by" (Psalm 57:1).

Are you in the middle of trouble? Take refuge in the Most High God. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Christian, when your way seems darkest,

When your eyes with tears are dim,

Straight to God your Father hastening,

Tell your troubles all to Him. —Anon.

We learn the lesson of trust in the school of trial

Hebrews 2:18

Rejected

Rejection hurts. When candidate Adlai Stevenson conceded the US presidential election in 1952, he said he felt like a grown man who had just stubbed his toe. He added, "It hurts too much to laugh, but I'm too old to cry."

Little children feel the pain of rejection when one of their peers is chosen instead of them to recite a poem or sing a song. As they grow older, some of them are not going to be chosen for the varsity team. Some of them are going to be turned down by a girl they want to date. Some may marry and have their mate leave them for another person. They may wonder why the Lord allows them to be rejected.

I have no easy answers for people who have been hurt like this. I can only suggest that they look to Jesus, remembering how He experienced rejection. He was scorned by His brothers and His countrymen. He heard the crowd demand His crucifixion (Matthew 27:23). On the cross, as our sin-bearer, He felt such abandonment by His Father that He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (v.46).

When you feel the deep hurt of rejection, remember that Jesus understands how you feel. He loves you. If you have believed on Him, He has accepted you—and He will never reject those who trust in Him (John 6:37).—Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I love to dwell upon the thought

That Jesus cares for me;

It matters not what life may bring—

He loves me tenderly. —Adams

Jesus cares—and that makes all the difference.

Hebrews 2:18

He Was Tempted

We had everything set for the first bass fishing expedition of the year. We had exotic new lures that we knew would be irresistible to those big six-pounders lurking beneath the surface of our favorite fishing lake. We would tempt them with Sassy Shads, brightly colored new Hula Poppers, buzz baits, a "killer" red flatfish with a black stripe, and a white double spinner with long bright streamers. And, if all else failed, we had some fresh Canadian crawlers. Out at dawn, we hit all the best spots with our assortment of delectable temptations. But nothing happened. We worked the shore. We cast along the weeds. We tried every lure in the tackle box—even the crawlers. Finally we gave up. Heading back to the cabin, we concluded, "The fish just aren't hungry."

Satan has a whole "tacklebox" of alluring devices he uses to tempt us. Some are gaudy and exotic, easy to spot—yet oh, so tempting. Others whet our appetites in quiet and subtle ways, appearing harm-less until the hook is set. Whatever the temptation, we can best resist if we do not let our thoughts dwell on evil but on things that are true, noble, just, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8). With mental discipline and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can keep our hearts full of goodness. Then, in frustration, Satan will have to say, "They just aren't hungry."—D.C.E. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Every step away from the devil leads us one step closer to God.

Hebrews 3:1 Consider ... Jesus.

Who are to consider Him? — "Holy brethren." Because we are the brethren of Jesus, we must consider our Brother. Because we are brethren with all, whom He brothers, we should emulate the saints of all ages in their eager gaze at Christ. We must possess the holiness without which none can see the Lord, and we must live in holy love with all who bear the name of Christ. Do you lack either of these? This is the reason why your eyes are blinded. Step out of the mist into the clear prospect:—

"A step,

A single step, shall free you from the skirts

Of the blind vapour, and open to your view

Glory beyond all glory ever seen

By waking sense or by the dreaming soul.”

What right have they to consider Him? — Because they are “partakers of a heavenly calling.” They have turned from the world, from the fascinations of the sin and the flesh; they are seeking the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. Surely such have a right, given them of grace, to live in daily personal vision of their King!

In what aspects should they consider Him? — As Apostle, whom God has sent out of his bosom to man, and whom man sends back to God. As Priest, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, who bears our needs and sins and sorrows on his heart. As the Son, compared with whom Moses was but a servant. As Creator, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made. As the Head of the household of those who believe. As the All-faithful One, who will never resign his charge. Consider Jesus in each of these aspects, and rejoice in Him. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 3:7-8 God Is Talking

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. —Hebrews 3:7-8

Years ago, an annoyed senior citizen from Richmond Heights, Missouri, hung up on President Reagan, who was trying to call him. This happened not just once, but half a dozen times! He didn't believe the operator when she insisted that the White House was calling. He was so sure it was a prank that he didn't stay on the line. But the Southwestern Bell operator and a neighbor finally convinced him it was for real. As a result, the man had the privilege of chatting with President Reagan for about 15 minutes.

That incident reminded me of a call received centuries ago by a young Israelite named Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1-15). He didn't realize who was calling—even after the call was repeated. It came from one greater than a president. It was from God Himself. At first Samuel was perplexed, but when Eli told him who was trying to get through to him, he listened.

Have you ever heard the Lord speaking to you? God speaks to us today through His written Word, the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to hear His voice (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

God is always trying to get through to us! The important question is this: Are we taking the time to listen?

We need to take the time each day
To read God's Word and pray,
And listen for what He might say
To guide us on our way. —Sper

God speaks through His Word to those who listen with their heart.

By Mart DeHaan

Hebrews 3:7-8 Are You Listening?

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts (Hebrews 3:7-8).

One summer an annoyed senior citizen from Richmond Heights, Missouri, hung up on President Reagan. He did it not just once but half a dozen times. The elderly gentleman didn't knowingly refuse to talk to the Chief Executive; he just didn't believe that the President was calling him. He was sure it was a prank. But the Southwestern Bell operator and a neighbor finally convinced him it was for real. As a result, the man had the privilege of chatting with Mr. Reagan for about fifteen minutes.

Many centuries ago a young Israelite named Samuel also received a call from a surprising source. He didn't realize who was calling, even when it was repeated. It came from one greater than a president. At first Samuel was perplexed, but when Eli told him God was trying to get through to him, he listened.

We Christians sometimes have the same response when God speaks to us. Deep down in our awareness we may have a thought or conviction that we cannot understand. At first, we may not recognize it as God's voice. Then, when we're convinced it's Him, we're surprised that He would want to speak to us. But God is personal. He wants us to know Him. He has spoken through His written Word, the Bible, and through the living Word, Christ. In addition, He indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit who enables us to "hear His voice."

God is always trying to get through to us. That means we must always be listening. —M.R.D.II ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There are two kinds of Christians—those who wait on the Lord and those who keep the Lord waiting.

Hebrews 3:7ff

D. L. Moody called it the biggest blunder of his life. It happened on October 8, 1871, during a preaching series in Farwell Hall, Chicago. His text was "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ." At the conclusion of the sermon Moody said he would give the people one week to make up their minds about Jesus. He then turned to Ira Sankey for a solo, and Sankey sang "Today the Saviour Calls." But by the third verse Sankey's voice was drowned out by the noise outside the hall. The great Chicago fire had begun, and the flames were even then sweeping toward the Hall. The clanging of the fire bells and the noise of the engines made it impossible to continue the meeting. In the years that followed, Moody wished that he had called for an immediate decision for Christ.

[\(Wiersbe, Warren: The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and Preachers. Moody, 1984\)](#)

Hebrews 3:13

Let's Go Higher!

