



CMM Daily Devotional

2026

*A Journey Through Faith, Hope,
Love, Perseverance, and Joy*

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A Word Before We Begin

Dear friend,

This devotional is a walk — 251 days long — from the spring of 2026 through the close of the year. Each morning you will find a passage of Scripture and a short reflection written to settle into your heart before the day runs away with you. Some days you will also meet a brother or sister from somewhere in the CMM global family of seventy nations, whose story carries the same Gospel you and I have staked our lives on.

The journey unfolds in five seasons:

- **Faith Awakens** (April 25 - May 31) — the risk and joy of trusting God
- **Hope Rising** (June 1 - July 15) — the anchor that holds in any storm
- **Love Overflowing** (July 16 - August 31) — the heart of the Father poured into and through us
- **Perseverance Deepening** (September 1 - October 31) — endurance for the long obedience
- **Joy Unshakable** (November 1 - December 31) — gratitude, Advent, and the light of the Incarnation

Seventy testimonies are woven through these pages — roughly one every three or four days — because the Great Commission is not a slogan; it has faces, and places, and names. What God is doing in Andhra Pradesh, in Kampala, in Preah Vihear, in Sibiu, and elsewhere in the world — He is doing in you too.

We are one family. Welcome to the CMM.world and CMMTheology.org

Note: This devotional contains writings and excerpts from my books, articles, and CMM websites which were compiled by Claude AI.

Read slowly. Underline freely. Share what the Lord gives you.

With love in Christ,

Jorge

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PART ONE

Faith Awakens

April 25 - May 31, 2026

April 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." — Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

There is a moment before every great step of obedience when the ground beneath you feels thin. You cannot see what is on the other side. You cannot calculate the outcome. You only have the word of God and the quiet pull of the Spirit saying, *Go*.

That is precisely the territory where faith lives.

Hebrews 11:1 does not define faith as a feeling of confidence or a personality trait that some people have and others lack. It defines faith as *substance* — a Greek word that means "title deed," the legal document that certifies ownership of something you have not yet held in your hands. Faith is not wishful thinking. Faith is the evidence itself. It is the documentation of a heavenly reality that has not yet broken through into the visible world.

We are beginning a new phase of this devotional journey together, and I want to start here, at the foundation. Everything God will do in and through you this season rests on this one word: *faith*. The obedience He is asking of you, the step He is inviting you to take, the risk that makes your palms sweat — all of it requires exactly this kind of substance-confidence in a God who does not lie.

I have stood at the edge of the unknown many times in ministry. What I have learned is this: the moment I placed my weight on the promise rather than the evidence, the ground held. It always held.

Friend, whatever threshold stands before you today — a conversation, a commitment, a calling — faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is moving forward because you know whose voice you heard.

Father, today I choose to stand on Your word even when I cannot see the way forward — thank You that Your promises are the firmest ground there is.

April 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." — Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

I have read this verse a thousand times, and yet it still arrests me. Notice what the text does not say: it does not say God will explain the path. It says He will *make it straight*. That is a different promise entirely.

We live in an age that rewards analysis. We diagram our decisions, weigh our options, consult our networks. And while wisdom is never foolish, there is a posture that Proverbs is calling us away from — the posture of leaning on our own understanding as the final court of appeal. The word "lean" here carries the image of someone resting their full body weight on a support. God is saying: do not rest your full weight on what you can figure out. Rest it on Me.

What does it look like to trust with *all* your heart? It looks like obedience that precedes complete understanding. It looks like releasing the grip of control while the details are still unresolved. It looks like a farmer who plants seed into dark soil with total confidence that the harvest is already written into the nature of that ground.

The promise in return is extraordinary: *He will make your paths straight*. Not painless. Not quick. But straight — purposeful, directed, going somewhere that matters.

Today, whatever is pulling you toward anxiety or second-guessing, bring it to the Lord. Hand Him the mental spreadsheet. Let Him be the final word.

Lord, I release my need to figure everything out and choose to trust You with the details I cannot see.

FROM THE NATIONS

India. Pastor Spurgeon Babu in Andhra Pradesh writes: "We planted a small fellowship in the village of Narasapuram with twelve believers meeting under a mango tree. Last month, forty-three people gave their lives to Christ after a week of open-air meetings. What began as a step of pure faith — no building, no budget — is now a growing church family. We praise God for the straight paths He makes."

April 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you." — Genesis 12:1 (NKJV)

There are four words in this verse I never want to rush past: *the land I will show you*.

Not "the land I have already shown you." Not "the land you can find on a map." God said: go, and I will show you *as you go*. The destination was not disclosed at the point of departure. It was disclosed in the movement.

Abram was seventy-five years old. He had a household, a community, an established life. And God essentially said: none of that defines your future. I do. Now walk.

This is the grammar of faith — present-tense obedience to a future-tense promise. The address comes after the first step is taken.

I think of all the times in my own journey that God called me to act before the complete picture was clear. A missions trip without funding confirmed. A partnership with a leader I had never met in a country I had never visited. Every single time, the clarity came in the walking, not in the waiting. God is not withholding the plan to be difficult. He is withholding it because our capacity to receive it expands as we move.

If you are waiting for God to hand you the complete itinerary before you take the first step, I want to gently say: that is not usually how He works. He gives enough light for the next step. Then the next. Then the next.

Walk today. The land will become visible.

Father, give me an Abram-like courage to move toward what You have promised before I can see it clearly.

April 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." —
Romans 10:17 (NKJV)*

A musician once told me that after years of training, she could hear notes in a symphony that were invisible to untrained ears — the subtle entrance of a single viola beneath thirty other instruments. She had learned to *listen* in a way that transformed what she perceived.

Faith, Paul tells us, comes the same way: through hearing. Not passive exposure to sound, but attentive, expectant listening to God's word.

The Greek word for "word" here is *rhema* — the spoken, living word. Not merely doctrine on a page, but the voice of God actively addressing you. There is a difference between reading Scripture as a historical document and receiving it as a personal communication from a God who is present and speaking. Both honor the text. But only the second produces the kind of faith that moves mountains.

This is why I come to Scripture every morning before I come to my calendar. The day fills quickly with voices — notifications, news, obligations, other people's urgencies. If I do not first tune my ear to the voice of the Lord, the noise drowns out the signal. By evening, I can find myself operating on anxiety rather than faith, reacting rather than responding.

Hearing from God is a practice. It requires quiet. It requires return. It requires that you sit with a passage long enough for it to become personal, not merely informational.

What is the Lord saying to you today through His word? Do not skim the surface. Listen beneath the text for the voice that formed the universe — and forms you still.

Lord, open my ears today to hear what You are saying, not just what I expect to read.

April 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9 (NKJV)

Joshua had just received the most impossible assignment in Israel's history. Moses — the liberator, the lawgiver, the man who spoke with God face to face — was dead. And now this younger man stood at the edge of the Jordan River with two million people behind him and a land full of fortified cities in front of him.

God's response to Joshua's situation was not a military strategy. It was not a five-step plan. It was a command: *Be strong. Be courageous.* And then the reason: *because I will be with you.*

The command comes first. The courage must be chosen before the assurance settles into the bones. That sequence matters enormously. God is not saying, "Wait until you feel brave, then go." He is saying, "Choose courage now, and watch what My presence does to the landscape in front of you."

I find this enormously liberating. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the decision to move despite fear because the One who accompanies you is greater than anything ahead of you. You do not manufacture courage by willing yourself into a feeling. You access it by reminding yourself who is walking with you.

Wherever you are facing a Jordan today — a threshold that seems uncrossable, a call that seems too large for you — hear this command as personally addressed to you. God is not watching from a safe distance. He goes with you into the thing that frightens you.

Step in. The waters will part.

Lord, wherever I am afraid today, remind me that Your presence is greater than any obstacle I face.

April 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." — 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

Seven words. No punctuation except a period. Paul does not elaborate or qualify. He simply states the operating principle of the Christian life as plainly as if he were stating that water runs downhill.

We walk by faith, not by sight.

In context, Paul has just been speaking about the body as a temporary tent — fragile, impermanent, subject to suffering. He is not writing from a comfortable position; he is writing from a place of genuine hardship. And his conclusion is not that things are improving visibly. It is that the walk of faith operates by a different set of instruments than the walk of sight.

Sight navigation says: *I see a closed door, so this is finished.* Faith navigation says: *I see a closed door, and I wait for God to open or redirect.* Sight says: *The numbers don't work.* Faith says: *My Provider is not limited by my spreadsheet.* Sight says: *The diagnosis is serious.* Faith says: *My Healer is active.*

This is not denial. It is not pretending the visible does not exist. It is choosing to weight the invisible reality of God's word and character more heavily than the visible reality of present circumstances. That choice, made daily, is what produces a life of genuine faith over the long arc.

Today, practice navigating by faith. When a circumstance pulls your eyes downward, lift them to the One who sees the whole road.

Father, train my eyes to see what You see, even when what surrounds me tells a different story.

FROM THE NATIONS

Uganda. Pastor Jackson Kereji of Destiny Worship Center in Kampala writes: "We began our outreach in the Karamoja region with nothing but two Bibles, a motorcycle, and the assurance of the Lord. We walked by faith for six months with no outside support. Now there are three churches planted, with over 180 believers who have been baptized. We did not see the harvest when we started — but God saw it, and He was faithful."

May 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." — John 15:5 (NKJV)

I once watched a gardener cut away a thick branch from a grapevine. The branch was beautiful — full, green, healthy-looking. Within two days it was brown and brittle. All that apparent life was borrowed life. Severed from the source, it could not sustain itself for even a week.

Jesus uses this image on the night before He is crucified, when the disciples are hours away from their greatest crisis of faith. He does not give them a strategy for surviving His absence. He gives them this: *remain in Me*.

The word "remain" — *meno* in Greek — means to stay, to abide, to make your home in. It is not a momentary check-in. It is a posture of continuous connection. A branch does not periodically reach back to touch the vine; it is organically joined to it. The sap flows constantly.

One of the quiet lies of ministry and busy Christian living is that output can sustain itself. We run on yesterday's connection, last Sunday's worship, last month's prayer retreat — and we wonder why the leaves begin to yellow. The branch does not bear fruit through striving. It bears fruit through remaining.

What does remaining look like practically? For me it is early morning before the work begins — not performance, not intercession as obligation, but simply being in His presence, open and unhurried. It is returning to His word in small moments through the day. It is honest conversation with Him rather than monologue to Him.

You were not designed to produce fruit by effort alone. You were designed to receive life from a Vine that never runs dry.

Lord, teach me to remain — not to strive, but to stay — and let Your life flow through me today.

May 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." — Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

The verse makes a startling claim: faith is not one way to please God. It is the only way. Without it, impossibility.

I want to sit with that for a moment. We often think of pleasing God in terms of behavior — serving faithfully, giving generously, treating people with kindness. And those things matter greatly. But the writer of Hebrews cuts beneath behavior to the bedrock question: *Do you believe He is real? Do you believe He rewards those who seek Him?*

Notice the two convictions required. First: *He is*. Not was, not might be, not probably. Present tense, certain, existing. God is not a concept to be studied but a Person to be encountered. Second: *He rewards those who seek Him*. This is startling in its implication. It means God is not a passive object of contemplation. He is a responsive, engaged Being who moves toward those who move toward Him.

Many believers accept the first conviction intellectually but stumble at the second. We believe God exists. But do we truly believe He is interested — in me, in my situation, in this particular prayer? Do we believe that our seeking actually reaches Him and that He responds?

This is the faith that pleases Him: not just doctrinal assent to His existence, but a relational confidence that He sees, that He hears, and that He rewards the heart that genuinely looks for Him.

Seek Him today with that confidence. You will not be disappointed.

Father, I believe You are here and that You respond when I seek You — increase that belief in me today.

May 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." — Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

A lamp to my *feet*. Not a floodlight that illuminates the entire road for miles ahead. A lamp at my feet — enough light for the next step, the next footfall, the next moment of obedience.

In the ancient world, a traveler navigating a rocky path at night would carry a small clay lamp that cast perhaps three feet of light. You could see immediately in front of you, but not the bend in the road thirty yards ahead. You had to keep moving to keep seeing.

That is the pace of faith. The lamp does not light up the full journey at once. It gives you exactly what you need for exactly where you are. And as you move forward in obedience, the light moves with you.

This is why reading Scripture daily is not merely a discipline for knowledge accumulation. It is navigation. The word of God is alive — it speaks into specific situations, illuminates specific decisions, brings specific comfort that meets you in the particular darkness of today. I have experienced this too many times to count: a passage I have read dozens of times suddenly lands with fresh precision on a situation I am currently facing, as if the Holy Spirit underlined it specifically for this morning.

Do not carry yesterday's light into today's darkness. Come to the word fresh. Ask the Spirit to show you what you need to see for the path directly in front of you.

One step at a time, lamp by lamp, the whole journey is completed.

Lord, speak clearly through Your word today — illuminate the exact step You need me to take.

FROM THE NATIONS

Liberia. At Future Foundation International Academy in Jacob Town, outside Monrovia, teacher Ruth Kollie writes: "When we opened our school building six years ago, we had one room, no desks, and forty children sitting on the floor. Today we have over four hundred students, a feeding program, and three

teachers trained by CMM partners. Every morning we read Psalm 119:105 with the children. They know: God's word lights the way, even when the road is hard."

May 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." — Hebrews 11:8 (NKJV)

He went out, not knowing where he was going. Four words that dismantle every plan I have ever made in the name of prudent preparation.

Abraham was not reckless. He was responsive. He heard God's call, he got up, and he obeyed before the destination was disclosed. The famous Hebrews 11 faith list does not celebrate Abraham because he was fearless or because he never stumbled. The man laughed when God told him he would have a son at ninety-nine. He twice pretended Sarah was his sister out of fear. He fathered Ishmael as a shortcut around the promise.

And yet he is in the Hall of Faith.

This encourages me enormously, because it means faith is not a condition of perfect trust. It is the *direction* of your life. Abraham's defining characteristic was not his flawless performance — it was his fundamental orientation toward God. Even in his stumbles, he returned. Even in his doubts, he came back to the altar.

God does not disqualify you because your faith is imperfect. He honors the faith that keeps moving toward Him, keeps building altars even after the detours and the self-made messes.

If you are carrying regret today over a past failure of faith — a promise you doubted, a call you delayed, an Ishmael you created — hear this: the record is not closed. The altar can be rebuilt. The journey continues.

Go out, even if you do not yet know where you are going.

Father, I am returning to You — imperfect faith and all — and I trust that You receive me with open arms.

May 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." — 1 Peter 5:7
(NKJV)*

There is a physical image buried in this verb. "Cast" is the same word used for throwing a fishing net — not a gentle setting down, but a deliberate, forceful throw. Peter is not saying to slowly transfer your worries to God when they become manageable. He is saying to *hurl* them at Him, all at once, with the same decisive force a fisherman throws an open net.

Why can we do this so boldly? *Because He cares for you.*

That phrase is deceptively small. In the original Greek it carries the weight of a parent's deep attentiveness to a child's need. Not tolerance. Not patience-with-you. *Genuine, active, personal care.* God is not indifferent to what is pressing on you today. He is not too occupied with cosmic governance to notice the particular weight on your particular shoulders.

In our global missions family, I hear regularly from brothers and sisters in situations that would crush most Western believers — persecution, poverty, family danger, government opposition. And the ones who walk with the most peace are not the ones whose circumstances are easiest. They are the ones who have learned to actually cast the weight. Not carry it stoically, not manage it spiritually, but genuinely release it to a God they are absolutely convinced cares.

What are you carrying today that you were never meant to carry? A broken relationship, a financial pressure, a health scare, a ministry situation that will not resolve?

Throw it. Hard. He can handle the impact.

Lord, I throw every burden at Your feet right now — thank You that Your care for me is deep enough to hold all of it.

May 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." — Psalm 23:1 (NKJV)

Five words, and a whole theology of faith. *I shall not want.*

This is not a prosperity declaration. David was a shepherd before he was a king; he knew exactly what shepherding required. A shepherd does not guarantee the sheep a life of comfort. He guarantees provision, protection, and presence. The sheep under a good shepherd does not lack what it needs — but what it needs is decided by the shepherd, not by the sheep.

Faith in God's shepherd-care is not faith that everything will be easy. It is faith that I will not be deprived of what I genuinely need. And it is faith grounded in relationship: not "the LORD is *a* shepherd," but "*my* shepherd." Personal. Covenantal. Mine.

I think of how different our prayers would sound if we prayed from this posture of provision rather than from scarcity anxiety. Instead of desperately beseeching God as if He might not come through, we would speak with the quiet confidence of a sheep that has learned: this Shepherd knows where the green pastures are, and He leads me to them.

This does not mean we stop asking. David fills the rest of Psalm 23 with specifics about what the Shepherd does. But the posture behind the asking changes. We ask from a position of already-cared-for trust rather than uncertain begging.

The Shepherd is not absent. He is leading you today, even through the valley. You shall not want.

Lord, I rest today in the confidence that You are my Shepherd and that You provide everything I truly need.

May 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." — Matthew 7:8 (NKJV)

Ask. Seek. Knock. Three verbs, and in the original Greek, all three are in the present tense — continuous action. Jesus is not describing a one-time event but an ongoing posture: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

What would it look like to pray with that kind of persistent confidence? Not frantic desperation — but settled, continuous, expectant engagement with a Father who has promised that these three actions always produce results.

I believe one of the reasons we stop asking is that we misread silence as refusal. God has not spoken yet, so we conclude He has said no. But silence is not denial. The door has not been flung open yet, but that does not mean your knocking went unheard. In God's economy, persistence in prayer is not a sign of weak faith; it is a sign of *strong* faith — the kind that refuses to reduce God to a vending machine that should produce a result within thirty seconds.

Keep bringing it. Keep returning to the throne. Keep knocking on the door that only He can open.

Father, give me the endurance to keep asking, seeking, and knocking until Your answer arrives — and the trust to know You hear every knock.

FROM THE NATIONS

Cambodia. Pastor Soly and his wife Vanouen at New Hope Preah Vihear Children's Home write: "We had been knocking on the government's door for two years, asking for permission to expand our children's home. Every month, another delay. But we kept praying — kept knocking, as the verse says. This past January the doors opened, and we now have official recognition and space to house sixty children instead of twenty-four. Praise God, who answers those who do not stop seeking."