Author Ragnar Arlander tells about the time he and some friends scaled Mt. Rainier. When they reached a plateau, the group decided they had gone far enough.

Arlander, however, continued the climb to find a person who had traveled on ahead. Eventually he found him resting, gazing at a beautiful glacier. The man was ready to go back, but when he saw Arlander approaching, he jumped up and exclaimed, "Since you've come, let's go higher!"

This experience makes me think of the events described in Acts 28. As the apostle Paul was traveling to Rome, he met some fellow believers, and "when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

What better compliment could be offered us than to have someone say, "Talking to you has encouraged me to continue on in my spiritual walk." The world is filled with troubled and discouraged souls who are struggling along in the Christian life. Battle weary, they are almost ready to give up. When they see you, what influence do you have on them? Do you inspire them to more noble lives of service? Or does your example tend to drag them down?

May we influence others in such a way that they will take heart and say, "I want to go higher!" —Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, I would be to others

A cheering ray of light,

Inspiring them with courage

To climb some new-found height! —Bosch

The human spirit soars with hope when lifted by an encouraging word.

Hebrews 3:13

I Was Deceived

It was dusk. My wife and I had just strolled across the famous Charles Bridge in Prague when a man approached us with a wad of money in his hand. "Forty-two Czech korunas for one dollar," he said. The official rate was about 35Ks for one US dollar. So I exchanged 50 dollars for 2,100 Czech korunas.

That evening I told my son about my good fortune. "Dad, I should have told you," he apologized. "Never exchange money on the street." We looked at the bills. The 100K note was a good Czech bill, but the two 1,000K bills were worthless. They looked like Czech money but were Bulgarian notes no longer in circulation. I had been deceived—and robbed!

Satan employs similar tactics (John 8:44). He capitalizes on the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13), using its "passing pleasures" (Hebrews 11:25) to hide the pain that always follows. Sin may be attractive, even offering something that in and of itself is good—but behind it is deception.

Our best defense against that deception is to have a growing knowledge of God's Word. As we follow the psalmist's example, we'll keep from being deceived by sin: "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). —Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Give me, O Lord, a strong desire

To look within Your Word each day;

Help me to hide it in my heart,

Lest from its truth my feet would stray. —Branon

God's truth uncovers Satan's lies.

Hebrews 3:13

Booster Words

Booster shots—think of the benefits! They are part of a complete program of vaccinations that protect us against threatening diseases.

Booster words—ever heard of them? They are words we say to help others in the fight against discouragement and despair.

In his book *Secrets From The Mountain*, Pat Williams tells of an experiment with a group of students. They were told that scientists had proven that brown-eyed children were smarter than blue-eyed ones. Immediately, the brown-eyed students began doing better in school. A few days later, though, the students were told that they had been misinformed, and it was the blue-eyed youngsters who were actually smarter. Quickly, the scores of the blue-eyed children rose above those of their brown-eyed classmates.

Lying to children is never right, but the study demonstrates that words have the power to influence behavior. Paul recognized this, so he sent Timothy to the church at Thessalonica to encourage the believers in their faith—and his words did just that (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3,6).

Do we "exhort one another daily"? (Hebrews 3:13). Do we bring comfort and encouragement to the people we know? Try using some booster words today. —Dave Branon —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Putting It Into Practice

Think of someone who needs encouragement.

How can you help that person today?

Make a phone call, send an e-mail, or pay a visit.

Hope can be ignited by a spark of encouragement.

Hebrews 3:13

Connected Actions

My son Steve was running the best cross-country races of his life. Just a high-school freshman, he earned a spot on the varsity team.

That's when Steve decided he wanted to go even faster—but not on foot. So he spent a Saturday racing a dirt-track motorcycle. All went well until he misjudged a jump and ended up with his leg under a Yamaha.

Nothing was broken, but having a banged-up calf muscle took a toll on his cross-country season. His times got worse, and he missed making the varsity team for the state finals.

Steve learned an important lesson: All of our actions are connected. Each action affects other areas of our lives.

Sometimes we try to keep parts of our lives separate from our faith in Christ. One example is thinking that watching immorality on TV does not affect our walk with God. But the Bible says, "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow" (Proverbs 22:8), and "He who sows to his flesh will ... reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will ... reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:8).

All elements in life are inter-related. We must make sure that each thought, each action, and each word flows from a heart of Godliness—so that everything we do is for God's glory, honor, and praise. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Surer than autumn's harvests

Are harvests of thought and deed;

Like those that our hearts have planted,

The yield will be like the seed. —Harris

The best reason for doing what's right today is tomorrow.

Hebrews 3:13

The Power Of Sin

I was having lunch with a pastor-friend when the discussion sadly turned to a mutual friend in ministry who had failed morally. As we grieved together over this fallen comrade, now out of ministry, I wondered aloud, "I know anyone can be tempted and anyone can stumble, but he's a smart guy. How could he think he could get away with it?" Without blinking, my friend responded, "Sin makes us stupid." It was an abrupt statement intended to get my attention, and it worked.

I have often thought of that statement in the ensuing years, and I continue to affirm the wisdom of those words. How else can you explain the actions of King David, the man after God's own heart turned adulterer and murderer? Or the reckless choices of Samson? Or the public denials of Christ by Peter, the most public of Jesus' disciples? We are flawed people who are vulnerable to temptation and to the foolishness of mind that can rationalize and justify almost any course of action if we try hard enough.

If we are to have a measure of victory over the power of sin, it will come only as we lean on the strength and wisdom of Christ (Rom. 7:24-25). As His grace strengthens our hearts and minds, we can overcome our own worst inclination to make foolish choices. —Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The price of sin is very high

Though now it may seem low;

And if we let it go unchecked,

Its crippling power will grow. —Fitzhugh

God's Spirit is your power source—don't let sin break the connection.

Hebrews 3:14

Look Back

What was wrong with the ancient Israelites? Why did they have such trouble trusting God? In Hebrews 3, we're reminded that they heard God's promise yet refused to believe. I think I know why—we have the same problem today.

God provided for the people on their desert march. They would be satisfied and happy for a while, but then a new crisis would arise. They would stare ahead at their wall of trouble, become frightened, and lose faith.

Before Moses went up the mountain to get instructions from God, the Israelites had recently defeated the Amalekites. Things were going fine. But when Moses stayed on the mountain too long, the people panicked.

Instead of looking back and recalling that God could be trusted, they looked ahead and saw nothing but the possibility of a leaderless future. So they sought to create "gods that shall go before us" (Exodus 32:1). Their trust was blocked by a fear of the future when it could've been solidified with a simple look back at God's deliverance.

Likewise, our obstacles appear huge. We need to look back and reassure ourselves by recalling what God has already done on our behalf. That backward look can give us forward confidence. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I have learned to love my Savior,

And I trust Him more each day;

For no matter what the trial,

He will always be my stay. —Hess

Fear hinders faith, but trust kindles confidence.

Hebrews 3:15 Let Go!

A 14-year-old North Carolina boy refused to stop playing his Nintendo Game Boy during school hours. The principal was called in and he still refused to stop. When the school liaison officer tried to search him, the teen kicked and punched him. The police were summoned, yet the boy adamantly resisted. Only after the officers gave him two shocks from a Taser gun were they able to remove the toy from him. He was uninjured, but one officer was bitten by the boy.

How can someone be so obstinate! Consider Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let God's people go despite numerous plagues (Exodus 5-9). Only after the seventh plague did Pharaoh begin to relent (9:27-28).

Pharaoh was foolish to harden his heart against God. Yet look at who hardened their hearts in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:15-16 says, "If you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?" Even those who had seen God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt rebelled against Him!

Today, let us ponder whether God is speaking to us. Could it be that we are clinging to some "toy" and refusing to let Him be Lord of our lives? —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, help us when we don't know what to do.

Help us most of all when we know what to do but don't want to do it.

May it never be said that we cling tightly to what displeases You. Amen.

God must rule our hearts if our feet are to walk His way.

Hebrews 3:18-19 Disobedience and Unbelief

Important lessons are given by this alternation of the two ideas of faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience. Disobedience is the root of unbelief. Unbelief is the mother of further disobedience. Faith is voluntary submission within a person's own power. If faith is not exercised, the true cause lies deeper than all intellectual reasons. It lies in the moral aversion of human will and in the pride of independence, which says, "who is Lord over us? Why should we have to depend on Jesus Christ?" As faith is obedience and submission, so faith breeds obedience, but unbelief leads on to higher-handed rebellion. With dreadful reciprocity of influence, the less one trusts, the more he disobeys; the more he disobeys, the less he trusts. (Alexander Maclaren)

HEBREWS 4

Hebrews 4:1-2 Lipstick On A Bulldog

"In a lot of organizations, change is like putting lipstick on a bulldog. There's a tremendous amount of effort involved, and most times all you get is some cosmetics—and an angry bulldog." So writes Dave Murphy of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Real change, whether in a business, church, family, or in ourselves, can be difficult and elusive. While we long for a deep and lasting transformation, we often get only a temporary cover-up that solves nothing and satisfies no one.

The word repent is used in the Bible to describe the beginning of genuine spiritual change. Language scholar W. E. Vine says that to repent means "to change one's mind or purpose." In the New Testament it always involves a change for the better as a person turns away from sin while turning toward God. Jesus began His public ministry with the call, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).

When we feel sorry for doing wrong or for getting caught, it may be nothing more than a spiritual cosmetic. But true repentance occurs deep in our hearts and results in a visible difference in our actions.

When we turn to Christ and yield ourselves to Him, He produces real change—not just a cover-up. —David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Don't hide your sin and cover up,

Pretending there is nothing wrong;

Instead, confess it and repent,

And God will fill your heart with song. —Sper

Repentance is not just words but actions.

Hebrews 4:2 Freud's Exposure to the Truth

Few thinkers in recent times have exerted so pervasive an influence as Sigmund Freud. Although he claimed to be an atheist, he continually speculated about religious issues as if subconsciously haunted by the God whom he denied.

When Freud turned 35, his father sent him a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures he had given to him when he was a boy. Sigmund had read and studied that book, at least for a while. Enclosed in that worn copy of the Scriptures was a note from the elder Freud reminding his son that “the Spirit of the Lord began to move you and spoke within you: ‘Go read in My Book that I’ve written and there will burst open for you the wellsprings of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom.’”

His father expressed the hope that Sigmund might, as a mature man, once again read and obey God’s law. We have no evidence, however, that Freud took to heart his father’s exhortation. How different his life and influence might have been if he had! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hebrews 4:1-2 The War Is Over!

The bitter conflict had finally ended between the North and the South. The soldiers of the US Civil War were free to return to their families. But a number of them remained hidden in the woods, living on berries. They either didn’t hear or didn’t believe that the war was over, so they continued enduring miserable conditions when they could have been back home.

It’s something like that in the spiritual realm too. Christ made peace between God and man by dying in our place. He paid sin’s penalty on the cross. Anyone who accepts His sacrifice will be forgiven by a holy God.

Sadly, many people refuse to believe the gospel and continue to live as spiritual fugitives. Sometimes even those who have placed their trust in Christ live on almost the same level. Either out of ignorance or unwillingness, they fail to claim the promises of God’s Word. They do not experience the joy and assurance that should accompany salvation. They do not draw from their relationship with God the comfort and peace He intends for His children. They are the objects of His love, care, and provision but live as if they were orphans.

Have you been living apart from the comfort, love, and care of your heavenly Father? Come on home. The war is over!—Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We fail, O Lord, to realize

The fullness of what You have done,

So help us trust Your saving work

And claim the triumph You have won. —D. De Haan

Christ’s victory over death means peace for His saints.

Hebrews 4:2 The Choice

You’ve heard the infamous name of John Wilkes Booth. He assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. But have you heard about Edwin Booth, John’s eldest brother? Edwin, a well-known actor, was waiting at a Jersey City train station when he saw someone slip and fall off the platform. Edwin quickly grabbed the man’s collar and pulled him to safety—rescuing him from serious injury or death. Who was the man he saved? Abraham Lincoln’s son Robert, a soldier in the Civil War.

How ironic that the man who saved Lincoln’s son had a brother who would soon kill the president. One saved a life; one took a life. One chose life; the other chose death.

The Lord gave His people a choice between life and death: They could love Him and obey His commands (Deut. 30:16), or they could worship and serve other gods (v.17). He told them, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life” (v.19).

We too have a choice between life and death. We can receive Jesus as our Savior and live with Him forever, or we can reject Jesus and be in darkness forever without Him. The best choice is clear. Receive God’s gift of His Son Jesus. Choose life! —Anne Cetas

The choice we make determines our

Eternal destination;

One leads to everlasting life;

The other, condemnation. —Sper

The choice you make today will determine your tomorrow.

Hebrews 4:2

Israel Had Good News Preached to Them

Israel in ancient days

Not only had a view

Of Sinai in a blaze,

But learn'd the Gospel too;

The types and figures were a glass,

In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice

And blood-besprinkled door,

Seen with enlighten'd eyes,

And once applied with power,

Would teach the need of other blood,

To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth His perfect innocence,

Whose blood of matchless worth Should be the soul's defense;

For He who can for sin atone,

Must have no failings of His own.

The scape-goat on his head

The people's trespass bore,

And to the desert led,

Was to be seen no more:

In him our Surety seem'd to say,

"Behold, I bear your sins away."

Dipt in his fellow's blood,

The living bird went free;

The type, well understood,

Express'd the sinner's plea;

Described a guilty soul enlarged,

And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,

Throughout the sacred page,

The footsteps of Thy grace,

The same in every age!

Oh grant that I may faithful be

To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

Olney Hymns, by William Cowper

Hebrews 4:9 Sabbath rest

There is a rest for weary souls. — God speaks of it as his Rest. He entered it, we are told, when He had finished his work; and beheld it to be very good; and ever since the door has been standing open for the travel-stained, weary children of men to enter it. To every other creation-day there were evening and morning, but not to this; it partakes of the nature of eternity in its timeless bliss.