May 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." — Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

Four commands cascade through this single verse like a staircase of grace: *Fear not. Be not dismayed. I will strengthen you. I will uphold you.*

God is addressing Israel in exile — a people who have lost everything that looked like security: temple, homeland, king, national identity. They are not being asked to minimize the loss. They are being given a different source of stability in the middle of it.

I want you to notice that God does not say "the situation will immediately improve." He says: *I am with you.* He says: *I am your God.* The ground shifts from circumstance to character. What cannot be shaken is not your situation but your source.

"I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" — the image is a parent catching a stumbling child, or a strong soldier steadying a wounded comrade. The upholding is active, personal, physical in its imagery. God is not passively allowing you to manage. He is actively reaching in.

I think of the countless brothers and sisters in our global family who are navigating genuine danger, genuine loss, genuine uncertainty. They are not held by their courage. They are held by the hand of the One who says: *I am your God.* That hand does not let go.

Whatever is dismaying you today — bring it specifically to this promise. You are not holding yourself up. He is holding you. And His right hand is righteous — full of covenant faithfulness and unwavering love.

You will not fall.

Father, I rest in the grip of Your right hand today — thank You that You uphold me when I cannot hold myself.

May 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us," — Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

Think for a moment about the largest prayer you have ever prayed — the one that felt almost too big to say out loud. The healing that seemed medically impossible. The nation that seemed spiritually impenetrable. The family member whose hardness seemed permanent. The ministry vision that required more resources than you would ever accumulate.

Now read this verse again. *Far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.*

Paul is not describing a God who occasionally exceeds expectations. He is describing a God whose capacity to act is categorically beyond the ceiling of human imagination. Our asking is already an act of audacity — and God says He is able to do *more* than that. Abundantly more. Far more abundantly more.

But notice the phrase that brackets the promise: *according to the power at work within us*. The channel for this extravagant divine action is not external circumstance — it is the Spirit actively resident in the lives of believers. The power is already present. The question is whether we are cooperating with it or containing it.

This week, I want to challenge you to upgrade your prayers. Not to demand or presume, but to actually petition God at the level this verse describes — asking for things that require Him to be exactly who He says He is. Let your prayer life catch up with the theology you hold.

God is not embarrassed by large requests from humble hearts.

Lord, enlarge my asking to match the size of Your ability — and let Your power work freely in and through me.

May 10, 2026

Mother's Day

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come."
— Proverbs 31:25 (NKJV)*

On this Mother's Day, I think of the women of faith whose courage has shaped everything I know about following God.

My mother's hands folded in prayer before sunrise. My wife's steadiness in the seasons when I was not steady. The countless women of our global CMM family — in rural India, in the barrios of Latin America, in persecuted church communities — who have held families together with a faith so practical and so fierce that it shames my theology.

Proverbs 31:25 is the portrait of a woman who has made peace with the future because she has placed the future in God's hands. "Laughs without fear" is not naïveté. It is the laughter of someone who knows what it cost to get here — the sleepless nights, the stretched budgets, the children prayed over into the small hours — and who has learned that God is faithful in every single one of those places.

To every mother reading this today: what you have poured out in faith over your family is not invisible. Heaven has noted every prayer. Every sacrifice made in trust that God sees has been seen. You are clothed with strength and dignity — not because your life is easy, but because you have chosen to walk by faith through the hard seasons and come out still standing.

Honor the mothers in your life today. They are frequently the most faithful, most prayerful people in the room.

Lord, bless and honor every mother today — clothe her in Your strength, fill her with Your peace, and remind her that her faith is moving mountains.

FROM THE NATIONS

Pakistan. Sajjad and Latif write from Lahore: "Our sister Miriam leads a small house church of twelve women in a neighborhood where following Christ can cost everything. She gathers them weekly, teaching them to read the Bible and to pray for their families. Three of those women have seen their husbands come to faith in the past year. Miriam is a mother in every sense — to her children and to these

women — and she laughs without fear of the future."

May 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD." — Jeremiah 17:7 (NKJV)

Jeremiah writes this verse while standing in one of history's most catastrophic moments — the eve of Jerusalem's destruction, the collapse of everything the covenant people had built. He is not writing from a position of comfortable ease. He is writing from the wreckage.

And still he says: blessed is the person whose confidence is in God.

The contrast Jeremiah draws in the surrounding verses is vivid. The person who trusts in human strength is like a shrub in the desert — eking out survival in a parched wasteland, never growing. But the person who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted by water, roots extended deep into the riverbed, green through every drought, bearing fruit in every season.

The difference is not environment. Both trees face the same scorching sun. The difference is root system.

Our confidence is so often misplaced — in our networks, our savings, our platforms, our health, our government, our plans. None of those things are wrong to have. But when they become the root system, the drought reveals how shallow they are.

I have watched God strip away layers of false confidence from my own life over the years — gently, deliberately, leaving me with exactly one thing: Him. And what I found was that He was more than enough. More stable than any system I had constructed. More present than any network I had cultivated.

Where is your confidence today? Not where do you wish it was — where is it actually resting?

Lord, I want my roots to go so deep into You that no drought can dry me up — shift my confidence to You alone.

May 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." — John 10:27 (NKJV)

There is a remarkable intimacy in this verse that gets flattened when we read it too quickly. Jesus does not say His sheep know *about* His voice. He says they *hear* it — a word that carries the sense of ongoing, recognizing, responsive listening.

Hearing the voice of God is one of the most common questions I receive from believers across our global family: *How do I know when it is God speaking and not my own desires?* I want to offer something simple today: the sheep know the shepherd's voice because they spend time with the shepherd. Recognition is a product of relationship, not of theological technique.

A shepherd's flock in the ancient Near East would sometimes be mixed together with other flocks at night. In the morning, when each shepherd called, his own sheep would separate from the mass and follow — not because they were told which shepherd to follow, but because they knew the sound of the one whose voice they had learned over months of daily life together.

You will learn to distinguish God's voice from the noise of the world and the noise of your own soul by spending regular time in His presence — through prayer, through Scripture, through worship, through the witness of the Spirit in community. It is not mysterious. It is relational.

If you feel uncertain about whether you are hearing clearly, the answer is not anxiety — it is proximity. Draw closer. Listen longer. The Good Shepherd is not hiding from His flock.

Lord, tune my ear to Your voice — make it more familiar to me than any other sound that competes for my attention.

May 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." — James 1:2-3 (NKJV)

I want to be honest with you: I have never liked this verse on the first day of a trial.

It is easy to quote James 1:2 in hindsight, when you can see the fruit the test produced. It is much harder to "consider it joy" on the morning the diagnosis arrives, or the funding collapses, or the relationship fractures. James is asking for something that feels counterintuitive to every nerve in our body.

But notice precisely what he is asking. He does not say: *feel happy about your trial*. He says *consider it* — deliberate, cognitive reframing. Choose to interpret this difficulty through the lens of what it is producing rather than through the lens of what it is costing you. The trial is not an interruption to the journey of faith. It *is* the journey of faith, in one of its most important forms.

"Testing" here is the same word used for the assaying of metal — the intense heat that burns off impurities and reveals what is genuine. The fire does not destroy the gold. It purifies it. Your faith under pressure is being refined into something more durable, more real, more useful in God's hands than the untested version could ever be.

The most effective missionaries, pastors, and servants of God I know are not the ones who avoided suffering. They are the ones who walked through it and came out with a faith that cannot be shaken, because it has already been shaken and found solid.

Lean in today. The testing is not the end of the story.

Father, help me to see today's difficulty not as interruption but as formation — and to trust You through every degree of heat.

May 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

This verse is famously quoted out of context — printed on athletic gear as a promise of winning — but what Paul actually says here is far more powerful than a victory slogan.

He writes this from prison. And the verse before it reads: "I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need" (v. 12). The *all things* he can do through Christ is not a list of achievements. It is a list of conditions: plenty and hunger, abundance and need. Paul is saying: *in every circumstance — the high ones and the desperate ones — Christ strengthens me to persevere faithfully in it.*

That is actually a much greater promise than athletic victory. It is the promise of supernatural sufficiency in every situation. Whatever your calling places in front of you today — whether abundance or scarcity, welcome or opposition — you have access to a strength that is not your own.

I think of our brothers and sisters in dangerous places, doing ministry that would paralyze most of us with fear. They are not superhuman. They are ordinary people who have discovered what Paul discovered in prison: Christ's strength does not run out. It shows up specifically for the situation you are actually in.

You do not need strength for tomorrow's challenges today. You need it for today's challenges. And it is available.

Lord, I trade my own insufficient strength for Yours today — let Your power be made perfect in my weakness.

FROM THE NATIONS

Myanmar. Dr. David Joy writes from Yangon: "Our church has met under restriction for years. We cannot advertise. We cannot hold large gatherings. But we have not stopped. Michael Naing leads our discipleship groups in three neighborhoods, meeting in homes of ten to fifteen believers at a time. Paul wrote from prison; we meet in small rooms. In every circumstance, Christ is enough —

and the church continues to grow."

May 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." — James 1:5 (NKJV)

Every leader I know has stood at a decision point where the stakes were high, the variables were complex, and they genuinely did not know what to do. Not a test of courage — a test of clarity. The call was obvious, but the next step was not.

James gives us the most direct instruction in all of Scripture for this moment: *ask God*. Ask the God who gives generously — not reluctantly, not conditionally, not after a lengthy probation period, but *generously*. And without finding fault. He will not roll His eyes at your question. He will not say, "You should have figured this out by now." He gives to all, without finding fault.

The wisdom James is describing is not abstract philosophical insight. It is the practical, situational understanding of how to walk faithfully in a specific set of circumstances. The Greek word is *sophia* — the kind of knowledge that translates into wise action. It is what a seasoned elder gives a young leader: not just information but discernment.

God has that for you today. Whatever decision is pressing, whatever complexity is tangled, whatever path is unclear — bring it to Him with a simple, honest request. Not a lengthy theological negotiation. Not a performance of piety. Just: *Lord, I don't know what to do here. Please give me wisdom.*

He will. He has promised. He gives generously.

Father, I need Your wisdom for what I am facing today — give it to me generously, as You have promised.

May 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," — Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

The image is the ancient stadium — tens of thousands of spectators in the stands, packed tier upon tier, watching the runners below. Now the writer of Hebrews says: imagine that stadium filled not with anonymous faces but with every faithful man and woman from Hebrews 11 — Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab — all of them leaning forward, watching you run your portion of the race.

They are the cloud of witnesses. Not spectators in a detached sense, but witnesses in the legal and covenantal sense — people who have borne testimony by their own lives that the God who called them is faithful. They have finished their leg. Now you run yours.

The instruction that follows is deeply practical: throw off the weight. The writer distinguishes between two things — encumbrances (things that are not necessarily sinful but are slowing you down) and sin itself. Both need to go. A runner in an ancient race stripped down to as little as possible; every ounce mattered. What are you carrying into the race that belongs at the starting line?

And then: run *with perseverance* the race *marked out for you*. Not someone else's race. Not the race you wish you had been assigned. Yours. The one God designed your specific gifts, history, and calling to run.

You are not running alone. The stands are full.

Father, show me what I need to drop at the line, and give me the endurance to run my portion well.

May 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." — Romans 1:17b (NKJV)

Four words from Habakkuk 2:4, quoted by Paul at the hinge of the entire book of Romans. Luther read this verse in his monk's cell and the Reformation ignited. It is that consequential.

Not "the righteous will live by *works*." Not "by reputation." Not "by inherited religion." By *faith* — a living, personal, ongoing trust in the God who declares us righteous through Christ.

What strikes me afresh every time I return to this verse is the verb: *live*. Not merely "the righteous will be declared justified by faith" (though that is true). The righteous will *live* — will actually inhabit their daily existence — by faith. Faith is not just the door you walk through at conversion. It is the air you breathe inside the house.

Every single day of the Christian life is meant to be lived in conscious, active trust in God. The decisions of the morning, the pressures of the afternoon, the rest of the evening — all of it inhabited by faith rather than by anxiety, self-reliance, or performance.

I think of the FAITH arc we are walking through this devotional season together: trust, obedience, hearing God's voice, stepping out, risk. Each of these is simply a different room in the house that faith builds. You cannot live in any of those rooms for long without returning to this foundation: the righteous live by faith. Every day. In everything.

How different would today look if you lived every hour of it in active trust?

Lord, let every moment of today be inhabited by genuine faith — not performance, not worry, but trust in You.

May 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass." — Psalm 37:5 (NKJV)

The Hebrew word for "commit" here is *galal* — literally, to roll. Commentators describe it as rolling a heavy burden from your shoulders onto someone else's back. It is not the polite handing-over of a light package. It is the grunt-and-heave of transferring a weight you were never designed to carry alone.

Commit your way — not just your specific request, but the whole direction of your life. The path. The calling. The ministry. The family. All of it, rolled onto the strong shoulders of a God who promises: *I will do this*.

Three of the most restful words in Scripture. *He will do it*. Not: He will help you figure it out. Not: He will support your efforts. He will *do it* — take the committed burden and bring it to the appointed end.

This does not mean passive disengagement. David is not advocating for spiritual laziness. He is advocating for releasing the outcome while remaining faithfully active in the means. You plant. You pray. You serve. You obey. And then you roll the results off your shoulders and let God be responsible for what only He can produce.

The anxiety that drives so many of us is the anxiety of outcome-control — the relentless inner monitoring of whether things are going the right way. Commit dissolves that anxiety. You have handed the weight over. You can work with a light back now.

Father, I roll every weight of outcome onto Your shoulders today — I trust You to do what only You can do.

FROM THE NATIONS

Cuba. Osmani and Geidy Sosa write from Havana: "We have been doing sports evangelism in communities where churches cannot legally gather. We set up a volleyball net in a neighborhood park, we play, we talk, we share. Last year seventeen young people made first-time commitments to Christ through those nets and those conversations. We committed the ministry to the Lord and He has done it — in ways we could never have organized ourselves."

May 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears." — Psalm 34:4 (NKJV)

David wrote this psalm in a genuinely embarrassing situation: he had fled from Saul, ended up in enemy territory, and pretended to be insane to avoid being killed. Not a high point in his spiritual biography. And yet out of that low, humiliating moment, he wrote one of the most beautiful testimonies to God's faithfulness in all of Scripture.

I sought the Lord. Even in the mess of his own making. Even when fear was not a vague anxiety but a concrete, life-threatening reality. He sought, and God answered, and the fear dissolved.

I want to draw your attention to the sequence: *I sought* came before *he answered*. This is not always comfortable for those of us who want God to preemptively remove fear before we take the step of seeking. But the testimony is clear: seeking precedes answered prayer. Not as a condition God imposes to test our persistence, but as the natural shape of relationship — we come to Him, and He responds to our coming.

What fears are real in your life today? Not metaphorical discomfort but genuine fear — about your health, your finances, your family, your calling, your future? Bring them specifically to the Lord. Not a general "I trust You" — bring the actual fear by name and ask for His specific deliverance.

David discovered that this God is a fear-dissolving God. Not a God who guarantees you will never be in danger, but a God who meets you in the danger and delivers.

Lord, I name my fears before You today and ask for Your specific deliverance — I choose to seek You rather than manage my anxiety alone.

May 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." — Deuteronomy 20:4 (NKJV)

Moses is addressing Israelite soldiers about to enter battle. The instructions are startling: before the fight begins, a priest is to speak to the army. And the message is not a tactical briefing. It is a theological one: *the LORD your God is the one who goes with you.*

The primary resource in the battle is not your training, your weapons, or your numbers. It is the presence of God fighting on your behalf.

Now, we are not fighting the same kind of battles as ancient Israel — but we fight battles nonetheless. The enemy of faith is real: discouragement, doubt, opposition, spiritual resistance that doesn't show up on any intelligence briefing but makes itself felt clearly in the fatigue of ministry, the weight of intercession, the relentlessness of the advance against dark spiritual strongholds in cities and nations.

In those battles, the most important strategic truth is the same as Deuteronomy 20:4: *God goes with you.* He is not watching the battle from a neutral position. He is not impartially observing while you fight. He fights for you. He has already gone ahead of you into the territory you are entering.

This week, where are you fighting? In prayer, in a relationship, in a ministry context that is requiring everything you have? Hear this promise as yours: the LORD your God goes with you into that place, and His purpose in going is to give you victory.

Father, remind me today that You go before me into every battle — and that Your presence changes the outcome.

May 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." — James 2:17 (NKJV)

James has been called the most controversial book in the New Testament. Luther famously called it "an epistle of straw." But James is not arguing against Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. He is arguing against faith that never gets off the couch.

The faith that saves, the faith that pleases God, the faith that is the substance of things hoped for — that faith moves. It acts. It clothes the naked and feeds the hungry and crosses the ocean and plants churches and drills wells in dry villages. Not because the action saves us, but because genuine trust in God produces obedient, active engagement with the world He loves.

Dead faith is a kind of intellectual agreement that does not change behavior. It says "I believe God can provide" while hoarding out of fear. It says "I believe God calls people to the nations" while never giving a dollar or a conversation toward reaching them. It says "I trust God with my family" while refusing to have the honest conversation that the Spirit has been prompting for six months.

Alive faith — the kind James celebrates — shows up in the body, the calendar, the checkbook, the conversation. It has hands and feet. It looks like something in the actual world.

As we press deeper into this FAITH season, I want to ask: where is your faith taking physical form? Where is the obedience that gives your belief bones?

Father, let my faith be alive — let it show up in what I do with my hands and feet today.

FROM THE NATIONS

Ghana. Jacob Reddekopp writes from Accra: "We partnered with a local Ghanaian pastor to start a vocational training center for young men who had aged out of the orphanage system. It would have been easy to pray and not act. Instead, we built — with donated tools, volunteer teachers, and a borrowed building. In two years, forty-three young men have learned a trade and found employment. Faith that acts builds things that last."

May 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." — Mark 11:24 (NKJV)

This verse makes me both excited and uncomfortable, and I think that combination is the right response to it.

Jesus has just cursed the fig tree (v. 21) and used its withering to launch into a teaching on prayer. He goes further than any of us would dare: *believe that you have received it*. Present perfect. Treat the answer as already given in the moment of asking.

This is faith at its most radical. It is not wishful thinking — it is a posture of such utter confidence in God's word and character that you anchor your expectation in the moment of asking rather than waiting for visible confirmation. It is the faith of a farmer who plants the seed in winter and speaks of the harvest in present tense.

Now, I hold this verse in tension with the rest of what Jesus teaches — "Thy will be done," praying according to what aligns with God's purpose and character. This kind of faith-in-receiving is not a formula to extract anything I want from an unwilling God. It is the posture of a child who knows the character of their Father so well that they ask and trust simultaneously.

The question this verse forces is: how deeply do I believe that God is *for* me? That He is not reluctant to answer, not withholding arbitrarily, not playing games with my need? When I bring a prayer request to Him, do I leave it there — anchored in trust — or do I immediately pick it back up and keep worrying about it?

Leave it there today.

Father, I ask and I believe — I anchor my expectation in Your faithfulness and leave my request in Your hands.

May 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" — Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

I want to speak to anyone today who feels like the work God started in you is stalled — or worse, sliding backward.

Paul writes this to a community of real believers in Philippi — people with real conflicts (the Euodia-Syntyche tension of chapter 4 is just one of them), real struggles, real distance yet to travel before Christ-likeness is complete. He does not pretend they are finished. He affirms something better: God who started this is *responsible for finishing it*.

The word "confident" carries legal certainty — the same word used for being certain about a contractual obligation. Paul is not expressing an optimistic hope. He is stating a theological certainty: when God initiates a work of grace, He does not abandon it midway. He is committed, by His own character, to completing what He began.

This is enormously freeing. You are not responsible for completing your own sanctification by willpower. You are not responsible for maintaining God's interest in your growth. He began this. He holds the timeline. The Day of Christ Jesus — the completion point — is already written into His plan, and He will get you there.

Does this mean your cooperation doesn't matter? Of course not — the whole letter to the Philippians is full of active, participatory commands. But the burden of the work belongs to Him, not to you.

Rest in this today. God is not finished with you. And what He starts, He finishes.

Father, thank You that my completion is in Your hands — help me to cooperate with You rather than anxiously attempting to complete myself.

May 24, 2026

Pentecost Sunday

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting." — Acts 2:1-2 (NKJV)

Fifty days after resurrection. One hundred and twenty people in an upper room. No crowd yet, no platform, no strategy. Just waiting — exactly as Jesus had commanded — for something none of them fully understood.

And then: *suddenly*.

Pentecost is the hinge point of history. Everything before it was preparation; everything after it is the ongoing work of the Spirit-filled church advancing the mission of God to the ends of the earth. The same Spirit who filled that room in Jerusalem is the Spirit who empowers every CMM minister in every one of our seventy nations. Pentecost is not ancient history. It is active present reality.

I want to press gently on the "together in one place" detail. They were unified. They were waiting together. The wind did not blow into a divided room. It filled a house of people who had set aside their individual agendas and sat expectantly before God in common purpose.

On this Pentecost Sunday, I am asking myself: am I in position to receive? Am I waiting with expectation, in unity with the Body, open to what the Spirit wants to do — or am I too busy managing my own agenda to notice the wind?

The Church was not sent into the world without power. And that same power — the very same Spirit — is available to every believer and every congregation today. Not a memory. A living, active, sending, filling presence.

Come, Holy Spirit. We are in position.

Spirit of God, fill this house again — fill Your church with fresh fire and send us into the world with resurrection power.

May 25, 2026

Memorial Day

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." — John 15:13 (NKJV)

On Memorial Day, we pause to honor those who gave everything — young men and women who ran toward the sound of danger so that others could live in freedom. Whatever one's views on war or politics, this particular sacrifice calls for silence and gratitude. These are not abstractions. They are names on headstones. They are empty chairs at family tables. They are real.

Jesus speaks these words in John 15 the night before He lays down His own life. He is not speaking abstractly about heroism in the abstract. He is speaking in twelve hours' warning of what He is about to do. And He connects His sacrifice to the same word we hear on Memorial Day: *love*.

The deepest love is self-donating. It counts the cost of another person's freedom more precious than its own continuity. That is what the Cross is. That is what the battlefield is, at its best — not glory-seeking but other-centered sacrifice.

As we remember our fallen today, let this also be a day of personal reflection: What am I withholding from the King I claim to follow? What comfort, convenience, safety, or preference am I holding back from the altar of faithful service?

We remember those who gave all. We serve a Savior who gave all. And we are called — not to comfortable allegiance — but to a love that lays down its life in whatever small or large form today's obedience requires.

Lord, honor the memory of those who gave their lives for others — and give me the courage to lay down whatever You ask of me today.

FROM THE NATIONS

Peru. The Thurners write from Lima: "We work in the Callao district, one of Lima's most dangerous neighborhoods. Several of our young believers have been threatened for sharing their faith in this community. But they do not stop. They understand that love like Jesus described costs something real. Three of them were baptized last Easter, publicly, in a neighborhood where that takes courage. We are proud to serve beside people who choose sacrifice over safety."

May 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength." — Isaiah 40:29 (NKJV)

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is one of the great theological summits in all of Scripture. Its subject is the incomparable greatness of God — He measures the oceans in the hollow of His hand, He counts the stars and names every one, the nations are like a drop in a bucket to Him.

And then, almost paradoxically, it zooms in on the faint. The exhausted. The ones who have no might left.

God's immeasurable greatness does not make small human need irrelevant. It makes it exactly the right container for His power. The ocean of His strength is not poured into the vessel of human self-sufficiency — it is poured into the vessel that is empty. The person who has run out. The minister who is depleted. The believer who hit the wall at the end of a long season.

If that is where you are today, I want to speak this directly: you are in exactly the right position to receive what Isaiah promises. You do not need to refill yourself first before coming to God. You come empty and He fills. You come faint and He gives power. You come with no might and He *increases* strength — the Hebrew suggests multiplying it, more than what was there before.

The hardest part of receiving this is releasing the shame of emptiness. We live in a culture — even a ministry culture — that rewards strength and productivity. But Isaiah is clear: it is the ones with *no might* who experience the increase.

Come as you are. Come empty. He fills.

Lord, I come to You depleted today — pour Your strength into my empty vessel and fill me beyond what I had before.

May 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." — 1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)

Samuel was a seasoned prophet, and he was about to make a mistake that any of us would have made. He stood before Eliab — tall, impressive, firstborn — and thought, *Surely this is the one*. The criteria were obvious to the human eye.

God interrupted him mid-assumption.

The contrast could not be more stark: man looks at the outward appearance. God looks at the heart. Two completely different systems of evaluation, operating simultaneously on the same subject.

The one God chose was in the field, tending sheep, not even considered important enough to be called in from work when the prophet arrived. David was not in Samuel's sight line at all. He was in God's.

I find this verse deeply challenging as a leader, because I am constantly making assessments — of people, of opportunities, of what constitutes "promising" ministry. My categories are inevitably shaped by visible, measurable things. God's categories are not. The person sitting quietly in the back row of the church may be the one with a heart entirely bent toward God. The overlooked candidate, the unimpressive resume, the underfunded ministry in an unknown village — God is looking at the heart.

This also means He is looking at yours. Not your platform. Not your output. Not your reputation. Your heart. Today, ask Him not what you should accomplish but what kind of heart you should carry into the day.

Lord, let my heart be the thing You look at and find right — make it tender, honest, and wholly Yours.

May 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." — Romans 1:16 (NKJV)

Paul writes "I am not ashamed" as if he is actively resisting a pull toward shame. And he was. He was heading to Rome — the center of the most sophisticated, powerful, culturally dominant empire in the world — with a message about a crucified Jewish carpenter. By every cultural metric, this was an embarrassing errand.

And yet he planted his flag in the word *power*. The gospel is not merely information, not merely a moral upgrade, not merely a helpful philosophy. It is the *power of God* — the same word used for the force that raised Christ from the dead — released into the life of every person who receives it in faith.

That changes the posture of proclamation. We are not sharing a culturally awkward idea and hoping people are polite about it. We are delivering the most powerful force in the universe into the hands of people who desperately need it.

I have watched this power do what nothing else can do — in South America, in South Asia, in the heart of skeptical Europe. I have watched educated people who had intellectually dismissed Christianity encounter the living Christ and be transformed. I have watched addictions dissolve, marriages restored, whole communities reshaped. Not by clever argument. By power.

You carry good news. Do not be ashamed of it. It works.

Father, give me boldness today to share the gospel without apology — remind me that what I carry is not a message to be defended but a power to be released.

FROM THE NATIONS

Spain. Justyna and Rafal, with their daughter Hanna, write from Madrid: "We came from Poland to plant a church among Madrid's immigrant community. People told us Europe was post-Christian and the gospel would not find soil here. In three years we have a congregation of fifty-three people from eleven nationalities — Spaniards, Latin Americans, Africans, Eastern Europeans — all finding the same power Paul described. Paul was right: it is not ashamed."

May 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." — Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

Jesus says this immediately after Peter's great confession — "You are the Messiah" — and immediately after His first prediction of His death. The disciples are on the highest emotional high of their journey with Him, and He turns around and invites them into the most demanding reality of discipleship.

Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Follow.

Three commands. Each one is a different kind of surrender. *Deny yourself* means to disown the self that wants to be the center — not self-hatred, but the deliberate dethroning of personal comfort as the primary guide. *Take up your cross* is not a metaphor for inconvenience; it is the first-century image of a condemned man carrying the instrument of his own execution. It means accepting the consequences of following Jesus wherever they lead. *Follow* is ongoing, present tense — not a one-time commitment but a daily, directional decision.

This is the costlier side of faith, and we do it no favors by softening it. Jesus is not recruiting fans. He is calling disciples. The distinction is enormous.

But here is the grace within the command: the life that is surrendered in this way is not lost. It is *found* — Jesus says so in the very next verse. The self that is released into His hands comes back in a form more genuinely alive than the defended, self-protecting version could ever achieve.

The cross is not the end of the story. It never was.

Lord, I take up whatever cross today requires, knowing that what I surrender into Your hands is always returned multiplied.

May 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert." — Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV)

The people Isaiah is addressing are stuck in a posture of looking backward — replaying past glories and past failures, rehearsing the old exodus narrative, unsure whether God was still doing anything new. God's response is not a rebuke. It is an invitation: *Look. Can you see it?*

The new thing is already springing up. The way is already being made in the wilderness. The streams are already appearing in the wasteland. But perception requires a different posture — eyes oriented toward the present and the future rather than anchored in the past.

This speaks directly to where I find many faithful believers at midpoint in their journey. They have a history with God — genuine, precious, real. But somewhere along the way, they began to experience that history as the primary category for what God does, rather than as evidence of what He *will* do. The miracle became the museum exhibit rather than the family trait.

God is doing new things. In your family, your church, your city, your calling, your generation. The question He presses is: *do you perceive it?* Are you positioned to recognize it when it appears?

I am seeing new things in our CMM family right now — in places we had nearly given up on, in generations we had underestimated, in geographies that looked like wasteland and are showing streams. Do not limit what God can do by the size of what He has done.

Lift your eyes. The new thing is springing up.

Father, open my eyes to see what You are doing new in this season — and give me the faith to join it.

May 31, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." — Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

We have walked thirty-seven days together through the FAITH phase of this devotional year. We started with Hebrews 11:1 — the substance of things hoped for — and now we close with Paul's magnificent benediction over the Roman church.

Notice what Paul prays for: *joy and peace as you trust in him*. The channel is trust. The river is joy and peace. You cannot have the river without the channel — but if the channel of trust is open, the joy and the peace flow through it in abundance.

And then the beautiful overflowing: by the power of the Holy Spirit, we overflow with hope. Not a trickle. Not a measured portion. An overflow — the kind that spills over the banks and splashes onto everyone nearby.

That is the picture of a life lived by faith: it becomes a source of hope for every person who stands close enough to be reached by the overflow. You trusted when it was hard. You obeyed when you couldn't see. You kept hearing and following and stepping out. And now that trust-shaped life becomes a spring in the desert for someone who desperately needs to see that faithfulness is possible.

As we cross into the HOPE phase tomorrow, carry everything you've learned in these thirty-seven days. Faith is not just the first chapter. It is the foundation of every chapter that follows — every hope, every act of love, every perseverance, every joy.

You were built for this. Keep walking.

God of hope, fill me to overflowing — let the trust I have practiced in this season pour out as hope into every life I touch.

PART TWO

Hope Rising

June 1 - July 15, 2026

June 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." — Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)

June arrives like a door thrown open. The heavy weight of spring uncertainties rolls back, and something in the air whispers: more is coming. That is exactly the posture of this month — Hope Rising. Not wishful thinking, but the confident expectation that God's purposes are still moving forward.

Jeremiah 29:11 is one of the most quoted verses in Scripture, and I understand why. The prophet wrote those words to people in exile — uprooted, homesick, wondering if God had forgotten them in Babylon. And yet into that dry place, God spoke: *I know the plans*. Not "I had plans" or "I hope for plans" — present tense, active, settled.

What you are walking through today may feel like exile. A season of waiting. A circumstance that doesn't match the promise you were given. But this verse insists that God's knowledge of your future is complete. He is not scrambling. He is not revising. He has already designed the landscape of your tomorrow.

Hope is not passive. It acts. It prays. It plants. When we believe the Promiser, we make decisions that align with the promise rather than the problem. We give generously while believing in provision. We speak kindly while waiting for reconciliation. We keep showing up while the answer still looks distant.

This is the first day of our HOPE season together. Let's enter it fully — expectant, anchored, and moving forward with God.

Father, I receive Your plans over my life today — not my fears, but Your future.

FROM THE NATIONS

Guatemala. The Berberian family has been serving in Guatemala for many years, equipping pastors in indigenous communities across the highlands. This month, twelve village leaders completed a two-year discipleship training program and are now planting churches in areas where no congregation existed before. "We watched men walk three hours each way just to attend class," shared one of the Berberians. "That is not us — that is hope alive in them."

June 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." — Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

There is a particular kind of tiredness that sleep cannot fix. You have probably felt it — the weariness of a prolonged season, a slow trial, a promise not yet fulfilled. Your body may be rested but something inside is running on empty.

Isaiah was speaking to people in that exact condition. The nation had been through devastating loss, and forty chapters into this prophecy God addresses the simple, bone-deep exhaustion of His people. Notice what He does not say. He does not say: try harder, pray longer, stop complaining. He says: *hope in the Lord*.

The Hebrew word here — *qavah* — means to wait with expectation, to twist together like strands of a rope. It is not passive resignation. It is an active intertwining of your life with God's. When you wrap your weakness around His strength, something transfers.

The images Isaiah uses are remarkable in their range: soaring, running, walking. Not everyone is soaring today. Some of us are just trying to walk without fainting. That's enough. God honors the person who keeps putting one foot in front of the other when soaring feels impossible. The promise covers all three speeds.

I have been in ministry long enough to watch people give up just before the breakthrough — when the rope was fraying but not yet broken. Don't let go today. Your renewal is not far.

Lord, I wait on You — wrap Your strength around my weakness and lift me.

June 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." — Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

Paul calls Him "the God of hope." Not merely a God who dispenses hope on occasion, but whose very nature is hope itself. That single phrase can reframe everything.

When you pray, you are not petitioning a reluctant landlord. You are speaking to the One whose essence is forward-moving, promise-keeping, future-securing. His name is bound up with hope the way the sun is bound up with light — you cannot have one without the other.

What strikes me in this verse is the mechanism: *as you trust in him*. The filling is not automatic. It is released through trust. And trust is a daily choice, not a one-time decision. Every morning we wake up to a world still full of uncertainty, and every morning we decide whether to lean into the God of hope or to carry the weight ourselves.

Notice also that Paul prays for overflow — not just enough hope to get through the day, but so much that it spills into the people around you. When you are genuinely anchored in God's promises, it shows. People can see settled peace in your eyes even when your circumstances are unsettled. That is a witness more powerful than any argument.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of this overflow. He takes the promises of God and makes them alive inside us. Invite Him to do that work in you today.

Spirit of God, fill me past the brim — let hope overflow to every person I encounter today.

June 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." — Romans 5:5 (NKJV)

Hope, by worldly standards, is a gamble. You hope for something that might not come, and if it doesn't, you are left embarrassed, your optimism exposed as naïveté. That's why so many people protect themselves by not hoping at all.

But Paul draws a hard line of distinction. Biblical hope does not disappoint — it does not shame us — because it is rooted not in favorable circumstances but in the love of God already poured out inside us. This is past tense: *has been poured out*. The love of God is not on its way — it has already arrived. It lives in you through the indwelling Spirit. That changes the mathematics of hope entirely.

You are not hoping God will love you. He already does, beyond measure, and the evidence of it is living inside your chest right now. You are not hoping He is good. He has proven His goodness at the cross. Biblical hope, then, is simply trusting that the God who has already given His Son will continue to keep His word about every lesser thing.

This truth sets us free to hope boldly. Because if the anchor holds even in death — which it did at the resurrection — it will certainly hold in the difficulties of an ordinary Tuesday.

Thank You, Lord, that Your love inside me is greater than any disappointment outside me.

FROM THE NATIONS

Sri Lanka. Timothy and Jeanne Edward Oruwala have served the church in Sri Lanka faithfully through seasons of political and economic upheaval. Recently, Jeanne gathered forty women from three villages outside Colombo for a three-day retreat focused on identity and healing. "These women had survived so much — poverty, family fracture, fear," Timothy shared. "But when they understood that God's love was already poured into them, something broke open. Tears, then laughter, then worship. That is the power of this Gospel."

June 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." — Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Faith and hope are not the same thing, but they are inseparable — like two legs that must both work for a person to walk forward. Hope says: *that is where I am going*. Faith says: *I am taking the next step even though I cannot see the ground beneath my foot*.

Hebrews 11:1 gives us one of the most precise definitions in all of Scripture. Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for. In other words, hope gives direction — it points toward the promise — and faith is the real-world weight you assign to it. When faith is present, the hoped-for thing becomes so certain in your spirit that it already shapes how you live today.

Abraham hoped for a son and a land. He had no evidence in his body or his geography. But he *acted* as if the promise were real, packing up, traveling, building altars. That acting-as-if was faith. And through it, the hoped-for became the actual.

What has God promised you that still feels distant? A restored marriage? A prodigal's return? A calling not yet confirmed? Hope keeps your eyes on the horizon. Faith keeps your feet moving toward it.