Let us rejoice that this rest remaineth. — Of course, the Sabbath, which was and is a type of it, could not exhaust it. And Canaan, with its sweet plains and cessation of the wilderness wanderings, could not completely fulfill it; because centuries after it had been given through Joshua, in the Psalms God spoke of yet another day, as though his rest were still future.

The rest may be a present experience. — The word "remaineth" has diverted the thoughts of commentators who have supposed it referred to heaven. There is rest, sweet rest, there. But "remaineth" means "unexhausted, unrealized, by aught which has taken place." The rest is for us here and now. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Where is it? In the bosom of Christ: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." It is in ploughing the furrow of daily duty — "Take my yoke; ... and find rest."

This rest is compatible with great activity. — He that enters into the Divine rest is not reduced to quietism. On the seventh day the Creator rested from creation; but He works in providence. Jesus, on the seventh day, rested from Calvary; but He pleads in heaven. Cease from your own works, after a similar fashion; abandon your restless planning and striving; by the grace of the Holy Spirit better service will be produced. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

Hebrews 4:9 Work Is Done; Rest in Him

GOD has provided a Sabbath, and some must enter into it. Those to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief; therefore, that Sabbath remains for the people of God. David sang of it; but he had to touch the minor key, for Israel refused the rest of God. Joshua could not give it, nor Canaan yield it: it remains for believers.

Come, then, let us labor to enter into this rest. Let us quit the weary toil of sin and self. Let us cease from all confidence, even in those works of which it might be said "They are very good." Have we any such? Still, let us cease from our own works, as God did from His. Now let us find solace in the finished work of our Lord Jesus. Everything is fully done: justice demands no more. Great peace is our portion in Christ Jesus.

As to providential matters, the work of grace in the soul, and the work of the Lord in the souls of others, let us cast these burdens upon the Lord and rest in Him. When the Lord gives us a yoke to bear, He does so that by taking it up we may find rest. By faith we labor to enter into the rest of God, and we renounce all rest in self-satisfaction or indolence. Jesus Himself is perfect rest, and we are filled to the brim in Him. (Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook)

Hebrews 4:9 Morning and evening: Daily readings (January 18 AM)

How different will be the state of the believer in heaven from what it is here! Here he is born to toil and suffer weariness, but in the land of the immortal, fatigue is never known. Anxious to serve his Master, he finds his strength unequal to his zeal: his constant cry is, "Help me to serve thee, O my God." If he be thoroughly active, he will have much labour; not too much for his will, but more than enough for his power, so that he will cry out, "I am not wearied of the labour, but I am wearied in it." Ah! Christian, the hot day of weariness lasts not for ever; the sun is nearing the horizon; it shall rise again with a brighter day than thou hast ever seen upon a land where they serve God day and night, and yet rest from their labours. Here, rest is but partial, there, it is perfect. Here, the Christian is always unsettled; he feels that he has not yet attained. There, all are at rest; they have attained the summit of the mountain; they have ascended to the bosom of their God. Higher they cannot go.

Ah, toil-worn labourer, only think when thou shalt rest for ever! Canst thou conceive it? It is a rest eternal; a rest that "remaineth." Here, my best joys bear "mortal" on their brow; my fair flowers fade; my dainty cups are drained to dregs; my sweetest birds fall before Death's arrows; my most pleasant days are shadowed into nights; and the flood-tides of my bliss subside into ebbs of sorrow; but there, everything is immortal; the harp abides unrusted, the crown unwithered, the eye undimmed, the voice unfaltering, the heart unwavering, and the immortal being is wholly absorbed in infinite delight. Happy day! happy! when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the Eternal Sabbath shall begin. (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 4:9 The Rest! James Smith 1865

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." Hebrews 4:9

There was a rest for Adam in Paradise — which he lost by sin.

There was a rest for Israel in Canaan — which many forfeited by unbelief.

There is a rest for the Christian in Christ — which can only be enjoyed by faith.

And there is a rest for all the saints in Heaven — to which we can only be admitted at death.

To one of the last two, the Apostle refers; some think to the former, and some to the latter. We shall consider the words as referring to HEAVEN:

our Father's house,
our Savior's home, and
our eternal dwelling-place!

To the weary and way-worn — there is something delightful in the thought of REST, and they love to think of Heaven as the place where they shall "rest from their labors."

REST gives us the idea of . . .

- repose — the calm, quiet repose of the soul;
- refreshment — the refreshment of the exhausted spirit after conflict, sickness, or toil;
- restoration to vigor — after debility, lassitude, and fainting.

Heaven will be a rest . . .

- from sin — which will no more grieve us;
- from sorrow — which will no more trouble and distress us;
- from fears — which will no more harass and perplex us; and
- from conflicts — which will no more agitate and suppress us.

It will be a rest . . .

- with God in his glory,
- with Jesus in his immediate presence,
- with saints and holy angels in full perfection and blessedness.

This rest is FUTURE — it remains for the people of God.

This rest is the object of our hope and DESIRE. We look forward to it, with holy longing and cheering anticipations.

This rest is PERFECT — free from all mixture of anything that will agitate, give pain, or cause grief.

This rest is UNINTERRUPTED — nothing will ever occur to disturb, distress, or agitate us more.

This rest is GLORIOUS — as bright as the meridian sun, as balmy as the most pleasant morning, as glowing with holiness, splendor, and majesty.

This rest is ETERNAL — and this is best of all. The possibility of a change, of a return to former scenes — would spoil all. But that rest will be enduring — as changeless as the Divine nature, and as glorious as the Divine perfections.

Blessed be God for such a rest for the weary, suffering, and downcast believer in Jesus! Oh, to keep the eye fixed upon it, and the heart expecting it — amidst all the troubles and trials of time!

This rest is FOR the redeemed people of God. Not for the Jews as such, nor for the Gentiles as such — but for the Lord's people. The people He has chosen for himself, as says the Apostle, "God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

This rest is for the people He claims as his own, being set apart for himself in his eternal purpose, redeemed to God by the blood of his Son, out of every nation, country, people, and tongue. He claims them by his Holy Spirit in the day of his power.

This rest is for the people whom He himself teaches, as Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets — they shall be all taught of God, everyone therefore that has heard and learned of the Father, comes unto Me." Divine teaching is educating for eternity, and God thus educates all his own people. The people He prepares — for Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Jesus is gone to prepare the place for the people — and the Holy Spirit comes to prepare the people for the place. To this end, He creates them anew in Christ Jesus, and makes them fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

They are now a poor, tried, tempted, and restless people; strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, as all their fathers were.

Satan tempts them,
sinners try them,
fears harass them,
Providence perplexes them,
and they often cry out, "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest!"

Believer, let the prospect of this eternal glorious rest, cheer you in toil and trouble! Your work will soon be finished, your trouble will soon come to an end, and then the rest — the glorious rest, remains for you! Let it encourage you to labor and suffer: labor for Jesus, who is preparing the rest for you; suffer in the cause of Jesus, acquiescing in his will, who once suffered for you, and now rests as you will soon.

Think of the Christian believers — what they suffered, and how they suffered; they "joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property, because they knew that they had better and lasting possessions."