The passage does not say faith is the absence of uncertainty. It says it is the evidence of things *not seen* — which means uncertainty is assumed. You trust anyway. That is the walk.

Lord, give me the courage to act today as though Your promises are already on their way.

June 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit." — Jeremiah 17:7-8a (NKJV)

June is a good month to think about trees. The summer growth season is fully underway — leaves dense, branches wide, roots working silently underground toward moisture. Most of what sustains a tree is invisible.

That is precisely Jeremiah's image for the person who places their trust in God. The visible part — the confidence, the steadiness, the fruitfulness — is fed by roots that run deep toward a source that never dries up. When drought comes — and Jeremiah is explicit that drought does come — the tree doesn't panic. It has already gone deep. Its confidence is not in the weather; it is in the stream.

I think about what it means to "send out roots by the stream." It's deliberate growth. Roots don't accidentally find water — they move toward it in response to need. Every time you press into God's Word when you feel dry, every time you choose prayer over distraction, every time you bring your worry to the throne room instead of burying it — you are extending a root.

Summer heat will come. Circumstances will press. But the person rooted in God's Word, soaked in His promises, anchored in prayer — that person will not wither.

Today is Saturday. Perhaps a quieter day for many. Take time to send a root deeper — into Scripture, into prayer, into a conversation with someone who sharpens your faith.

Lord, draw my roots deeper into You so I can withstand whatever heat this season brings.

June 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."
— Psalm 118:24 (NKJV)*

Sunday is a resurrection day. Every week, we gather — physically or scattered among the nations — around the same great fact: the tomb is empty. The Lord is risen. That reality is not merely historical. It is the engine of all our hope.

Psalm 118:24 is a shout, not a whisper. The psalmist has come through enemies, through near-death, through rejection — "the stone the builders rejected" appears just a few verses earlier — and on the other side of all of it, he lands here: *This is the day the Lord has made*. Not just any day. *This one*. The one that followed the darkness.

I want to invite you into that posture today, whatever your Sunday holds. Perhaps worship with your congregation. Perhaps quiet time with family. Perhaps a hospital room, or a lonely kitchen table. Wherever you are, this day was made — crafted, designed, placed in the calendar of eternity — by a God who sees you in it.

Rejoicing is not denial. It does not pretend the hard things aren't hard. But it insists that the Lord who made the day is bigger than what the day contains. And that is enough reason to lift your head.

Our brothers and sisters in 70 nations are gathering today under a thousand different skies. The same Spirit fills every meeting, every prayer, every raised voice. We are not alone.

Lord, I choose to rejoice today — not because everything is perfect, but because You made this day and You are in it with me.

June 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." — Romans 8:24-25 (NKJV)

We live between what was and what will be. Paul names this clearly in Romans 8: the whole creation groans, we ourselves groan, even the Spirit groans. But embedded in that groaning is hope — not despite the longing but because of it. Longing is the evidence that we were made for more.

The logic Paul uses here is striking. He says hope by definition is for something unseen. If you already have it, you don't hope for it. So when you find yourself hoping — really hoping, with that deep ache — you are doing exactly what you were designed to do. You are reaching toward a reality that is coming but hasn't fully arrived.

The word he uses for waiting is *patience* — endurance, steady perseverance. Not gritted-teeth suffering, but a settled posture of trust that what God has promised, He will perform.

I think of the many ministers across our CMM family who have waited years to see breakthrough in their nation. Month after month of planting, praying, facing opposition, rising again. That is not stubbornness — it is the deep patience of people who have genuinely set their hope on what is unseen. And I have watched those same people receive the fruit. Always in God's time.

Let the groaning point you to the promise today. You were saved in hope, and hope does not disappoint.

Father, teach me the grace of waiting — steady, expectant, and at peace in what I cannot yet see.

FROM THE NATIONS

Romania. Erika Klemm in Sibiu has spent years reaching students and young families across central Romania with the hope of the Gospel. Last spring, a university student named Andrei walked into one of her small group meetings carrying a lifetime of disappointment and little belief that God was real. Eight months later, Andrei leads the group's worship. "He told me," Erika shared, "that

hope was the one thing no one had ever offered him without conditions. When he found it in Christ, everything changed."

June 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." — Hebrews 10:23 (NKJV)

The phrase that anchors this verse is the last one: *he who promised is faithful*. Everything hinges on that. If the One making promises were unreliable, "holding unswervingly to hope" would be delusion. But because the Promiser is faithful — not occasionally, not when things are convenient, but constitutionally, always — holding on makes complete sense.

Notice the word *unswervingly*. Life will try to make you swerve. Bad news swerves you. A long wait swerves you. A friend who says "you really think God is going to come through?" swerves you. The writer of Hebrews anticipates all of it and says: hold your position.

This is not rigidity. It's not pretending circumstances don't matter. It's choosing, day after day, to keep your hand on the anchor rope and your feet pointed toward the One who made the promise.

I find great encouragement in the first-person plural here — *let us*. This is a community exhortation. We hold on together. When your faith flickers, someone else's is steady. When mine grows thin, your testimony fans the flame. This is why community — local church, mission family, accountability relationships — matters so much. We were not designed to maintain hope alone.

Who in your life needs you to hold on *with* them today? A word, a text, a prayer voiced out loud over someone who is starting to swerve — that may be the most important thing you do.

Lord, make me steady — and make me someone who steadies others.

June 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;" — Romans 12:12 (NKJV)

Three short commands. Three disciplines that, together, produce a life that does not crumble under pressure.

Joyful in hope. Not joyful because everything has resolved, but joyful because of what's coming. The joy comes before the answer, drawn forward by the certainty of the promise. This is a countercultural stance. The world says feel good when things are good. Paul says feel the joy of hope even when you're still waiting.

Patient in affliction. The Greek word for patient here means to remain under — to stay put under a heavy load without running. It's not passive. It's a posture of choosing to endure rather than escape. Affliction is not evidence that God has left. It is often the very forge where character is shaped.

Faithful in prayer. The word faithful here implies continuity — not one dramatic prayer session but a consistent returning. Prayer is not an emergency broadcast system. It is a daily conversation. The person who prays regularly in small things has resources built up for when the big things come.

What I love about this triad is the order. Joy first — because hope anchors the spirit. Then patience — because that joy needs to outlast the difficulty. Then prayer — because prayer is the lifeline that sustains both. If any one of these is missing, the others weaken. Together they form a rhythm of life that Paul himself demonstrated, writing these words from prison.

Lord, form in me this triple rhythm — joyful hope, patient endurance, faithful prayer — every single day.

June 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." — Psalm 23:1 (NKJV)

Six words. The most peaceful sentence in all of Scripture. I have read Psalm 23 beside hospital beds and gravesides, in prison chapels and in living rooms cluttered with the wreckage of lives falling apart. Every time, those six words do something nothing else can do.

The Lord is my shepherd. Not was. Not might be. Is — present tense, active, attentive. And a shepherd is not an administrator. A shepherd goes where the sheep go, knows them by name, walks the rough terrain ahead of the flock, sleeps between the sheep and the danger.

I shall not want. This is not a promise of abundance in every direction. It's something better — a promise of sufficiency. The sheep do not worry about provision because that is the shepherd's job. The sheep's job is to stay close.

In our HOPE season, this verse grounds us in a particular way. Hope doesn't demand that we figure out how God will provide — it trusts that He will. The shepherd leads by still waters and through valleys both, and He is present in both. Provision doesn't always look like comfort, but it is always there.

I have been in regions of the world where our ministers had almost nothing by material measure, yet they radiated a contentment that puzzled me until I understood: they had settled the question of the Shepherd. Once that question is settled, want loses its grip.

Today, let the Shepherd lead.

Good Shepherd, I choose today not to want — not because I have everything, but because I have You.

June 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all." — 2 Thessalonians 3:16 (NKJV)

Peace and hope are first cousins. Where genuine hope lives, peace follows — not as an achievement but as a gift from the One Paul calls "the Lord of peace himself." Not just a lord who occasionally grants peace, but One whose very identity is peace.

What strikes me in this benediction is the phrase "at all times and in every way." Paul wrote that to a congregation dealing with disruptive members, theological confusion, and the daily difficulty of living as believers in a resistant culture. Their circumstances were not peaceful. Their peace came from beyond their circumstances.

That distinction is critical for us today. If we only have peace when the environment cooperates — when the diagnosis is good, the finances are stable, the relationships are whole — then we have something fragile that the world can shatter with a single phone call. But if peace is a person, and that person lives inside us, then the call doesn't change our foundation. It only tests it.

I think of our family in Mongolia — Ganbold and Ishi, building the church in one of the world's most spiritually resistant climates, with temperatures that drop to minus forty in winter and a cultural landscape equally cold to the Gospel. They carry peace. I have seen it in their eyes. It is the peace that passes understanding because it passes explanation.

Today, receive the Lord of peace. Not a feeling — a Person.

Lord of peace, make Your home so completely in me that wherever I walk today, peace walks with me.

FROM THE NATIONS

Mongolia. Ganbold and Ishi have planted and nurtured a growing church community in Ulaanbaatar through nearly two decades of faithful ministry. Recently, they launched a literacy and discipleship program in a rural district where many families had never held a Bible. "We drove four hours on ice roads to reach this community," Ganbold shared. "When we placed the Word in their hands for the first time, an elderly man wept. He said he had waited his whole life to

know that God saw him. That is why we go."

June 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." — Romans 5:2 (NKJV)

We stand in grace. That is our address. Not "struggling toward grace" or "hoping to qualify for grace" — *standing in it*. Paul says that through Jesus, we have been given access — a permanent entry pass into the throne room — and we stand there now.

And from that standing place, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The hope is oriented toward glory — the full, unveiled presence and weight of who God is, which will one day be revealed and shared with His people. This is the ultimate trajectory of Christian hope. We are not hoping for comfortable circumstances. We are hoping for glory.

That perspective reframes everything in between. When I know that the endpoint is glory — unimaginable, eternal, the full brilliance of God's presence — the hardships of the road are not meaningless. They are the path. Paul goes on in Romans 5 to describe how suffering produces perseverance, then character, then hope. The very thing that threatens to extinguish hope is, in God's economy, the thing that deepens it.

Saturday is often the day we assess how the week went and what we still lack. I want to invite you to flip that: assess where you are standing. If you are in Christ, you are standing in grace. Nothing the week brought can move you off that ground.

Father, I rejoice today not in my circumstances but in the glory that is coming — and in the grace where I already stand.

June 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth." — Psalm 121:1-2 (NKJV)

On a Sunday morning, lifting your eyes feels natural — you are headed to worship, or perhaps sitting with a cup of coffee before opening Scripture. The psalmist's action here is deliberate: *I lift up my eyes*. There is something voluntary about hope. It requires the choice to look up.

The hills in this psalm were likely the hills around Jerusalem — impressive, ancient, solid. A traveler might instinctively trust them: they have been here forever, they won't change. But the psalmist asks the honest question: does my help really come from them? And the answer is no — my help comes from the One who *made* the hills.

This is the grammar of hope. We look at the most stable-seeming things in our world — our savings account, our health, our relationships, our reputation — and we ask: are these my source? Or are they gifts from the Source? Genuine hope moves past the gift to the Giver, and in doing so, becomes untouchable by the fragility of the gifts.

The Maker of heaven and earth. That title is loaded. The One who flung stars into darkness, who set the earth on its orbit, who carved the ocean basins and filled them — that One is your helper. Not a helper in the celestial hierarchy. *Your* helper, the One who is watching your coming and going, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Lift your eyes today. The Maker of heaven and earth is for you.

Lord, I choose to lift my eyes — to You, the Maker of heaven and earth, who is also my daily help.

June 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations." — Psalm 100:5 (NKJV)

A CMM theology student in Quito once asked me: "How do you keep believing when the evidence around you is uncertain?" I told her what I still believe — that the certainty of God's goodness does not depend on current evidence. It is established in eternity, demonstrated at the cross, and flowing forward through every generation.

Psalm 100 is a shout of thanksgiving written from within ordinary life, not from the mountaintop of victory. Its joy is not circumstantial — it's theological. *The Lord is good.* That's a statement about His nature, not a report on recent events.

Goodness, love, faithfulness — the psalm stacks these three. Goodness speaks to His character. Love speaks to His posture toward us. Faithfulness speaks to His consistency. And all three are permanent: love endures *forever*, faithfulness continues through *all generations*. This is not dependent on our generation getting things right. It continues regardless, passed from parent to child to grandchild like a river that never runs dry.

This is the bedrock of our hope. When I am discouraged about the state of the world, about the suffering in nations where our CMM family labors, about the slow pace of breakthrough — I return here. God is good. His love is endless. His faithfulness is generational.

You can trust Him with your family. With your children. With the ministry He has placed in your hands.

Lord, I rest today in what never changes — Your goodness, Your love, Your faithfulness, forever.

FROM THE NATIONS

Ecuador. The CMM Facultad de Teología in Quito has trained hundreds of leaders over the years. This past semester, a class of twenty-two students — many from rural highland communities — completed their ministry training. Among them was María, a single mother from Otavalo who walked two hours to the bus stop every Friday morning to attend weekend classes. "I never imagined I could lead anything," she told her professors at graduation. "But God imagined it for me, and

this school gave me the tools. Now I go back to my community as a pastor."

June 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." — Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

This verse has been called the great anchor of the New Testament — and rightfully so. It does not say all things are good. It says God works *in* all things for good. The distinction matters enormously.

Not every event in your life is good. Loss is not good. Betrayal is not good. Disease is not good. God does not ask you to call the darkness light. He asks you to trust that He is working within it — turning it, shaping it, using it in ways that will only be fully visible in retrospect.

The condition is "those who love him, who have been called." This is not a blank cosmic guarantee. It is a covenant promise to those in relationship with Him. If you love God — if you are moving toward Him rather than away from Him — then you are covered by this promise. All things. Not some things. Not the manageable things. All of them.

I have watched this work in my own life and in the lives of our ministers around the world. A failed church plant that became the foundation for a movement a decade later. A season of illness that produced an intimacy with God the minister says they wouldn't trade. A rejection that rerouted them to the exact place they were supposed to be.

God is a weaver. What looks like a tangle on the underside of the tapestry is pattern on the top.

Trust Him with the tangle today.

Lord, I don't need to understand every thread — I trust the Weaver whose purposes are always good.

June 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," — Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

There is a race marked out specifically for you. Not a generic Christian path, but a particular course — with your name on it, your gifts factored in, your story written into the route. No one else can run your race, and you cannot run theirs.

The writer of Hebrews gives us two motivations for running well. First: the great cloud of witnesses — all those who ran before us and finished. They are not watching in judgment; they are cheering in solidarity. Their testimonies say: it is possible. The race can be run. The finish line is real.

Second: the promise that the race is worth it. We don't run for applause or achievement. We run because the One who marked the course is worthy of our best effort.

But before we can run, we have to throw off what hinders. Not just sin — which is named separately — but anything that adds drag. Distractions. Grudges. The weight of others' expectations. Old identities that no longer fit. The race requires us to travel light.

What do you need to lay down today? What has been slowing your stride? Wednesday is a good midweek moment to reassess: are you running freely, or are you dragging something that was never meant to come this far with you?

Let it go. The race is too good to run weighed down.

Father, show me what I am carrying that You never meant for me to carry — and give me the grace to lay it down.

June 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope." —
Psalm 130:5 (NKJV)*

My whole being waits. That phrase stops me every time. Not just my mind, not just my prayer life, not just the spiritual compartment of my day — my *whole being*. The psalmist is describing a total posture, a complete orientation of body, soul, and spirit toward God.

This kind of waiting is rare. We are so trained to fill every silence, to resolve every tension, to move every project forward. The discipline of letting your whole being wait — not anxiously, but expectantly — is one of the hardest things God asks of us.

The psalmist grounds this waiting in the Word. "In his word I put my hope." This is not vague spiritual optimism. It is specific. I return to the written promise. I hold the Scripture before my eyes again. I remind myself of what God has said, and I let that become my foundation while I wait.

I have had seasons when I genuinely did not know what was coming next in ministry. Not knowing can be terrifying — or it can be transforming. The difference was always whether I was waiting in the Word or waiting in my worry.

Waiting in the Word means reading until you find the verse that speaks to your situation, then sitting with it. Praying it back to God. Letting it do its slow, deep work. The psalmist pictures watchmen waiting for the morning — not sleeping, not despairing, but watching. Certain the dawn is coming.

The dawn is coming.

Lord, I wait for You today with my whole being — body, mind, spirit — and in Your word I place my hope.

June 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." — John 10:10 (NKJV)

The contrast Jesus draws here is absolute. One agenda is theft and destruction. The other is abundant life. And the One speaking is not ambiguous about which side He occupies.

Hope is always under assault. The enemy of your soul does not want you to live in the expectancy of God's promises. His primary tools are discouragement, delay, distortion. He whispers that the promise was never for you. That the waiting proves abandonment. That the abundant life is for more spiritual people, not for you in your specific, messy situation.

But Jesus says: *I came*. The incarnation itself is the refutation of every lie about God's distance. He did not manage our hope from a safe remove. He entered the suffering, took on the vulnerability, absorbed the death — and walked out of it carrying life. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. That is not the act of a God who is indifferent.

Abundant life does not mean a life without loss. It means a life with so much of God — His presence, His peace, His purpose, His power — that even loss cannot empty it. I have seen this in people who faced devastating diagnoses with a joy that astounded their doctors. Life so full of Christ that the thief could not steal what mattered most.

Today our brothers and sisters in Kenya and across East Africa are ministering in communities that have known tremendous theft and destruction. Yet the abundant life of Christ is advancing.

Jesus, be the fullness of my life today — filling every corner the enemy has tried to empty.

FROM THE NATIONS

Kenya. Alongside CMM partners in Kenya, a team of evangelists has been holding outdoor crusades in the Rift Valley this month, reaching nomadic Maasai communities rarely visited by the church. Last week, a gathering of over eight hundred gathered under an acacia tree — no microphone, no stage — and

seventeen families received Christ together. A young moran warrior named Saitoti told the team: "I have stolen and fought my whole life. I did not know there was another kind of life until today." He is now enrolled in discipleship.

June 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." — Lamentations 3:22-23 (NKJV)

This is one of the most remarkable passages in Scripture precisely because of its context. Lamentations is a book of grief — raw, unfiltered mourning over catastrophic national destruction. Jeremiah is not writing from a comfortable study. He is writing from the ruins of Jerusalem.

And from those ruins, he reaches this: *the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases*. Not "I have decided to be positive." Not "things will probably get better." It is a theological declaration made in the darkest hour — a choice to anchor on what is eternally true rather than what is presently visible.

His mercies never come to an end. Every dawn carries a fresh supply. You cannot exhaust God's mercy yesterday. You cannot overdraw the account. Each morning the reserves are replenished, and they are specifically calibrated for what this particular day will require.

Tomorrow is Father's Day — a day that holds different weight for different people. For those with good fathers, a day of gratitude. For those with wounded father-relationships, sometimes a day of quiet ache. But Lamentations reminds us: beneath every earthly fathering story, the love of the Heavenly Father never ceases. It is the ground that holds when every other ground shifts.

Rest in that love tonight. Tomorrow brings new mercies.

Father, thank You that Your love is not contingent on my yesterday — tomorrow I wake to new mercy, to a fresh start, to You.

June 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him."
— Psalm 103:13 (NKJV)*

Father's Day. The longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere — the summer solstice, when light reaches its peak. It feels fitting to think about the Father who is light, in whom there is no darkness at all.

I have been blessed with a spiritual understanding of fatherhood over the years — both through my own father's influence and through watching men in ministry around the world live out what it means to shepherd with love. But I know that Father's Day carries complexity. Not every reader holds warm memories. Some carry a wound where a father's voice should have been.

Psalm 103:13 does something profound. It uses the best of what we know about human fatherhood — compassion, tenderness, being moved by the vulnerability of a child — and says: that is what God feels toward you. The Hebrew word for compassion here shares a root with the word for *womb* — it is visceral, deep, blood-level care.

Whatever your earthly father gave you or failed to give you, this remains: you have a Heavenly Father whose compassion is not earned and cannot be revoked. It is the posture He takes toward every son and daughter who walks toward Him.

Today, on the summer solstice, the day filled with more light than any other, I pray you would experience the Father's light falling full on your face. Let Him call you His child. Let Him be what every human father imperfectly pointed toward.

Heavenly Father, fill every place in me where I longed for a father's voice — You are the One I was always looking for.

June 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." — Psalm 16:8 (NKJV)

There is a posture described in this verse that is simultaneously an act of will and an act of worship. *I have set the Lord always before me.* This is not passive mysticism — it is a disciplined, intentional placing. David is describing the habit of his inner life: before the day's demands arrive, before the threats take shape, before the decisions must be made, he positions God as the one he is oriented toward.

The result is remarkable in its simplicity: *I shall not be shaken.* Not "I might survive this" or "I will try to stay steady." The language is confident, grounded — the kind of steadiness that comes not from self-mastery but from proximity to the unshakable One.

Monday morning is often when the weight of the week falls. After Sunday's worship, the inbox fills, the calendar crowds, the phone lights up with needs. The temptation is to let the week set the agenda before God gets a chance to. David's approach flips that: begin with positioning.

What does it look like practically to "set the Lord before you"? It might be five minutes of silence and Scripture before touching your phone. It might be a brief prayer before your first meeting. It might be a verse written on a card in your line of sight. Small habits, faithfully kept, produce the unshakable life.

Set Him before you today, and walk into your Monday from that place.

Lord, before anything else this week, I set You before me — and I rest in knowing that because of that, I will not be shaken.

FROM THE NATIONS

Rwanda. Pastor Jean-Baptiste Habimana ministers in the hills outside Kigali, where churches bear the deep marks of both trauma and renewal. Twenty years after the genocide, he has watched God rebuild families whose relationships were completely destroyed. "Reconciliation is not natural," he says. "But it is supernatural. We have seen enemies weeping and embracing because only Christ can do that work." His congregation has become a model for trauma healing ministry across the region, training counselor-pastors in seven neighboring

districts.

June 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more." —
Psalm 71:14 (NKJV)*

These words were written by someone old enough to know that hope can erode. The psalmist in Psalm 71 reflects on a long life, speaks of threats in old age, asks God not to forsake him when his strength is gone. This is not youthful idealism. This is seasoned, hard-won conviction: *I will always have hope.*

Always. That word swallows every exception. Not "when circumstances improve." Not "once the threat passes." Always — in the morning when I wake uncertain what the day holds. Always — in the evening when I review what didn't work out. Always — in the middle of the night when the fears are loudest.

The second part of the verse connects hope to praise: *I will praise you more and more.* There is a direct relationship. When we praise God — not because everything is resolved but because He is worthy — hope grows. Praise breaks the grip of fear. It reorients our attention from what is lacking to who is present.

"More and more" is a trajectory, not a plateau. The psalmist is not aiming to maintain his current level of worship. He is committed to increase — to a praise that deepens with age, that grows richer as the evidence of God's faithfulness accumulates.

Are you praising more today than you were a year ago? That is one honest measure of spiritual growth. Let today be a day of more.

Lord, I choose today to hope always and praise more — not because my circumstances demand it, but because You deserve it.

June 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." — Romans 8:18 (NKJV)

Paul is not minimizing suffering here. He has catalogued his own suffering with stunning specificity elsewhere — shipwrecked, beaten, imprisoned, sleepless, hungry. He is not writing as someone who has avoided pain. He is writing as someone who has measured it honestly and found it outweighed.

The scale he uses is interesting: *present sufferings* versus *glory that will be revealed in us*. Not glory bestowed on us from outside, but revealed *in us* — as if the glory is already there, latent, waiting for the moment of full disclosure. Paul's vision of eternity is not a distant reward separate from who we are; it is the full unveiling of what God has already been doing inside us through every hard season.

That reframe changes everything. The difficulty you are walking through right now is not wasted. It is not the interruption of your real story — it is part of it. Every weight that produces endurance, every fire that burns away the nonessential, every waiting season that stretches trust — all of it is forming something in you that will one day be revealed in glory.

Summer days in June can be deceptively comfortable, and it's easy to think of hope as a fair-weather virtue. But this verse was written for the hard days. For the diagnoses and the phone calls and the situations that cannot be fixed by optimism. In those moments, the honest accounting of Romans 8:18 is more nourishing than anything comfort can offer.

The glory coming is greater than the suffering present.

Father, anchor my perspective in eternity today — remind me what is being formed in me through what I cannot change.

June 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever." — Psalm 23:6 (NKJV)

We return to Psalm 23, but this time at the end — the conclusion of a song that moved through green pastures, dark valleys, and a table prepared in the presence of enemies. After all of that, the psalmist looks back and makes a declaration: goodness and love have been following me the whole time.

The image of goodness and love "following" is beautiful. These are not blessings that only appear when you notice them. They are in pursuit of you — running after you, present at your heel, traveling every road you travel. You don't have to manufacture them. You don't have to earn them or deserve them each day. They follow you because the Shepherd is faithful, not because the sheep always chose the right path.

And then the ending: *I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*. This is the final destination. Not a temporary campsite, not a way station — forever. The hope that runs through all of Psalm 23 is not only for today's provision but for an eternal belonging. We are people going somewhere, and where we are going is home.

In our HOPE season, this is where the arc is tending. Yes, we wait. Yes, we endure. But we are not wandering in circles. We are on our way home. Goodness and love are behind us, the Shepherd is before us, and forever is ahead.

Live today as someone who knows where they are going.

Lord, I receive the goodness and love that pursue me today — and I walk forward toward the forever You have prepared.

June 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil," — Hebrews 6:19a (NKJV)

An anchor does not prevent storms. It does not still the water or calm the wind. What it does is keep the ship from being driven off course — from drifting past the point of no return. That is precisely what biblical hope does for the soul.

This is one of the most precise metaphors in all of Scripture. The anchor is not visible — it goes down into the deep, below the waterline, into what the writer of Hebrews calls the inner sanctuary beyond the veil. Our hope is anchored not in a visible, manageable circumstance but in the very presence of God, where Jesus has gone as our forerunner.

Firm and secure. Two words for the same certainty, stacked for emphasis. The anchor doesn't slip. It doesn't corrode. It doesn't give way under pressure. When the storm is at its worst and every other source of stability has been tested, the anchor of hope in Jesus holds.

I want to speak to whoever is reading this today in the middle of a storm. Maybe the storm is relational — a marriage in crisis, a child who has walked away. Maybe it is financial. Maybe it is the slow grind of chronic illness. Maybe it is ministry opposition that has left you bruised. Your soul has an anchor. It is set in the presence of God, and it is firm and secure.

You will not drift beyond recovery. The anchor holds.

Father, when the storm is loud and my footing is uncertain, remind me: the anchor holds, and it holds in You.

FROM THE NATIONS

South Sudan. In one of the world's youngest and most war-scarred nations, a CMM-connected pastor named Juma Ladu has been gathering displaced families in the town of Yei for weekly fellowship, often under a corrugated roof with no walls. What began as twenty people has become two hundred. "We have nothing by the world's measure," Juma says, "but we have the anchor. People come here broken and leave with something no situation can take away." Discipleship groups have multiplied to twelve surrounding villages.

June 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." — Romans 15:4 (NKJV)

The Bible is a hope-generating book. That is one of its central purposes. Paul makes this explicit: the ancient stories, the hard passages, the long narratives of waiting and failure and rescue — all of it was written for us, specifically to produce hope in us through the combination of endurance and encouragement.

What a combination. Endurance and encouragement — not one or the other. Endurance without encouragement becomes grinding stoicism. Encouragement without endurance becomes shallow positivity. Together they produce a robust, tested hope that the world cannot manufacture.

When I read about Abraham waiting twenty-five years for the son of promise, I am taught endurance. When I read about God's faithfulness to David through every betrayal and consequence, I am encouraged. When I follow Joseph from the pit to the palace, I learn that the same God who allowed the pit was present in it all along and was working the whole time.

Your Bible is not a collection of distant historical records. It is a living library of hope. Every time you read of God's faithfulness to His people in impossible circumstances, the Spirit of God is planting something in you: an expectation that He will be equally faithful in yours.

Read it as a book written for you. Because it was.

Father, open Your Word to me today with fresh eyes — let endurance and encouragement rise from its pages, producing hope that outlasts every difficulty.

June 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!" — Psalm 27:14 (NKJV)

The psalm repeats itself at the end. *Wait for the Lord*. Then after the exhortations to strength and courage: *wait for the Lord*. The repetition is not accidental. The psalmist knew how easily the command slips from our grip. We need to hear it twice.

Waiting in Scripture is never passive. It is the active stance of a soldier at his post — alert, positioned, prepared, but holding until the command comes. The heart takes courage in the waiting, not after the answer arrives. Strength is built in the season of anticipation, not distributed as a reward for patience already achieved.

David wrote Psalm 27 in the middle of enemies and adversity. He speaks of a father and mother forsaking him. He speaks of opponents rising against him with false accusations. And through all of it, his conclusion is not escape — it is waiting. Specifically, waiting on the Lord. Because what David understood is that God does not abandon the waiting person. He inhabits that space. He is present in the delay.

Sunday is a day when many of us re-gather with the body of Christ after a week of individual navigation. We bring our waiting seasons with us. We lay them before God together. Something about communal worship strengthens the wait — we see one another's faith, hear one another's testimonies, and leave more capable of the courage the psalmist describes.

Wait with courage today. He is worth the wait.

Lord, make me strong in the waiting — let my heart take courage not after the answer, but now, in the space where I trust You.

June 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:" — Hebrews 10:35-36 (NKJV)

Do not throw away your confidence. The writer is addressing people who are weary, who have been faithful for a long time and whose reward has not yet arrived. Some were shrinking back. Some were tempted to trade their costly stand for a more comfortable position.

And the word that stands out is "throw away" — as if what they were tempted to discard had genuine value. Confidence in God is not worthless when circumstances disappoint. It is a possession — a rich one, the writer insists — and discarding it is a tragic miscalculation.

You need to persevere. That word — *chreia*, need — is the same used when someone is describing a practical necessity. Not "it would be nice to persevere." You *need* it. Like you need water. Because the promise is on the other side of the perseverance, and you cannot skip to the reward without walking the road.

How many times have people stopped just before the breakthrough? Stepped back just when the answer was forming? I have seen it in ministry, in marriage, in calling. The enemy knows when we are close. His loudest lies come just before the turn.

Today is Monday — the day we recommit to the week. Recommit to confidence. Recommit to perseverance. Your confidence will be richly rewarded.

Father, I refuse to throw away what You died to give me — today I recommit to confidence, perseverance, and trust in Your timing.

June 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength." — Isaiah 40:29 (NKJV)

The last day of June. Thirty days into our HOPE season, and perhaps some of you are arriving here genuinely fatigued. Ministry is demanding. Life is relentless. Some of you have been pouring out without adequate time to be filled up. Isaiah 40:29 is a verse for exactly this moment.

He gives power to the faint. Not to the strong. Not to the ones who have been managing well. He gives power specifically to those who are running on empty — which means your emptiness is not a disqualification. It is the very condition that positions you to receive from God what you cannot generate yourself.

To him who has no might he increases strength. The increase comes in direct proportion to the absence of natural resource. This is the arithmetic of grace. When you are operating from God's reserves rather than your own, you discover a capacity that consistently exceeds what should be possible.

I think of the long months our brothers and sisters in the Congo endure — serving in conditions of instability, violence, and grief that would deplete most people within weeks. And yet I hear testimonies of people continuing to plant churches, lead discipleship groups, feed children, preach with fire. It is not natural strength. It is the increase God gives to those who have none.

Finish June on your knees if you must. That's the right posture for receiving what only God provides.

Lord, I have no might of my own today — so I position myself to receive the increase only You can give.

FROM THE NATIONS

DR Congo. Pastor Ezekiel Molanga ministers in a town near Goma in eastern Congo, where armed conflict has displaced hundreds of thousands of families. Despite constant danger and frequent displacement of his own congregation, Ezekiel has maintained a weekly discipleship program for forty young men, many of them former child soldiers. "We do not focus on what has been taken from them," he says. "We focus on who they are becoming in Christ. That is the only hope that holds here." Three of his disciples have now planted churches in

neighboring villages.

July 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." — Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

The first day of July carries the energy of a second beginning — a new month, fresh columns in the calendar, a sense of midyear reset. And Proverbs 3:5-6 is exactly the right verse for a new beginning, because it calls us to surrender the one thing we most tightly grip: our own understanding.

Lean not on your own understanding. This is not an anti-intellectual command. God made our minds and delights in their use. But there is a difference between thinking carefully and trusting primarily in your analysis. Understanding has limits. God's knowledge does not. He sees around corners we haven't reached. He knows the people we haven't met. He can make paths straight through terrain our plans couldn't have navigated.

With all your heart. Not the compartmentalized trust that says "I'll trust God with the spiritual parts and handle the practical myself." All your heart. The business decision and the medical decision and the relational tension and the ministry strategy. Every quadrant.

He will make your paths straight. Straight doesn't always mean smooth — it means direct. The most efficient route from where you are to where God wants you may pass through some difficulty. But you will not be wandering in circles. You will be moving forward.

Commit July to Him right now. What a way to start the month — hands open, heart surrendered, path straightening.

Father, I submit every part of this new month to You — I trust Your knowledge over my analysis, Your path over my plan.

July 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." — Exodus 14:14 (NKJV)

These words were spoken at the edge of the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army closing in behind and impassable water ahead. The people were terrified and accused Moses of leading them out to die. Moses' response, given under that kind of pressure, is one of the most remarkable statements in Scripture.

The Lord will fight for you. Future tense — the battle has not yet started. In fact, from the human perspective, the battle looks completely lost. But Moses speaks from a different vantage point: from the knowledge of who God is, not from the appearance of the circumstance.

You need only to be still. This sounds passive but is actually one of the hardest instructions God ever gives. Stillness in a crisis requires more interior strength than frantic action. It is the choice to stop generating solutions and trust the Sovereign. It is stepping back from the Red Sea of your situation and saying: "I believe You will part this water."

There are battles in your life today that you are not equipped to fight. Financial crises that exceed your earning capacity. Relational ruptures that exceed your ability to heal them. Health situations beyond your control. Ministry opposition that overwhelms your strategy. In all of these, the same voice that spoke at the Red Sea is speaking to you: be still. I will fight for you.

Be still today. Let the Fighter fight.

Lord, today I step back from the battle I cannot win and trust the One who has never lost — fight for me.

July 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." — Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

The eve of Independence Day in America. Tonight, many will watch fireworks light up the summer sky in brilliant bursts. But this verse describes a quieter, more sustaining light — the lamp of God's Word, close and specific to the step you are taking right now.

Notice the scale. Not a floodlight that illuminates the entire landscape. *A lamp to my feet* — enough light for this step, this decision, this moment. *A light to my path* — enough clarity to see the way forward without seeing the entire map.

Many of us are waiting for a grand vision that shows the whole route before we'll commit to the first step. But God's way is often different: here is enough light for one step. Take it. More light comes with obedience.

This is not spiritual blindness — it is spiritual trust. The person who requires the whole picture before moving rarely moves at all. The person who steps into the lamplight of today's clear instruction finds that the next step becomes clear as they move toward it.

For our family in Tanzania — Yohana Mayiku and the CMM community there — life in ministry often means navigating without the luxury of complete information. Resources uncertain, situations fluid. But the Word has been their lamp, and I have watched them take one faithful step at a time into situations that became, in retrospect, miraculous.

What one step is clear to you today? Take it.

Father, I don't need to see the whole map — give me light for this one step, and I will take it.

FROM THE NATIONS

Tanzania. Yohana Mayiku has served in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania for years, training rural pastors who have no formal theological education. This season, he distributed handwritten study notes — copied and recopied because printing is unaffordable — to thirty-seven pastors leading churches in remote villages. "Each pastor leads between forty and two hundred people," Yohana

shares. "They hunger for the Word. I give them a lamp. They carry it home and it lights their whole community."

July 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance." — Psalm 33:12 (NKJV)

Independence Day. Flags, fireworks, the smell of summer celebrations. I am grateful to live in a nation where I can openly worship, openly preach, openly send missionaries to 70 nations without government interference. These are gifts not to be taken for granted.

But Psalm 33:12 sets the only foundation on which national blessing is truly secure: *whose God is the Lord*. Not whose economy is strong, whose military is powerful, whose democracy is functioning — though none of those are unimportant. The deepest security of any nation rests on its relationship to the God who made it.