Let your Heavenly rest, quicken your pace homewards! You are going to a rest — a perfect, uninterrupted, and eternal rest; a rest in Heaven, a rest with Jesus, a rest in the presence of your God forever; therefore gird up the loins of your mind, and press on towards the mark, cheered by the prospect at the end of the race.

Remember, Christian, this rest is SECURE, for Jesus has taken possession of it for you. "I am going," said He, "to prepare a place for you." "Where," said the Apostle, alluding to Heaven, "Where the forerunner has for us entered, even Jesus." Yes, Jesus is gone there for you, He has taken possession in your name, He is preparing your place, and will soon come and receive you to himself!

Remember too, that it is NEAR — very near. Perhaps much nearer than you may think.

You may be sighing, sorrowing, striving, wrestling, doubting, fearing, and cast down today — and tomorrow you may be in your Heavenly rest!

Today, you may be lying, like Lazarus, at the rich man's gate, full of sores; tomorrow, you may be in Heaven!

Today, you may be dwelling in Mesech, or in the tents of Kedar; tomorrow, you may be basking in the beams of Immanuel's glory!

Today, you may be on the bed of sickness, suffering, and pain; tomorrow, you may be in the presence of Jesus, where there is no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying!

Who can tell how near we all are to our Heavenly and everlasting rest?

Remember also, that your very trials, toils, and sufferings here on earth, may SWEETEN your rest to you! And that soon, very soon — you may be rejoicing over your present sorrows, and praising God for what now fills you with grief and sadness. Things will look very different there — from what they do here. Never, never forget, then, in your darkest nights, in your most trying days, in the midst of every storm and tempest, when passing over burning sands and under a scorching sky — that there remains a rest for the people of God, and a rest for you!

"Arise and depart; for this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all remedy!"

"There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest!"

But, "there is NO REST, says my God, to the WICKED!" His soul is restless now, and, dying as he is — he will be restless forever. "And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night!" O think of an eternity of unrest! Think of an eternity of toil, agony, and woe! Think, and so think as to accept and act upon the invitation of Jesus, who is now at this moment saying unto you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls!"

Hebrews 4:11 Salmon Run

Salmon fascinate me. Each August I drive a few miles north of my home in Idaho and watch them make their weary way through the last stages of their spawning run to the sandbars along Lake Creek. I always think of the long journey they've taken.

Some months earlier, they leave the Pacific Ocean and begin their run up the Columbia to the Snake River, then up the main fork of the Salmon River to the East Fork, up the Secesh River to Lake Creek—more than 700 miles.

Driven by instinct, they swim against currents, up waterfalls, and around hydroelectric dams. Despite eagles, bears, and many other predators, they struggle to reach their ancestral spawning grounds to lay their eggs.

Their journey reminds me of the human journey. We too have a homing instinct. "There exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, a sense of Deity," John Calvin said. We are born and we live for the express purpose of knowing and loving God. He is the source of our life, and our hearts are restless until they come to Him.

Are you restless today, driven by discontent and a longing for that elusive "something more"? Jesus Christ is the source and satisfaction of all you seek. Come to Him today and find rest for your soul (Matthew 11:28). —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Looking to Jesus, my spirit is blest,

The world is in turmoil, in Him I have rest;

The sea of my life around me may roar,

When I look to Jesus, I hear it no more. —Anon.

Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Christ.

Hebrews 4:12 First In Our Lives

Actor Sylvester Stallone is applauded for his strongman movie roles as Rocky and Rambo. But what is he really like in his personal life? During an interview he honestly admitted, "If I were watching a home movie of my life, I would shake my head in despair and wonderment. It's a comedy of errors."

Suppose a movie were made of your life or mine. Would it reveal not only errors and poor choices but also a sinful person who doesn't even act like a follower of Christ? Would we be ashamed of some scenes? Would we be motivated, as Stallone says he was, to shift our values and start paying attention to "relationships ... and putting someone else first"?

Jesus wants to be the "someone else" in our lives whom we put first (Matthew 6:24,33). But how do we do that? It starts with confession of any sin that is between us and Him, and then experiencing the Lord's cleansing and forgiveness (Psalm 32:5). Then we are gradually changed by Him through the work of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God (Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 4:12). If we make our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ our first priority, He will make us into the kind of people He wants us to be (Philippians 2:3-8). —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;

Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.

See if there be some wicked way in me;

Cleanse me from every sin and set me free. —Orr

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to change the people of God.

Hebrews 4:12 The Robber

When evangelist John Wesley (1703-1791) was returning home from a service one night, he was robbed. The thief, however, found his victim to have only a little money and some Christian literature.

As the bandit was leaving, Wesley called out, "Stop! I have something more to give you." The surprised robber paused. "My friend," said Wesley, "you may live to regret this sort of life. If you ever do, here's something to remember: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!'" The thief hurried away, and Wesley prayed that his words might bear fruit.

Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger. What a surprise to learn that this visitor, now a believer in Christ as a successful businessman, was the one who had robbed him years before! "I owe it all to you," said the transformed man. "Oh no, my friend," Wesley exclaimed, "not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!"

Hebrews 4: 12 Sigmund Freud

Few thinkers in recent times have exerted so pervasive an influence as Sigmund Freud. Although he claimed to be an atheist, he continually speculated about religious issues as if subconsciously (**ED: NOW THAT'S A CRAZY "PUN" GIVEN HE WAS A PSYCHOANALYST!**) haunted by the God whom he denied. When Freud turned 35, his father sent him a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures he had given to him when he was a boy. Sigmund had read and studied that book, at least for a while. Enclosed in that worn copy of the Scriptures was a note from the elder Freud reminding his son that "the Spirit of the Lord began to move you and spoke within you: 'Go read in My Book that I've written and there will burst open for you the wellsprings of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom.'"

His father expressed the hope that Sigmund might, as a mature man, once again read and obey God's law. We have no evidence, however, that Freud took to heart his father's exhortation. How different his life and influence might have been if he had!

Hebrews 4:12 One Verse

Which of the 31,173 verses in the Bible is your favorite? And do you think that verse can make a difference in someone's life?

God has used certain verses to make a remarkable impact on the world. For example, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan, touched the lives of thousands by preaching from John 6:37, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."

Noted reformer Martin Luther greatly influenced the course of church history because of his understanding of Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith." And missionary pioneer William Carey introduced the gospel to India after being touched by the words of Isaiah 54:2, "Enlarge the place of your tent."

As a young person about to embark on my first overseas missionary venture, I was moved, challenged, and comforted by Jeremiah 33:3. God used this verse to remind me to call on Him because He had "great and mighty" things in store for me.

Maybe a specific verse from Scripture has touched your heart in a special way. Share that truth with others—because God's Word will always have an impact. —JDB —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May the Word of God dwell richly

In my heart from hour to hour,

So that all may see I triumph

Only through His power. —Wilkinson

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

Hebrews 4:12 The Big Questions

Author Ronald B. Schwartz asked scores of well-known contemporary writers to name the books that influenced them most deeply. Their responses ranged from the novels of Dostoevsky to the popular stories of Mark Twain. The works of Dickens, Shakespeare, and Faulkner were mentioned many times. But topping the list was the Bible. Why?

Perhaps because most writers want to deal with the "big questions" of life, and the Bible is the ultimate book for life's big questions: Who am I? Why am I here? Is there a God? Does life have any meaning or purpose?

The pages of Scripture bring us face to face with ourselves, with God, and with His grand design for our lives. The Bible, according to the late journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, is "the book that reads me." The writer of Hebrews said, "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

When we read the Bible, God speaks personally and powerfully to us about the big questions that matter most in life. —David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What is the meaning of life here on earth?

What is its purpose, and what is its worth?

God has the answers in His holy book;

That is the first and the best place to look. —Hess

The Bible is God's answer book.

Hebrews 4: 12 A "Dangerous" Weapon

One Sunday evening at church a short-term missionary reported on her overseas experiences and told about crossing into a communist country. At the border, the guards asked, "Do you have any guns, drugs, or Bibles?"

Although they probably hadn't read it, those communist border guards apparently believed Hebrews 4:12. To them, the Bible was as dangerous as guns and drugs. Guns injure and kill the body. Drugs alter and distort the mind. The Bible exposes and destroys falsehood. But the Bible threatens more than their religion of atheism. It threatens their place of power and control over the people because it gives to the people what no government can. The Bible enriches lives, instills hope, and frees the human spirit, which makes it as threatening to an atheistic government as guns and drugs.

In Psalm 119, the psalmist refers to some of the powerful effects of the Word of God on his life. It revives his soul (v. 25); it imparts inner strength (v. 28); it guides him into truth (v. 30); and it enlarges his heart (v. 32).

We who are blessed with both the Old and New Testaments have God's full and final written revelation of Himself. When we meditate on the truths of this powerful book, we experience its impact on our lives by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who makes it real to us.

Guns, drugs, and the Bible all wield power, but only the Bible destroys what is false and builds what is true. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No weapon in Satan's arsenal can destroy the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 Change The Word?

The Bible, God's written Word, changes lives. Its message of salvation makes the most profound change, of course, but Scripture can also change the way we treat others. It can provide a firm foundation for society with its clear teachings on institutions such as marriage, family, and the church.

But what happens when what the Bible clearly says—as understood for centuries by learned believers and scholars alike—is rejected? Those who reject its teachings try to change the Word.

Two Greek words can help explain this: eisegesis and exegesis. Eisegesis is the process of reading into a passage something that is not there—inserting a meaning that flows from a personal agenda. By contrast, exegesis means drawing from the passage the clearly intended meaning, using context, other Scripture passages on the same topic, and legitimate tools of understanding such as Bible commentaries.

Instead of trying to change God's Word to fit our own ideas, let's allow the Word to change us. As we read His Word and obey it, the Holy Spirit will transform us into the kind of people God wants us to be.

Don't change the Word—let it change you.—Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord has given man His Word,
His will He has made known;
Let man not try to change that Word
With words that are his own. —D. De Haan
The Bible—eternal truth and never-fading beauty.

Hebrews 4:12 Excuses

Unbelief, indifference, busyness, and laziness are some of the excuses people give for not reading the Bible. Gamaliel Bradford, a renowned American biographer who explored the lives and motives of famous individuals, candidly admitted, "I do not read the New Testament for fear of its awakening a storm of anxiety and self-reproach and doubt and dread of having taken the wrong path, of having been traitor to the plain and simple God."

Fear of facing up to failure, guilt and sin is not a very reasonable reason to avoid reading the Bible! It's about as irrational as refusing to see a doctor because there's a

suspicion that cancer has started to develop in one's body.

Yes, the Bible does indeed compel us to face ourselves. It is like an x-ray machine that penetrates below the facade of goodness and shows up any spiritual malignancy. It enables us to see how God views all the worst diseases of the soul. But the Bible does more than expose a fatal condition. It introduces us to the Great Physician, who can cure our sin and bring spiritual healing.

If you read the Bible with a willingness to obey the truth, you will find life's greatest cure. Vernon C. Grounds [Our Daily Bread](#). [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Instill within our hearts, dear Lord,

A deep desire to know Your voice;

We need to learn to hear

Your Word That we may make

Your will our choice. - Dennis J. De Haan

Many people criticize the bible because the bible criticizes them.

Hebrews 4:13 He's Watching

In this age of electronics, we have all become aware of bugging devices. A person's office, hotel room, or telephone can be monitored so that every sound is picked up. This is accomplished through highly sensitive microphones that are so small they can easily be hidden. Heads of state, government officials, and business people in strategic positions must be exceedingly careful of what they say, especially when entering a strange setting. The awareness that they might be overheard is sure to make them think twice before they speak.

Did you ever stop to think that God sees everything we do and hears everything we say every moment of the day? Hebrews 4:13 says that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

This truth is both comforting and sobering--comforting because God stands ready to deliver us when we are in trouble (Ps. 33:18-19), and sobering because "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). What a profound effect this should have on the way we live!

The next time you are tempted or in trouble, remember that God is watching and listening. —Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread](#). [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There is no time of day or night,

No place on land or sea

That God, whose eye is never dim,

Does not see you and me. --DJD

To know that God sees us brings both conviction and comfort

Hebrews 4:15-16 - J C Philpot - "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:15-16

What heart can conceive or tongue recount the daily, hourly triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ's all-conquering grace? We see scarcely a millionth part of what he, as a King on his throne, is daily doing; and yet we see enough to know that he ever lives at God's right hand, and lives to save and bless.

What a crowd of needy petitioners every moment surrounds his throne! What urgent needs and woes to answer; what cutting griefs and sorrows to assuage; what broken hearts to bind up; what wounded consciences to heal; what countless prayers to hear; what earnest petitions to grant; what stubborn foes to subdue; what guilty fears to quell! What grace, what kindness, what patience, what compassion, what mercy, what love, and yet what power and authority does this Almighty Sovereign display! No circumstance is too trifling; no petitioner too insignificant; no case too hard; no difficulty too great; no seeker too importunate; no beggar too ragged; no bankrupt too penniless; no debtor too insolvent, for him not to notice and not to relieve.

Sitting on his throne of grace, his all-seeing eye views all, his almighty hand grasps all, and his loving heart embraces all whom the Father gave him by covenant, whom he himself redeemed by his blood, and whom the blessed Spirit has quickened into life by his invincible power. The hopeless, the helpless; the outcasts whom no man cares for; the tossed with tempest and not comforted; the ready to perish; the mourners in Zion; the bereaved widow; the wailing orphan; the sick in body, and still more sick in heart; the racked with hourly pain; the fevered consumptive; the wrestler with death's last struggle--O what crowds of pitiable objects surround his throne; and all needing a look from his eye, a word from his lips, a smile from his face, a touch from his hand! O could we but see what his grace is, what his grace has, what his grace does; and could we but feel more what it is doing in and for ourselves, we would have more exalted views of the reign of grace now exercised on high by Zion's enthroned King!