America's story, like every nation's story, is complex. It has carried extraordinary gifts and devastating failures. The hope we have for this nation — as those who pray, who vote, who serve, who disciple — is not nationalistic pride. It is the same hope we carry for every nation in our CMM family: that the Lord would be God here, that His people would be faithful here, that His mercy would be sought here.

Today I am thinking of our brothers and sisters in nations where this kind of public worship is not allowed. Where gathering in Jesus' name means risk. Their underground faith often burns brighter than ours in freedom. They would give much to enjoy what we enjoy and sometimes neglect.

Celebrate your freedom today. And steward it. Freedom of worship is meant to generate more worship, not merely to be enjoyed as a right.

Lord, be the God of our nation — not as a slogan, but as a reality built one surrendered heart at a time.

July 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there." — Psalm 139:7-8 (NKJV)

The day after a national celebration is often quietly reflective. The fireworks are over. The crowds have dispersed. The ordinary Sunday returns. And in that ordinary moment, Psalm 139 offers one of the most intimate truths in Scripture: there is nowhere you can go that God is not already there.

David asks the question rhetorically — not as a complaint but as a comfort. Wherever I travel in the universe of experience, the Presence precedes me. The heights of joy — You are there. The depths of despair — You are there too. The unexpected places, the foreign lands, the dark nights of the soul, the ordinary Sundays after the celebrations — God is already present in all of them.

This is the foundation of all Christian hope. Not that God will eventually come to where we are, but that He is already there before we arrive. When you walk into the Monday that follows this Sunday, into the week with its unknowns — He is already in that week. He has already been there. He is going ahead of you, not catching up.

For those who feel today that God is distant — you are not in a place outside His presence. You are only in a place that feels that way. Press in. He is closer than the feeling suggests.

Lord, wherever I go this week — into the hard conversations, the uncertain decisions, the quiet moments — I go knowing You are already there.

July 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" — Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

Be still — the Hebrew is *raphah*, which means to let go, to relax your grip, to release. It is what a hand does when it stops clutching. And it is God's instruction not to the passive or indifferent, but to the anxious, the busy, the gripping-tightly people. The ones who need to hear it most are the ones who find it hardest to do.

Know that I am God. This is not acquisition of new information. You already know God exists. This is the deep settling — the re-anchoring of your trust in the ground of who He is. When we are still enough to truly know, the anxiety loses its grip. Problems don't disappear, but they are rightly sized relative to the One who holds them.

What I love is what follows the personal invitation: *I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.* The individual act of letting go — one person releasing control, settling into trust — is connected to the cosmic purpose. God's exaltation among nations is somehow related to your stillness before Him. When we stop straining to manage outcomes, we make room for God to be God.

Monday again. The week begins. Let it begin with an open hand rather than a clenched fist. Let it begin with *raphah* — releasing what you were never meant to carry.

And watch for Him to be exalted.

Lord, I let go right now — of the outcomes I've been gripping — and I make space for You to be God in my life and in the nations.

July 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." — Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

One of the most astonishing verses in the Bible. God — the Mighty Warrior, the Creator of galaxies, the One before whom seraphim cover their faces — sings over you. With delight. Not tolerance. Not patience. *Delight.*

Zephaniah speaks to people who had been rebuked, who carried the weight of knowing they had failed and were under discipline. And into that heaviness, God speaks a promise for the other side: the rebuke will end. In its place will come something almost incomprehensible — divine rejoicing, God's own voice lifted in a song of joy over you.

This is the language of a parent over a beloved child, fully restored to relationship. It is the Father catching sight of the prodigal on the road and running — not to scold but to celebrate. It is the most extravagant possible image of what awaits those who return to God and find themselves received not with restrained forgiveness but with exuberant love.

You are not a project to God. You are a delight. Whatever failures you are carrying, whatever silence you've been sitting in, whatever distance you feel — the Warrior who saves has already won the battle for your belonging. He is not gritting His teeth over you. He is singing.

Let that land today.

Lord, I receive what I cannot manufacture — the truth that You delight in me and rejoice over me with singing.

FROM THE NATIONS

Malawi. Pastor Phiri leads a congregation in the Dedza district of central Malawi, where drought has pushed many families to the edge of survival. Despite the hardship, his church planted a community garden this year — twenty families sharing seeds, labor, and harvest together. "We asked God what our delight in Him looks like," Pastor Phiri says. "He showed us: it looks like feeding your neighbor. It looks like not hoarding seed." The garden produced enough to feed sixty families and left seed for next season.

July 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)

Paul wrote this verse from a Roman prison while thanking the Philippians for their generous support. He had experienced both abundance and want. He had learned contentment in every condition. And from that deeply tested place, he makes this bold declaration about provision.

Notice the standard of the provision: *according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus*. Not according to the current balance of a divine account that fluctuates. Not according to how good your year has been. According to the riches of His glory — which are, by definition, inexhaustible.

God does not meet your needs from a limited supply that might run short. He meets them from the infinite treasury of who He is, expressed through Christ. Which means that no need you carry today — physical, relational, emotional, spiritual — is beyond His resource to meet.

The practical challenge is learning to bring every need to Him rather than managing needs ourselves until they exceed our capacity. By then we are exhausted, discouraged, and wondering why God didn't show up sooner. He shows up when we bring the need — not when we admit defeat.

What need have you been quietly managing without bringing it to God? Bring it today. The riches of His glory are not diminished by the number of needs presented to them.

Father, I bring You every need I've been managing in my own strength — meet them according to Your riches, not my capacity.

July 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You." — Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

The mechanism here is precise and teachable: *perfect peace* is the outcome of a mind kept on God. Not a mind that occasionally glances Godward while primarily focused elsewhere, but a mind that is genuinely directed at Him — His character, His promises, His presence.

Isaiah calls this "perfect peace" — *shalom shalom* in Hebrew, the word doubled for emphasis, meaning completeness upon completeness, wholeness stacked on wholeness. The peace God offers is not a reduction of anxiety to a manageable level. It is a completeness that transcends the situation.

And the mechanism is trust. The mind stays on God *because* of trust — because there is a settled conviction that He is safe, reliable, and good. A mind that can't fully trust God will keep drifting back to manage the situation. But when trust is genuinely in place, keeping the mind on God becomes natural because that's where the peace lives.

How do you keep your mind on God practically? You fill your mental bandwidth with His Word. You return to Him in quick mid-day prayers. You replace anxious thought-spirals with Scripture spoken aloud. You surround yourself with people who model this kind of anchored thinking. It is a discipline — and like all disciplines, it becomes easier with practice.

Start today. When you notice your mind drifting toward worry, deliberately bring it back. Not once, not twice, as many times as necessary.

The peace on the other side of that practice is worth every return.

Lord, I fix my mind on You — on Your faithfulness, Your goodness, Your presence — and I receive the perfect peace that only You can give.

July 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." — Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

Midsummer. The heat of July has settled in. Gardens are either thriving or struggling, depending on the water they've received. Farmers are watching, waiting, tending. Paul uses agricultural language here because the ancient reader would immediately understand the rhythm he's describing: you plant in one season and reap in another.

The danger Paul names is not failure. It is weariness. You could be doing everything right — sowing faithfully, laboring with integrity, serving consistently — and still grow weary. Fatigue is not a sign of disobedience. It is a human condition. But the instruction is clear: don't let weariness become quitting.

At the proper time. Those words matter. God has a timing for the harvest that is not always our timing. We plant in hope and we wait in hope. And the harvest, when it comes, often comes in ways and proportions we didn't anticipate. The mustard seed doesn't look like a harvest — until it does.

In our CMM family serving in Niger — where ministry conditions are among the hardest on earth — leaders have been doing good for years in a region resistant to the Gospel. They are planting in difficult soil. But harvests are beginning to come. Small, steady, irreversible. The proper time belongs to God.

Don't give up. The harvest is coming.

Lord, renew my energy for the work you've called me to — and let me trust Your timing for the harvest You've promised.

FROM THE NATIONS

Niger. A CMM-trained leader named Ibrahim works in a rural district of Niger, one of the least-evangelized nations on earth. For three years, he hosted a small weekly gathering in his home — never more than eight people. This year, a local official who had always been hostile to the Gospel attended out of curiosity after his daughter was healed of a prolonged illness. He gave his life to Christ. Since then, the group has grown to forty-five. "I almost stopped," Ibrahim admits. "I almost decided nothing was happening. Now I tell everyone: do not give up. You

do not know how close you are."

July 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth." — Psalm 145:17-18 (NKJV)

Psalm 145 is David's final great alphabetic psalm — a comprehensive celebration of who God is and how He acts. Two qualities are stacked here: *righteousness* and *faithfulness*. Everything He does flows from who He is. His actions are never arbitrary, never unjust, never outside the character that has been true of Him from eternity.

Saturday is a good day to take stock. This week may have brought things that felt unfair, unexplained, or simply hard. And into that honest assessment, Psalm 145 inserts something stabilizing: God is righteous in all His ways. Not most of them. All of them. That includes the ones you don't yet understand.

And then: *the Lord is near to all who call on him*. Not near to the spiritually advanced. Not near to those who have their devotional life in order. Near to all who call on him in truth — which simply means calling on Him with genuine intent, even when the voice is rough with grief or confused by silence.

Nearness is the gift we most need in the hard seasons. Not an explanation, not a resolution — presence. The God who is righteous in all His ways is also the God who draws close when called. Those two things together are enough.

Finish the week calling on Him. You will find Him near.

Lord, I call on You in truth today — in my confusion, in my fatigue, in my hope — and I receive the nearness You have promised.

July 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living." — Psalm 27:13 (NKJV)

Confident. David uses that word deliberately. This is not wishful thinking or optimistic hoping. It is settled conviction — an anchor point in the storm that the psalmist has chosen to plant and will not be moved from.

The phrase "in the land of the living" is significant. David is not pushing his hope off into eternity. He is not saying "one day, when I'm gone, I'll understand." He believes he will see God's goodness in this life, in this body, in the circumstances of his earthly story. That is a bold declaration, especially given what David was facing when he wrote it — betrayal, pursuit, the threat of death.

Hope always has a temporal dimension. Yes, ultimately our hope is eternal — resurrection, glory, the face of God. But it is also present. God's goodness is visible now, in the mundane and the miraculous, in the sunrise and the answered prayer, in the prodigal who comes home and the body that heals beyond what medicine expected.

Train yourself to see the goodness. It takes practice because we are trained by culture to notice what is wrong. The discipline of hope includes the daily practice of noticing God's goodness — naming it, recording it, sharing it. A gratitude journal is not sentimental; it is a training ground for hope.

What goodness has God shown you this week? Name it today. Speak it aloud. Let it build confidence that more is coming.

Lord, I remain confident — I will see Your goodness today. Help me recognize it when it comes.

July 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:7 (NKJV)

Paul is writing about a peace that transcends understanding — which means it does not always make rational sense. From the outside, it can look like calm in the face of a crisis that should produce panic. The guard it provides for the heart and mind is something that reasoning alone cannot build.

The context of this verse matters. Paul has just said: present your requests to God with thanksgiving. The sequence is prayer → peace → guarding. You pray — bringing the anxiety to God rather than feeding it with more analysis — and God's peace, which logic can't fully explain, moves in to stand guard.

Guard is a military term. The peace of God does not drift in casually — it is stationed. It stands watch. It refuses entry to the enemy's lies, the anxious replays, the worst-case scenarios that crowd the mind in quiet moments. This is active protection, not just a pleasant feeling.

Monday begins a new week. For some of you, Monday carries specific weight — a meeting you are dreading, a conversation that needs to happen, a decision that must be made. Before you enter the week, present those specific things to God with thanksgiving. Not because you're grateful for the difficulty, but because you're grateful for the One you're bringing it to.

The guard shows up when you pray.

Father, I present my anxieties to You now — and I receive in return the inexplicable peace that stands guard over my heart today.

July 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." — John 16:33 (NKJV)

Jesus says this to the disciples on the night of His betrayal. Hours before the cross. He is not offering them a trouble-free life — He is being brutally honest: *in this world you will have trouble*. Full stop. No asterisk, no exception.

But listen to what surrounds that reality: *in me you may have peace ... I have overcome the world*. The trouble is real. The peace is also real. And the peace does not come from absence of trouble — it comes from being *in Christ*, who has overcome everything trouble can do.

The word "overcome" in Greek is *nikaō* — to conquer, to be victorious over. Jesus uses the perfect tense: he has already overcome. This is not a future victory still in doubt. It is a completed work, carried out definitively at the cross and confirmed irrevocably at the resurrection.

Whatever trouble you are facing today — relational, physical, financial, spiritual — you are facing it from inside an overcomer. You are in Christ. He is not observing your trouble from a distance and hoping things work out. He has already defeated the ultimate enemy. What remains for you is not to win the victory but to stand in the one already won.

Take heart. That's a command, not a suggestion. Take it — reach for the courage that comes from knowing who won.

Lord, I take heart today — not in my strength but in Yours, not in my victory but in the one You already won.

FROM THE NATIONS

Syria. Brother Farzad ministers to refugees and displaced families in northern Syria, where years of conflict have left communities shattered. He gathers small groups in homes — never in public — to read Scripture and pray. Recently, a former fighter for a militant group came seeking answers after his brother was killed in the same conflict he had served. Farzad shared John 16:33 with him: "Jesus told His friends, in this world you will have trouble." The man wept. "He knew," he said. "He already knew." He is now part of the underground fellowship,

sharing the Gospel himself.

July 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."
— Ephesians 3:20-21 (NKJV)

We close the HOPE season with the most extravagant promise Paul ever wrote: God is able to do *far more abundantly* than all we ask or think. Not a little more. Not more than expected. Abundantly beyond the outer reach of our asking and imagining.

The mechanism is remarkable — *according to the power at work within us*. The power is already in motion inside us through the Spirit. We are not waiting for God to release some distant resource. He is already working. The prayer is less about activating something absent and more about recognizing and yielding to what is already present and active.

Forty-five days of hope. June opened with God declaring plans for a future. July closes this phase with a doxology: *to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever*. All our hoping finds its resolution there — not in the granting of every request, but in the glorification of the One who works in us beyond what we can conceive.

You are not the same person who walked into June 1. Something has been deposited through these weeks of Scripture, reflection, and prayer. Not from me — from the Spirit of God, through His Word. Let that deposit grow. Let it fund the people around you who are still in their early waiting, who need to borrow some of your settled hope until they develop their own.

The God who does abundantly more than you imagine is working in you right now.

Lord, receive the glory from everything You've built in me this season — and do in and through me what only You can imagine.

PART THREE

Love Overflowing

July 16 - August 31, 2026

July 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"We love Him because He first loved us." — 1 John 4:19 (NKJV)

There is a sequence in that sentence worth sitting with this morning. *He first.* Love did not originate with us. Every act of kindness you have ever extended, every sacrifice you have made for a spouse, a child, a stranger in need — it all traces back upstream to a single source: the heart of God toward you. You did not earn His attention. You did not perform your way into His affection. He moved first, before you were formed, before you drew your first breath, before you knew His name.

I have spent decades traveling among our brothers and sisters across seventy nations, and one thing consistently stops me in my tracks: people who have nearly nothing will give you everything, because they have been transformed by this love. I watched a pastor in a mud-brick church in East Africa weep with gratitude not over what he possessed, but over what he had received — the unearned, unstoppable love of God.

This is where the LOVE phase of our year begins — not with an exhortation to try harder, but with a reminder of origin. You and I are beloved. Loved before we were lovely. Loved when we were wandering. Loved at the cross, where the price of that love was made unmistakably clear. And from that fountain, love spills outward. You cannot give what you have never received, but when you truly receive His love — really let it land — it begins to overflow into the people around you, into your family, your neighborhood, your city, the unreached corners of the earth.

Let this month be a deep drink from the well.

Father, this morning I receive Your love afresh — let it be the source of everything I give today.

July 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." — John 3:16 (NKJV)

I have heard this verse ten thousand times, and I imagine you have too. There is a danger in familiarity: words that should land like a stone on still water barely ripple anymore. So this morning I want to slow down on one word — *gave*. God did not merely feel affection from a distance. He acted. Love without sacrifice is sentiment, and sentiment does not save anyone. He gave — the most costly thing He possessed, the dearest, most irreplaceable Person in the universe — and He gave Him for the world. Not for the morally sorted-out world. Not for those who had already cleaned themselves up. For the world.

This verse pulses beneath every missions endeavor CMM has ever undertaken. Whether we are training pastors in rural India or partnering with a church planter in the Middle East, the fuel is this singular, staggering fact: God gave. His giving becomes our sending. His sacrifice invites our sacrifice. Love that stays safely unexpressed is not love in any biblical sense — it is merely an idea.

Ask yourself today: what does my love cost me? Not the love I feel on a good morning when everything is easy, but the love that moves my feet, opens my wallet, clears my schedule, and sends me across a street or across an ocean.

Lord, Your love cost You everything — may mine cost me something today.

FROM THE NATIONS

Israel. Ambassador Earl Cox, who has long championed Israel-Christian relations, recently reflected on the way CMM's partnership in Jerusalem has encouraged local Messianic believers: "When our brothers and sisters from Fort Mill stood with us during a difficult season, it was not politics — it was the love of John 3:16 walking in the door. Mayor Benny Kashriel of Ma'ale Adumim told me afterward, 'These people carry something different.' They carry the love of God, and people here recognize it."

July 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." — 1 John 3:1 (NKJV)

Lavished. The word refuses to be modest. It does not say God parceled out affection cautiously, or that He extended a measured portion of love proportional to our performance. He lavished it. He poured it out extravagantly, wastefully by human reckoning — the way a parent throws open their arms for a returning child without calculating whether the embrace was earned.

I was raised in a home where love was conditional on performance, as many of us were. It took years of walking with God before I stopped presenting Him with my résumé at the start of every prayer. Then one morning a verse like this one would break through the crust of old conditioning, and something in my chest would loosen. You are not an employee of heaven. You are a child of the King.

The Apostle John writes it twice in one breath — *that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.* The repetition feels almost giddy, as if John himself can barely believe it. And perhaps that is exactly the point: this love is so lavish, so disproportionate to anything we deserve, that it should produce in us a holy astonishment. Not a pride that inflates, but a wonder that softens — that makes us gentle with ourselves and, consequently, gentle with others.