Hebrews 4:14-16 What Jesus Didn't Do

I once heard a skeptic say that if Jesus really was the Son of God, His sufferings must have been easier to bear. This comment caused me to re-examine the Gospels. While reviewing the incredible things Jesus did and said to accomplish our great salvation, I also noted a number of things Jesus didn't do that are equally vital to our salvation:

Jesus didn't demand His own will (Matthew 26:39). He didn't call down legions of angels to rescue Him (v.53). He didn't defend Himself or threaten His accusers (27:12-14). He didn't save Himself (Mark 15:31). He didn't come down from the cross (v.32). He didn't stop loving and saving sinners (Luke 23:43).

The fact that Jesus could have done these things intensified His agony and increased the temptation to use His power for His own advantage. But He didn't. Instead, He used His power for our benefit! This is described in Hebrews 4:15-16. Jesus suffered temptation the same as we do—except that He didn't sin. So He can "sympathize with our weaknesses" (v.15). Therefore, we can approach His throne of grace boldly and obtain His "help in time of need" (v.16).

Whatever your need is today, Jesus wants you to come and make full use of this privilege. —Joanie Yoder [Our Daily Bread](#).
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Though Christ was tempted in all ways,

He did not sin in word or deed;

So now we can approach His throne

For grace to help in time of need. —Sper

Every temptation is an occasion to trust God.

Hebrews 4:14-16 The Empathy Factor

In the summer of 2005, I led a group of high school students on a missions trip to Jamaica. Our goal was to build a playground at a school for deaf children in that beautiful island country.

Many of our students had previously visited the school and played with the kids. But one of our teenagers had a special connection to the Jamaican children. Chelsea too grew up in a world of quiet. Deaf since birth, she didn't hear a sound until she was 11, when she received a cochlear implant. Now able to hear about 30 percent of the sounds around her, Chelsea understood the deaf in ways our other students could not. She had true empathy.

Empathy is a strong emotion. It can drive us to come alongside those who are in similar situations. It can cause us to care in a deeper way for those with whom we share a concern or a difficulty.

The most important example of empathy is the Lord Himself. He became one of us (John 1:14). Because He did, He understands our struggles and weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). Jesus knows what we are going through, for He endured this life Himself. As we receive His grace in our time of need, we are better able to come alongside others. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God lived as man, as one of us,

And understands our need for grace;

He is not distant nor detached

From all the trials that we face. —Sper

No one understands like Jesus.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Open At The Top

A preacher was delivering a sermon before a large congregation. He pointed out that believers aren't exempt from trouble. In fact, some Christians are surrounded by trouble—trouble to the right, trouble to the left, trouble in front, and trouble behind. At this, a man who had served the Lord for many years, shouted, "Glory to God, it's always open at the top!"

This man's confidence in God is fully supported by Hebrews 4. Because our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, has ascended to heaven and is interceding there for us, we have good grounds for trusting Him in the midst of trouble (v.14). Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, for when He lived on earth He was tempted in every way that we are, yet He never sinned (v.15). His throne is completely approachable and is called "the throne of grace" (v.16).

In Hebrews we're urged to look up from our trials and to approach that throne boldly by faith. Through humble prayer, we will receive mercy for our failures and grace to help us in our time of need (v.16).

Are life's trials and temptations hemming you in? Has the tempter told you there's nowhere to go? Take heart. Keep looking up—it's always open at the top!—Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When life's afflictions batter you

Like waves upon the sand,

Remember to look up to God

And take His outstretched hand. —Sper

To improve your outlook, try the uplook.

Hebrews 4:15 The Hypocrite Excuse

I have a neighbor who can't stand hypocrites. In fact, he tells me that he stopped going to church because he saw too many hypocrites there. He's not alone. That's one of the most popular reasons people give for rejecting Christianity. My neighbor is right—there are too many hypocrites in the church. The problem of hypocrisy, though, is not the issue to pursue with people who reject the gospel. The key is validity. Does the presence of hypocrites in the church invalidate the gospel message?

In today's Bible reading, Paul accused Peter of hypocrisy (Galatians 2:13). Did that invalidate the gospel Peter preached? Some people may think so, perhaps because they expect Christians to be perfect. What might surprise them, however, is that Jesus Himself warned against and condemned hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1-18; 23:13-33). He hates it more than they do.

That brings us to a key point: The validity of Christianity is not based on imperfect Christians but on the perfect Christ. Therefore, if a

person could show that Jesus was a hypocrite, he would have an argument. But that's impossible. Jesus was sinless and without fault (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus is the answer to the hypocrite excuse. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help me make my witness clear,

And labor faithfully,

So friends and neighbors turn to Christ

Through what they hear from me. —Anon.

Instead of looking at hypocrites, look at Jesus.

Hebrews 4:15 The Humanity Of Jesus

I once overheard this comment about a person who was always critical: "The trouble with him is that he's forgotten what it's like to be human!" How easily we forget our past struggles and become unsympathetic toward those who are struggling today. But there's one who hasn't forgotten what it's like to be human—Jesus.

In Hebrews 2:9-18, we "see" Jesus' humanity more fully. As a man, He was able by God's grace to experience death in our place. And during His earthly life Jesus was made perfect through His sufferings (v.10). But there's more. "Both [Jesus] who sanctifies and [we] who are being sanctified are all of one." Because of this oneness, Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters (v.11).

In a body like ours, Jesus lived, worked, and overcame every obstacle, so He knows what it's like to be one of us. Having passed through all these experiences without sinning, He then went to heaven and is now our approachable High Priest at the throne of grace (vv.17-18; 4:14-16).

We all need someone who knows what it's like to be human yet has limitless power to help us overcome our human weaknesses. Jesus is that one. He longs to hear us speak His name and ask for His help.—Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God lived as man, as one of us,

And understands our need for grace;

He is not distant nor detached

From all the trials that we face. —Sper

No one understands like Jesus.

Hebrews 4:15 The Puppy

A man put up a sign in his yard that read: "Puppies for Sale." Among those who came to inquire was a young boy. "Please, Mister," he said, "I'd like to buy one of your puppies if they don't cost too much." "Well, son, they're \$25." The boy looked crushed. "I've only got two dollars and five cents. Could I see them anyway?" "Of course. Maybe we can work something out," said the man. The lad's eyes danced at the sight of those five little balls of fur. "I heard that one has a bad leg," he said. "Yes, I'm afraid she'll be crippled for life." "Well, that's the puppy I want. Could I pay for her a little at a time?" The man responded, "But she'll always have a limp." Smiling bravely, the boy pulled up one pant leg, revealing a brace. "I don't walk good either." Then, looking at the puppy sympathetically, he continued, "I guess she'll need a lot of love and help. I sure did. It's not so easy being crippled." "Here, take her," said the man. "I know you'll give her a good home. And just forget the money."

Hebrews 4:15 Jesus Understands

Seven-year-old Andy had to have his left arm amputated, and it wasn't easy to adjust to the loss. When he returned to school, his teacher wanted his classmates to understand how difficult the normal activities of life were for Andy. So one morning she told the other students to keep their left arm behind their back. That meant they all had to do everything with their right hand.

Little things like turning the pages of a book, writing neatly, and keeping the paper from slipping became difficult. Buttoning clothing took extra effort, and tying one's shoes became impossible. Andy's classmates discovered that the only way they could really

understand his problem was to experience for themselves the difficulties he faced.