Let the lavished love of God do its deep work in you today. You are not an orphan. You are not on probation. You are His.

Father, let the reality of being Your child settle deep in me today, and make me generous with others because You have been so generous with me.

July 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

The timing is everything. Not when we had gotten better. Not after we had made some sincere promises. *While we were still sinners.* God did not wait for favorable conditions before making His move. He did not hold love in reserve until we were worthy of it.

I want to sit with the word *demonstrates* for a moment. Paul did not write "God felt great love for us" — though that is also true. He wrote that God demonstrates it. Love in Scripture is never merely an interior state; it is an outward action that can be pointed to, witnessed, verified. The cross is the ultimate exhibit. You cannot argue with an empty tomb. You cannot explain away nail-scarred hands. The love of God is not theory — it is history, it is event, it is proof.

And this changes how I approach people who are, frankly, difficult to love. The coworker who undercuts you. The neighbor who has never returned a kindness. The family member who carries old wounds and distributes them freely. When I remind myself that God loved me while I was still in the middle of my own mess — before any evidence of transformation, before I deserved a single grace — it is harder to withhold love from the undeserving people around me. I was one of them. In some moments, I still am.

Demonstrating love is the calling. Not feeling it perfectly first, then acting. Acting in love is how love often becomes real.

Lord, help me demonstrate love today to at least one person I find it hard to love.

July 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—" — Ephesians 3:17-18 (NKJV)

Paul prays that we would have *power* to grasp the dimensions of Christ's love. That is a striking thing — he does not say insight, or understanding, or even revelation. He says power. As if the love of God is so vast that merely encountering it requires supernatural capacity. Our natural minds are simply too small a container.

I think about this on long flights to distant mission fields, when I stare out a window at the curvature of the earth and try to hold in mind that every person living in every city visible below is someone for whom Christ died. The love is that wide. That long — reaching back before creation and forward into eternity. That high — above every human court of judgment. That deep — deep enough to reach into the lowest pit of despair or shame and bring someone up.

The image Paul uses before this prayer is the image of roots. *Rooted and established in love*. A tree is only as strong as its root system. You may look at a great oak in late July, all thick canopy and shade, and think its strength is in what you see above the ground. But the unseen roots, drawing moisture from deep soil, are what allow it to survive drought. Your capacity to love others — especially when love is costly, when it is not reciprocated, when it is inconvenient — depends directly on how deeply your own roots go down into the love of God.

Be rooted today. Not in performance, not in approval, not in results. In love.

Father, send my roots down deeper into Your love today, so that what grows above the surface can give shade to others.

July 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." — John 13:34 (NKJV)

Jesus said this command was new — but Israel already knew "love your neighbor" from Leviticus. What made this new was the standard. Not "love your neighbor as you love yourself." Now the bar rose: *as I have loved you*. Jesus had spent three years washing feet, healing lepers, dining with sinners, weeping at a graveside, and He was about to go to a cross. That is the template. That is the new standard for the community of faith.

The honest response is that this is impossible — and I think Jesus knew that when He said it. He was not issuing a motivational challenge for sufficiently disciplined people. He was describing what the Holy Spirit would produce in us as we remained in Him. We cannot manufacture this quality of love through willpower. It has to be generated by something beyond us. And that is the grace — the very Spirit of the One who loved us unto death now lives inside us, making possible what no amount of self-effort could produce.

I remember being in the Philippines years ago, watching Molong Nacua stand with a community devastated by typhoon destruction. He had nothing extra to give — no surplus of resources — yet he gave himself completely to those families. When I asked him later how he kept going, he said simply, "I love them the way Jesus loved me." Not complicated. Just rooted.

The world will know we belong to Jesus not by our doctrine alone, but by this: the way we love each other.

Lord, let the love You showed me become the love I show today.

FROM THE NATIONS

Philippines. Molong Nacua of CMM Philippines recently shared that three new house churches have been planted along the Visayas coast, born out of sustained compassionate ministry to typhoon-affected families. "People did not come to Christ because we had a program," he said. "They came because someone stayed. That staying — that is love in action, and it opened every door."

July 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;" — 1 Corinthians 13:4 (NKJV)

If you have been to a wedding in the last thirty years, you have heard this passage. That familiarity can work against us. What Paul is writing here is not a romantic poem to be recited and admired — it is a diagnostic. Read it slowly and substitute your own name for the word "love." *Jorge is patient. Jorge is kind. Jorge does not envy.* That exercise will humble you quickly.

But notice how Paul structures this chapter. He opens by arguing that spiritual gifts, prophetic power, even martyrdom — without love — amount to nothing. The Greek word is *ouden*: zero, nothing, nada. That is a breathtaking statement in a letter written to a church proud of its spiritual gifts. Paul is not anti-gift; he is pro-love-as-the-context-for-everything-else. Love is not one fruit among many equal fruits — it is the soil in which all fruitfulness grows.

And patience is listed first. *Love is patient.* Not talent, not strategy — patience. How often have I rushed someone, grown frustrated when a person wasn't changing fast enough, hurried past a need because I had a meeting to catch? Patience is love with its eyes open and its hands available, not checking the clock.

Today, somewhere in your day, you will have a choice to be patient or to be efficient. Efficiency has its place, but it will not transform anyone. Patience might.

This summer, let the love chapter become less of a wedding reading and more of a daily mirror.

Father, where I am impatient and unkind today, interrupt me — let love slow me down enough to be useful.

July 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." — 1 John 4:7 (NKJV)

John was called the apostle of love for good reason. His first letter circles back to love again and again — not because he lacked other things to say, but because he understood that love is the atmosphere in which Christian life either thrives or withers. And here he draws a startling link: whoever loves has been born of God. The presence of genuine love is itself evidence of new birth. It is not merely something we do; it is something that testifies to what we are.

I have often asked myself: how do I know my faith is real? And the most searching answer I have found is not in my doctrinal accuracy or my ministry accomplishments — it is in whether I genuinely love people who are difficult to love. The tax collector and the Pharisee both had religion. Only one went home justified — the one who was honest about his need. But the mark of the justified life, according to John, is love. Not love as feeling, but love as pattern.

This is both convicting and liberating. Convicting because it raises the question of whether what passes for my spiritual life is actually spiritual at all, or just disciplined religious habit. Liberating because love is not something I have to invent from scratch — it flows from God Himself, and if I am abiding in Him, it will flow through me. My job is not to manufacture love but to remain in the source of it.

Stay close to God today. Love will follow.

Lord, may the love that flows from You find channels in my words and choices today.

July 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." — John 15:13 (NKJV)

Jesus said this the night before He did exactly that. He was not speaking in abstractions from a safe distance. He was sitting at table with twelve men, hours from Gethsemane, and He was describing — without drama, with full knowledge — what was about to happen to Him. The greatest love, He said, is the love that gives everything.

Most of us will never be asked to lay down our physical lives. But this verse speaks to a principle that touches us every day: love requires laying something down. Laying down our agenda. Laying down our comfort. Laying down the right to be right. Laying down sleep to be present for a child's nightmare. Laying down a Saturday to sit with a grieving friend who just needs someone nearby.

I think of the CMM missionaries and partners around the world who have given years — decades — to communities that have little to offer in return. They have laid down proximity to family, familiar food, their first language, medical convenience, sometimes safety. They do it because they have tasted a love so real that withholding it feels impossible.

There is a kind of freedom in laying things down. When you are no longer clinging to comfort, you have open hands — and open hands can both receive grace and give it. The cross is the ultimate picture of hands opened wide: holding nothing, giving everything.

What is one thing God may be inviting you to lay down today — not because you are required to, but because love prompts it?

Lord, show me what I am holding too tightly today, and give me the courage to open my hands.

July 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." — 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)

Paul ends his masterwork on love with a ranking that should make us stop. Faith is magnificent — it moves mountains, as he said earlier in the same chapter. Hope is glorious — it anchors the soul through the storms. But love is greatest. Why?

Some theologians suggest it is because love alone persists into eternity. Faith will be swallowed up by sight; we will no longer need to believe in what we cannot see when we stand face to face with God. Hope will be fulfilled; the promises will have arrived in full. But love — love is the eternal nature of God Himself, and it will continue forever. The whole age to come is structured around the love relationship between God and His people.

This changes how I think about the three phases of our devotional year we have already walked through. Faith was not just a phase we completed in April and May — it was the starting point for everything. Hope carried us through June and the first half of July. And now love is not simply another topic on a calendar. Love is the destination, the telos, the thing faith and hope were always pointing toward. We trusted God because He is trustworthy. We hoped because He is faithful. And underneath and beyond both: He is love.

I received a note this week from a CMM partner in a mountain village in Nepal who wrote: "We have nothing in our pockets but we have everything in our hearts." That is what love produces: fullness that no poverty can touch.

Father, fill me with what no earthly circumstance can give or take — let me overflow with Your love.

FROM THE NATIONS

Nepal. In the mountain village of Sindhupalchok, Pastor Rajan and his wife Sunita have been walking six hours each Sunday to reach three small house churches planted after the 2015 earthquake response. "We went first to rebuild homes," Rajan said. "People watched us work with no payment and no ulterior motive. After the third week, they asked us who sent us. We told them: God, who loves them." Seventeen families have come to faith in the past year through this patient,

costly love.

July 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." —
John 15:9 (NKJV)*

The verb Jesus uses here — *remain* — is the same one He uses throughout the vine-and-branches passage in John 15. Abide. Stay. Don't wander off. There is an intimacy in that word that the Christian life can easily lose in the busyness of doing good things. We can be quite active in ministry and quite distant from the love that ministry is supposed to express.

Notice the chain: *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.* The love flowing into you from Jesus is the same quality of love that flows between the Father and the Son in the eternal relationship of the Trinity. That is not a small thing. The love you have access to is not a lesser, diluted version — it is the real thing, the source, the original.

And His one instruction in light of that staggering gift? Remain. You don't have to generate this love. You don't have to prove yourself worthy of it. You don't have to perform to maintain it. You simply remain. Stay connected to the vine. Keep your roots in the soil.

I have found that the most loving people I know are not necessarily the most driven or the most talented. They are the most abiding. They carve time out of every day to sit quietly in the presence of the One who loves them, and that time produces a quality of patience and warmth that no strategy can replicate.

This is a Sunday. Wherever you worship today, let it be an act of remaining — pressing back into His love before the week begins.

Lord, keep me near You today — rooted in Your love, unhurried, present.

July 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." — Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

There is an image here that I return to again and again, especially on the days when I feel worn down by ministry, by the weight of needs that seem to multiply faster than resources. God rejoices over you with singing. Not over your performance. Over *you*. The original language carries the idea of a joyful spinning — a spontaneous outburst of delight. The Creator of the cosmos is singing over you right now.

I sometimes wonder if we have reduced God's love to something more like a contract than a romance. He will bless you if you obey; He will withdraw if you fail. And yes, Scripture speaks plainly about obedience and consequence. But Zephaniah writes from the other side of redemption's completion, describing a God who is not standing over us with arms crossed but one who is swept up in gladness over His people.

This should change the atmosphere of your morning prayer. You are not petitioning a reluctant sovereign. You are walking into the presence of One who has been looking for you, who lights up at your arrival, who quiets you with His love — which in the original suggests a deep, sheltering calm, the hush of total security.

Friend, you are not merely tolerated by heaven. You are cherished. Let that be your foundation before you open your email, before you face the difficulty that is waiting for you this Monday. You are loved by a God who sings.

Father, let me hear Your delight over me today — not my failures, but Your song.

July 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;" — Colossians 3:12 (NKJV)

Paul's use of clothing as metaphor is brilliant in its practicality. You get up every morning and you choose what to wear — it is one of the first decisions of the day. Paul is saying: the interior life works the same way. Compassion, kindness, humility — these are not personality traits some people are born with and others are not. They are things you put on. They require a daily, deliberate choice.

And notice the basis of the command: *as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved*. Identity precedes behavior in Paul's theology. He never says, "Behave this way and perhaps God will love you." He always says, "Because you are loved, because you are chosen, because you are holy in Christ — now live from that reality." The imperative flows from the indicative. What you do emerges from who you are.

I was in Dhaka, Bangladesh, some years ago, visiting a small ministry that served street children — kids sleeping on cardboard near the bus station, some as young as five. The local believers who ran that ministry were not wealthy. They were not professionally trained social workers. But they had put on compassion that morning and every morning before it, and it showed in the way they crouched down to be eye-level with a child, in the way they spoke — softly, patiently, as if nothing else in the world mattered at that moment.

Compassion is not a feeling that arrives uninvited. It is a garment you choose before you walk out the door.

Lord, help me dress myself in compassion today before I meet a single person who needs it.

FROM THE NATIONS

Bangladesh. In the Gazipur district near Dhaka, a CMM-trained pastor named Ratan Das has established a literacy and discipleship center for women who were left destitute after their husbands abandoned them. "These women came to us carrying shame," Ratan shared. "We put on kindness toward them every day until the day they understood that God had already put on love toward them. Seven

have been baptized this month. The center now has forty women learning to read God's Word for the first time."

July 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." — 1 John 3:18 (NKJV)

This verse has sat in my conscience for forty years of ministry. Especially in the communication age, it is remarkably easy to say loving things — to post encouraging words, to offer prayers of sympathy, to speak warmly about justice and compassion in church services — while the practical needs around us go unmet. John, writing with the directness he had earned through decades of walking with Jesus, cuts through the noise: *actions and in truth*.

Words are not nothing. Scripture itself is words, and they carry life-changing power. But John's point is about the gap between declared love and enacted love. Do the people in your life actually experience your love, or do they mostly hear about it?

I think about what this looks like close to home. My wife knows I love her not primarily because I have told her so — though I do — but because I show up, I listen, I adjust my schedule when she needs me. My colleagues know I value them not by my inspirational memos but by whether I defend them when the pressure is on and celebrate them before others.

In missions terms, we at CMM have tried to live this out. We do not simply tell the church in Uganda or Cambodia that we care — we go. We build. We train. We send. The relationship has substance because the love has feet. Money travels. People travel. Hours are given. And that is when love becomes credible to a watching world.

Let your love today have legs, not just language.

Father, turn my good intentions into specific, practical acts of love before this day is over.

July 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." — 1 John 4:8 (NKJV)

Not "God is loving" — though He is. Not "God shows love" — though He does. *God is love*. It is the most concentrated statement of divine identity in all of Scripture. His essence, His nature, His deepest character is love. When you encounter genuine love — costly, patient, sacrificial, other-focused love — you are encountering an attribute of God Himself.

This has profound implications for missions and evangelism. When we go to an unreached community, we are not bringing God to a place He has never been; He precedes us. But we are bringing a demonstration of His nature — love made visible — to people who may have experienced only love's counterfeit or love's absence. The gospel is not merely a set of propositions to be believed; it is a Person to be encountered, and that Person is love.

I often tell the leaders we train through CMM that the most powerful apologetic in any culture is not an argument but a community. When people see a group of believers genuinely loving each other — across tribal lines, across economic lines, forgiving, serving, celebrating together — they are seeing a display of the nature of God. It is irresistible. Sociologists can argue with your theology; they cannot explain away a transformed community.

The inverse of John's statement is equally sharp: *whoever does not love does not know God*. You can know about God without knowing God. The evidence of knowing Him is love flowing out.

Lord, may my life today be an argument for Your love that no critic can easily dismiss.

July 31, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." — Ephesians 5:2 (NKJV)

The phrase "walk in love" sounds like a poetic aspiration — something for a greeting card, not a Thursday morning in the middle of summer. But Paul uses the same word here — *walk, peripateo* — that he uses everywhere else when he means the everyday, on-the-ground conduct of life. Walking is not sprinting, not flying, not performing a grand gesture. It is the ordinary, habitual forward movement of a life. Walk in love. Let love be the texture of your everyday.

And the model he gives is not a heroic missionary story or a parable from Jesus. It is the cross. *Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.* The fragrant offering language draws on the Old Testament sacrificial system — something that rises to God and is pleasing to Him. When you give yourself for another person in love — when you sacrifice convenience, comfort, preference, even reputation in order to serve — that act becomes, in Paul's language, a fragrant offering. Heaven notices. It rises like incense.

We close out July with that image. Thirty-one days remain in our LOVE phase. As August opens, I want to invite you to identify one person in your life who needs a sustained act of love from you — not a grand gesture, but a consistent, walking-pace love that shows up day after day.

The great loves of Scripture were rarely dramatic. They were faithful. Ruth didn't make a speech; she stayed. David didn't simply mourn Jonathan; he sought out his crippled son Mephibosheth decades later. Walk.

Lord, make my love less impulsive and more faithful — a steady walk toward the people You have placed in my path.

August 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Let all that you do be done with love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14 (NKJV)

A new month, the same commission — and Paul fits it into five words. *Do everything in love*. It is deceptively compact. Everything means what it says: the phone call you don't want to make, the meeting you would rather skip, the errand that falls to you because no one else volunteered, the conversation with your teenager that will require more patience than you feel you have. Everything.

Paul closes his long, complex letter to the Corinthians — a letter full of corrections about lawsuits and sexual immorality and spiritual gifts and the resurrection — with this short, shining command. As if after all the theology, he wants to leave them with something they can carry in their pocket. Something that costs nothing to memorize and everything to obey.

I find that when I enter a situation with the question "how do I get through this?" I come out the other side merely having survived. But when I enter with the question "how do I love in this?" something different happens. I am more present. I am less reactive. I notice the person across from me instead of the inconvenience they represent.

August is one of the slowest months on the church calendar — school preparations, summer winding down, a certain restlessness before autumn begins. It can also be one of the most fruitful if we choose to let love govern the ordinary. No conferences. No big announcements. Just the quiet discipline of doing everything in love.

That is a revolution hiding in five words.

Father, let love govern every conversation, every decision, every moment of this new month.

FROM THE NATIONS

Thailand. In Chiang Rai, near the Myanmar border, a CMM-connected ministry led by Pastor Wichai runs a small residential home for children of hill-tribe families affected by trafficking. "We do everything in love here — cooking, homework, discipline, worship," Wichai shared. "The children come in broken. They leave knowing they are beloved. That is the only curriculum that matters."

Fourteen young people have completed secondary school and remained in faith over the past three years, several now returning to serve in the same home where they were loved back to wholeness.