Because the Lord Jesus, God's Son, became a man, He can identify with our trials and temptations. He understands the heartaches, pain, and difficulties we face. Since "He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). And because He was without sin (4:15), He was able to die in our place as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (2:14-17).

How thankful we can be that we have a Savior who understands and cares! —Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God understands your heartache,

He knows the bitter pain;

O trust Him in the darkness,

You cannot trust in vain. —Smith

No one understands like Jesus.

Hebrews 4:16 A Bold Entrance

One morning, Scott Long and his wife had just awakened and were lying in bed when suddenly a young fellow entered their bedroom. He walked around the bed to Scott's side. If the trespasser had been a total stranger, his entrance would've been criminal intrusion. If he had been a friend, his entrance would've been just plain obnoxious. But it was their toddler son who had entered their bedroom, jumped on the bed, and boldly said, "I want in the middle." Scott was struck with the beauty of a child's security in knowing he is wanted.

We are welcome in our heavenly Father's presence as well. Hebrews 4:16 tells us we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We can approach Him confidently about anything—our needs and our desires—knowing that He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

Writer Phillips Brooks said, "If man is man and God is God, to live without prayer is not merely an awful thing; it is an infinitely foolish thing."

Let's not be foolish and ignore the help we can find in prayer to our Father. Instead, let's approach Him with the boldness of a child who knows he is loved and wanted by his father. —Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we approach the Lord in prayer,

We can come boldly to His throne;

His children come expectantly,

For grace and mercy will be shown. —Sper

Pray as a child talks to his father.

Hebrews 4:16 Equal Access

Pastor Stuart Silvester told me of a conversation he had with an acquaintance who frequently flew his small private plane in and out of Toronto International Airport. He asked the pilot if he ever encountered problems taking off and landing a small craft at an airport that was dominated by so many large jets. His friend responded, "My plane may be small, but I have the same rights, the same privileges, and the same access to that airport as anyone else—even the jumbo jets!"

Pastor Silvester then made this spiritual application: "It's the same with prayer, with the believer's approach to the throne of grace. No matter who we are or how small we are in comparison with others or how low our station in life, we take a back seat to no one. No one is given priority treatment."

In a world that offers preferential treatment to the wealthy, the famous, and the influential, it's encouraging to know that every child of God has equal access to the Father in heaven. The psalmist said, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18).

With that assurance, we can “come boldly to the throne of grace” in prayer, knowing that our loving God will never turn us away. — Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There never is a night or day

When God can't hear us as we pray;

There is no time, there is no place

That we're beyond His love and grace. —D. De Haan

Prayer is an open line to heaven.

Hebrews 4:16 Worthy Of Worship

As Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep in the desert, his attention was drawn to a strange sight. A bush was burning without being consumed. When Moses turned to look more closely, God said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5).

Joshua had a similar experience when he approached the captain of the host of the Lord. As Joshua drew nearer, he was given this command: "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy" (Joshua 5:15).

The experiences of Moses and Joshua teach us that a holy God demands our reverence and respect. True, we are encouraged to "come boldly to the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16). We can enter the presence of God with confidence because Jesus has opened the way for us through His death on the cross. But never are we to approach God with disrespect. Never are we to profane His name.

Our heavenly Father is not "the man upstairs." He is God, the One who is high and lifted up. And because of His majesty and holiness, we are to exalt and worship Him. As the one true God, He is worthy of our adoration. Let's give Him our highest praise.— Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

You alone are worthy, Lord,

To be worshiped and adored;

We to You our tribute bring

As our hearts rejoice and sing. —Hess

True worship acknowledges the true worthship of God

Hebrews 4:16 Afraid Of The Dentist?

Why are so many people afraid of going to the dentist? It may be the result of a bad experience. One woman said of her childhood dentist, "I started getting upset and crying and he said, 'If you don't shut up, I'm going to slap you.'" She now drives 70 miles to The Dental Fears Clinic in Kansas City.

People who are afraid to go to God have a similar problem. Some may have been mistreated by spiritual leaders. Others may have learned unhealthy fear of God as children. Still others, overwhelmed by their sin, see only God's righteous demand for justice and miss the loving provision of His Son's sacrifice for sin.

The people in today's Bible reading (1 Samuel 12) were afraid because Samuel exposed their sin. But he also told them that God longed to forgive them.

We need to replace irrational fears with healthy ones. God's Word repeatedly assures us that the pain of going to Him is far less than the pain of avoiding Him. It also assures us that because of Jesus we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy" (Hebrews 4:16).

A dentist fills the holes in your teeth, but God wants to fill the holes in your heart—with Himself. Don't let your unhealthy fear stop Him.—Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The love of God is my pillow,

Soft and healing and wide;

I rest my soul in its comfort,

And in its calm I abide. —Long

Only God can fill the emptiness of an aching heart.

Hebrews 4:16 Praying With Boldness

Have you ever found it tough to pray? That can happen when we're reluctant to tell God how we're really feeling. We might abruptly stop in mid-sentence, fearful of being disrespectful of our heavenly Father.

A trip through the book of Psalms can help us pray more openly. There we can overhear David's conversations with God and realize that he was not afraid to be completely open and honest with the Lord. David cried out: "O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger" (Psalm 6:1). "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak" (6:2). "Why do You stand afar off, O Lord?" (10:1). "Do not be silent to me" (28:1). "Plead my cause, O Lord" (35:1). "Hear my prayer, O God" (54:2). "I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily" (55:2).

Think about David's approach. He was saying to God: "Help me!" "Listen to me!" "Don't be mad at me!" "Where are You?" David boldly went to God and told Him what was on his mind. Yes, God expects us to come to Him with a clean heart, and we need to approach Him with reverence—but we don't have to be afraid to tell God what we're thinking and feeling.

Next time you talk with your heavenly Father—tell it straight. He'll listen, and He'll understand. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you approach the Lord with boldness,

When you pray in Jesus' name,

Just tell Him all the pain you're feeling—

There's no need for fear or shame. —Fitzhugh

Prayer is an open line to heaven.

Hebrews 4:16 Help For The Helpless

I sometimes ask people, "Where does it say in the Bible, 'God helps those who help themselves'?" Most say they're not sure, but the concept is so familiar that they think it must be somewhere in God's Word.

Actually, the Bible doesn't say that at all. It tells us just the opposite: God helps the helpless.

When you read the Gospels, you find that Jesus did not refuse to help the helpless. He did not withhold forgiveness and compassion from those who acknowledged their sin. He did not turn away from those who had no power to change. In fact, the people who distressed Him most were those who thought they didn't need any help at all.

God's thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9), and He sees things differently than we do. We see our own ability to deal with problems; He shows us our weaknesses to teach us to rely on His strength. We take pride in our successes and begin to think we don't need God's help; He allows us to fail so He can teach us that true success comes through His grace.

Are you feeling helpless today? God's grace is available for those who recognize that they cannot help themselves. "Come boldly to the throne of grace" to find help in your time of need (Hebrews 4:16). —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God helps those who know they are helpless