August 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul." — Jeremiah 32:41 (NKJV)

Summer Sunday. The earth is full and green, the air thick with heat, and I want to ask you a different question today than you might hear in a typical morning sermon: when did you last *marvel*? Not analyze, not apply, not memorize — but genuinely stop and marvel at the love of God?

Jeremiah records God speaking with an almost startling enthusiasm: *I will rejoice* in doing you good — not reluctantly comply, not dutifully provide, but *rejoice*. With all His heart and soul. The image is of a God who takes active, animated delight in the welfare of His people. There is something childlike about wonder, and the enemy of wonder is familiarity. We read the same promises so many times they stop surprising us. We sit in church and sing about amazing grace without actually being amazed.

I was in a remote jungle church in Borneo some years ago where I watched a man who had heard the gospel for the first time two weeks earlier stand up during worship and begin weeping. He was not performing. He was overwhelmed. He had no church habits, no cultural conditioning about how Christians are supposed to look. He had simply met a love he had never encountered before, and his whole body was responding.

I have thought about that man many times when my faith grows thin and habitual. What he had in those first days — that freshness of encountering grace — is available to those of us who have been walking with God for decades. Not as a manufactured emotion, but as a returning to the wonder of what we actually have.

You are called a child of God. Today, let that be extraordinary again.

Father, restore to me the wonder of belonging to You — let it be news again, not just background.

August 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." — Matthew 5:44-45 (NKJV)

Of everything Jesus taught about love, this is the hardest sentence. Not because it is unclear — it is uncomfortably clear — but because our instincts run so powerfully in the opposite direction. When someone wounds us, we want distance, or justice, or at minimum the satisfaction of being acknowledged as the injured party. Jesus says: pray for them.

Notice the reason He gives: *that you may be children of your Father in heaven*. It is not that loving your enemy earns you a status you don't already have. It is that loving your enemy demonstrates the nature of the Father whose children you are. God makes His sun rise on evil and good alike, rains on the just and the unjust. His love is not rationed by merit. If you love only those who love you, Jesus says, what are you doing that is different from everyone else?

I have had seasons of carrying real wounds from ministry — betrayals, misunderstandings, people who left CMM in anger. I have not always handled those seasons graciously. But I have found that prayer for those people — honest, imperfect prayer, sometimes just "Lord, I'm choosing to pray for them even though I don't feel like it" — does something in me before it does anything in them. Bitterness requires maintenance. Love, even for an enemy, has a way of loosening the soil of the soul.

This is countercultural, radical, and distinctly Christ-like. It is also the most powerful witness available to us.

Lord, today I name before You anyone I am tempted to resent, and I choose to pray for their good.

August 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." — 1 Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV)

Noise. That is Paul's verdict on spiritual impressiveness without love: noise. The Corinthian church was gifted — spectacularly gifted — and it was also one of the most divided, prideful, and dysfunctional congregations in the New Testament. The gifts were real. The love was thin. And Paul tells them that without love, the gifts are just sound without substance, impressive in the moment, but accomplishing nothing eternal.

This is a word for the church in every generation, and perhaps especially in an era of platforms and audiences. There is a kind of ministry that is technically excellent, rhetorically powerful, strategically sophisticated — and that produces almost nothing that lasts because it is not rooted in love for the people being served. People can sense the difference, even when they cannot name it. There is a warmth that genuine love produces, a patience, a willingness to stay past the end of the program that no technique can replicate.

In Vietnam, our CMM partners work in some of the most restricted areas for Christian ministry in Southeast Asia. They cannot use impressive platforms or gather large crowds. They work slowly, quietly, in relationships — sharing meals, visiting the sick, praying for neighbors, building trust across years. When I hear reports from there, what strikes me is not the technique but the love. Ordinary love, poured out consistently, is producing extraordinary fruit.

Be a person of love today — not noise. The world has enough noise.

Lord, strip away everything in my ministry and my life that is sound without love — let what remains be real.

FROM THE NATIONS

Vietnam. In a province near the central highlands, a house church leader named Sister Linh has been discipling women from Buddhist backgrounds for six years. She cannot advertise or hold public meetings. Instead, she visits homes, shares meals, and listens — sometimes for hours. "I am not impressive," she says, "but I am present, and I love them." Her community of forty women worships quietly and

is growing. Three women have brought their husbands to faith through the testimony of sustained, patient love.

August 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" — 1 John 3:17 (NKJV)

John is direct to the point of discomfort here. The question is not rhetorical; it is diagnostic. He is testing whether the love of God is actually resident in a person by examining what happens when that person encounters need. Does the heart open or close?

We live in an age of unprecedented wealth — at least in the Western world — and unprecedented awareness of need. We can watch footage of a famine in East Africa while eating dinner. We can read statistics about children dying from preventable diseases while waiting for our coffee order. The awareness is constant. What varies is the response of the heart. Does exposure to need produce compassion or compassion fatigue? Does it prompt action or numbing?

I want to say something carefully here: compassion fatigue is real, and I am not trying to pile guilt on people who are already overwhelmed. But John's test is still the right one. In the normal course of your life, when you encounter a need you have the capacity to meet — a neighbor going through crisis, a family at church needing meals, a CMM partner field that needs resources — what happens in your chest? Do you feel the pull toward generosity, or does the calculating part of your brain close the door?

The love of God is not an abstraction we believe; it is a force that moves us toward the need. When it is present, it will not let us stay comfortable while a brother suffers.

Lord, keep my heart soft today — open, not closed, when I encounter the needs around me.

August 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." — 1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV)

Above all. Peter ranks love at the top of the practical instructions he is giving to a church under pressure. And the phrase *covers over a multitude of sins* is not a command to ignore or minimize wrongdoing — it carries the image of love stretching wide enough to absorb the offenses and failures of others rather than broadcasting them, exploiting them, or using them as leverage.

Community life — whether in a marriage, a church, a missions organization — generates friction. People disappoint. Leaders fail. Friends say careless things. The question is what happens to those offenses. In a community governed by deep love, there is a patience that bears with weakness, an instinct to protect rather than expose, a preference for restoration over condemnation. Proverbs says the same thing: "Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs" (10:12).

I have watched CMM teams navigate real conflict over the years — theological disagreements, cultural misunderstandings, financial tensions — and what has kept the global family together is not perfect agreement but deep love for one another. A love that says: I will not weaponize your failure. I will not use my hurt as a reason to destroy what God has built. I will stretch my love to cover what I could otherwise use to condemn.

This does not mean conflict is never addressed — it must be. But the spirit in which it is addressed determines whether the community survives or fractures. Deep love is the difference.

Father, give me a love wide enough and deep enough to cover the sins of those who have wounded me.

August 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."
— 1 John 4:18 (NKJV)*

Fear and love are in an inverse relationship. Where love is perfected — matured, completed — fear loses its grip. John is writing, in context, about the fear of the day of judgment: when you genuinely know you are loved by God and standing in His grace, the terror of condemnation loses its power. But this principle plays out on every level of life.

Fear in relationships produces control, manipulation, distance, performance. When I am afraid of being rejected, I manage my presentation instead of offering my real self. When I am afraid of failure, I avoid risks that love would take. When leaders are afraid of losing authority, they stop serving the people they lead and start protecting their position. Fear is a shrinking force; it makes us smaller than we were meant to be.

Love expands. Love takes the risk of vulnerability. Love gives without guarantee of return. Love speaks the truth when silence would be safer. Love goes to the difficult conversation rather than letting resentment calcify into bitterness.

I have met believers in the hardest places in the world — places where identifying as a Christian carries real risk — who carry a fearlessness that has nothing to do with recklessness. It comes from being so settled in the love of God that the worst their persecutors can do is simply usher them home faster. That is not bravado. That is the fruit of perfect love.

What fear is love being invited to drive out of your life today?

Lord, let Your perfect love push out every fear that is making me smaller than You made me to be.

August 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." — 1 John 4:9 (NKJV)

God's love has a track record. It is not a promise made in vague terms and left unverified. It has a specific date in history, a specific location in the ancient near east, a specific Person born of a specific woman in a specific stable — and that love ended on a specific cross and began again on a specific Sunday morning. The love of God is not mystical vapor; it is historical event.

I think about this particularly when I am in parts of the world where the gospel is still arriving for the first time. There is a moment when someone hears — genuinely hears — that God sent His Son *for them*, that the death was personal, that the love was not general but particular — aimed at them by name — and something in their face changes. I have watched it happen in Cambodia, in Indonesia, in Central America. The moment love becomes real is the moment the story becomes *their* story.

This is the heart of what CMM's partners in Indonesia are doing — carrying this specific, historical, personal love into communities that have heard very little of it. Not a religious system. Not a cultural imposition. The announcement of love.

Today, let the historical specificity of God's love sink in again for you. He did not just feel generally benevolent toward humanity. He sent His Son. For you. By name.

Lord, let the love that moved You to send Your Son move me today to tell someone what You have done.

FROM THE NATIONS

Indonesia. On the island of Sulawesi, in a predominantly Muslim fishing village, Pastor Yohanes and a team of CMM-trained evangelists have been serving for four years. They came after the 2018 tsunami, helping rebuild nets, boats, and homes. "We showed up when others left," Yohanes said. "We did not preach loudly at first — we just worked alongside people and loved them. Two years later, the village headman asked us why we stayed. We told him about the One who sent us." A house church of twenty-three believers now meets in the headman's own home.

August 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away." — 1 Corinthians 13:8 (NKJV)

Three words. I have preached entire sermons from three words and felt I had barely scratched the surface. *Love never fails*. Paul places this statement as a pivot point in 1 Corinthians 13: prophecies will cease, tongues will be stilled, knowledge will pass away — but love will not fail. It has no expiration date. It cannot be defeated. It outlasts every opposition.

I want to speak practically to anyone reading this who feels like their love has failed — whose marriage is strained, whose friendship ended in hurt, whose ministry labor seemed to produce nothing. The love of God never fails, but our imperfect human expressions of love sometimes do fall short. That is not the same thing as love being a lie. It means we are not yet the perfect conduits we will one day be.

The encouragement is this: even broken, imperfect, stumbling love — when it is sourced in God — tends to outlast and outperform everything that opposes it. I have seen marriages that looked finished become testimonies. I have seen relationships that were severed by years of silence be restored in a single phone call. I have watched churches that nearly dissolved become the most vibrant community in their city because a handful of people refused to stop loving each other through the hard season.

Love never fails. Sometimes it takes longer than we planned. Sometimes it works through what looks like failure. But it is never finally defeated.

Trust the love. Keep giving it.

Father, where I am tempted to give up on loving someone today, remind me that Your love in me does not have a failure option.

August 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." — Romans 13:8 (NKJV)

Paul is making a deliberately provocative statement. The entirety of the law — all the do's and don'ts, all the commands, all the regulations of Torah — is *summed up* in love. Not eliminated. Summed up. When you genuinely love your neighbor, you will not murder them, steal from them, covet their spouse, or bear false witness against them. Love is not a license for lawlessness — it is the interior motivation that makes the law unnecessary as an external constraint.

The phrase "owe no one anything" is itself striking. Paul writes to Roman Christians living in the most transactional city in the ancient world — a city of patronage systems, social debts, and carefully calculated obligations. Clear your debts, he says. Except one: the debt of love. That one cannot be fully paid, because the love of God is inexhaustible and therefore the obligation to love flows inexhaustibly.

I owe love to my family. I owe love to my colleagues at CMM. I owe love to the partners in seventy nations who have given their lives to this work. I owe love to neighbors whose names I am still learning, to strangers, to people very different from me. Not because I negotiated it into a contract but because I have been loved, and love repays itself in kind.

This is not a burden, friend. It is freedom. To owe nothing but love is to live free of every other obligation to perform or impress.

Lord, clear every debt from my conscience and leave only this one: to love well today.

August 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." — 1 John 4:21 (NKJV)

John keeps returning to this connection because it is, apparently, possible to think you love God while not loving people. Possible — and deeply problematic. In fact, in the verse just before this one, John says anyone who claims to love an invisible God while hating a visible brother is a liar. That is unusually direct language for the apostle of love. But directness here is itself an act of love — a refusal to let us maintain a comfortable spiritual self-image that is disconnected from our relational reality.

Loving "our brother and sister" includes the people we naturally like — but also those we find grating, those from different backgrounds, those whose theology sits slightly differently from ours, those in the global family of faith who worship in languages and styles foreign to our own. The Christian family is wonderfully, uncomfortably diverse.

I have had to deal with my own preferences in this area. I am more comfortable in some cultural contexts than others. Some ministry relationships are energizing and some are genuinely draining. But I have found that the love command extends right through my preferences. The CMM family is not sorted by who is easiest to be with — it is gathered by the love of God, and it requires of me the willingness to be present, warm, and committed across every cultural and relational line.

Loving God and loving people are not parallel tracks. They are the same track.

Lord, let my love for You today show up in patience and warmth toward every person I encounter.

August 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." — Galatians 6:2 (NKJV)

The law of Christ. Paul uses this phrase only here and in 1 Corinthians 9. And the content of it, in Galatians, is simply this: carry each other's burdens. The love command that Jesus gave in John 13:34 — love one another as I have loved you — is called here the law of Christ. And its fulfillment is practical, physical, present: you stoop down under someone else's weight and help them carry it.

This image requires proximity. You cannot carry the burden of someone you are not near enough to notice. You cannot help someone under a weight you have not taken the time to understand. Burden-bearing requires the willingness to ask, to listen, to stay long enough to hear what someone is actually carrying — not the surface presentation, but the real thing underneath.

I have been moved over the years by the mutual burden-bearing within the CMM global family. A Chinese house church network suffering pressure shares news and our community prays. A pastor in Malawi loses his harvest to drought and a partner in South Carolina sends resources. This is the global body of Christ functioning as a body — each part caring for the others, no part isolated in its suffering.

In your immediate circle today, who is carrying something heavy? And is love asking you to move close enough to help bear it?

The law of Christ — it is not complicated. It is costly. But it is the truest expression of what this community is called to be.

Lord, open my eyes today to someone whose burden I can help carry — and give me the willingness to stoop.

FROM THE NATIONS

China. In a province where open church gatherings are restricted, a network of house churches connected to CMM prayer partners holds weekly meetings in rotating homes. A leader known only as Brother Mingzhi shared in a letter received recently: "The love of our family overseas sustains us. When we are under pressure, we pray — and somehow we know we are not praying alone. Your prayers are carrying us. We are carrying your prayers back to heaven." The

network reports forty new believers baptized this year in a single county alone.

August 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;" — Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

Two verbs: *devoted* and *honor*. The first carries the warmth of family affection — the Greek *philostorgos* combines brotherly love with the tenderness of kin, the kind of deep attachment you feel for family. The second is a competitive word turned upside down: instead of competing to receive honor, compete to *give* it. Who can honor the other more? Who can most generously recognize the dignity and worth of the person beside them?

In a culture that trains us to think primarily about our own brand, our own platform, our own recognition, this verse is quietly revolutionary. The community Paul envisions is one where people are actually trying to outdo each other in honor — not in achievement, not in status, but in lifting others up.

I have seen this spirit operate in the best seasons of CMM's organizational life. When a field partner receives recognition, the whole team celebrates without jealousy. When a colleague achieves something hard, others genuinely rejoice — not with forced politeness, but with the kind of joy you feel when family wins. That culture does not happen automatically. It is built, day by day, choice by choice, by people who have decided to make honor a habit.

Who in your life deserves more honor than you have given them recently? A spouse who has been steady and faithful through a hard year. A colleague whose quiet work makes yours possible. A pastor who has served without fanfare. A parent who gave years you never fully acknowledged.

Give honor today. Let it be generous and specific and real.

Father, make me someone who honors others well — who notices and names the worth in the people around me.

August 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."
— Colossians 3:14 (NKJV)*

Paul ends his list of virtues in Colossians 3 — compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness — with love as the garment that holds them all together. The image is a belt, or perhaps a sash: the final piece of clothing that keeps everything else in place. Without love, the virtues fall apart. With it, they cohere into a unified character.

This is why you can be outwardly patient but inwardly seething, and it does not produce the fruit patience is supposed to produce. The form is there; the love is absent. Or you can be generous in your giving while maintaining a sense of superiority over those you give to, and the generosity sours. But when love is the motivating energy beneath every virtue, everything works together — and what results is the kind of person other people want to be around, whose presence brings peace rather than anxiety.

Perfect unity — the phrase Paul uses — is not uniformity. CMM's family of partners is beautifully non-uniform: different cultures, liturgies, theological traditions, ministerial styles. What binds us is not sameness but love. A love sourced in Christ that flows across every difference and makes the diversity itself a testimony to the creative power of God.

My prayer today is for unity in the body of Christ — real unity, not the managed tolerance that passes for it. The kind of unity that happens when love binds people together who would never have chosen each other otherwise.

Lord, let love be the belt that holds together everything good You are building in me today.

August 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." — Jude 1:21 (NKJV)

Jude writes to a church under pressure — surrounded by false teaching, pulled in multiple directions, uncertain about who to trust. And his pastoral instruction is, at its core: stay in love. *Keep yourselves in God's love.* Don't let the pressure push you out of the place of warmth and security that is your home.

The word *keep* suggests effort — not the effort of earning, but the effort of remaining. It is like keeping yourself warm on a cold night: you don't generate the heat, but you can stay near the fire, keep adding wood, avoid stepping out into the cold. Spiritual disciplines — prayer, Scripture, worship, community — are the ways we keep ourselves near the warmth of God's love. They do not produce the love; they position us to receive it.

On this day I want us to pray specifically for our brothers and sisters in places where staying in God's love requires extraordinary courage. We think of the underground church in North Korea — believers who gather in secret, who have no Bible apps, no worship music playlists, no Sunday morning freedom. They keep themselves in God's love with almost nothing external to support them: only the Spirit, only the Word remembered from a page seen years ago, only each other.

Their faithfulness rebukes my comfort. And their perseverance is a testimony that God's love is sufficient even when every external support is stripped away.

Lord, today I pray for my hidden brothers and sisters in the most dangerous places — keep them in Your love when the world offers them only darkness.

FROM THE NATIONS

North Korea. A report received through back channels from a CMM prayer partner describes a network of approximately thirty house church gatherings in North Korea's North Hamgyong province. Believers meet in groups of three to five, rotating locations weekly. One woman, referred to only as Sister H, has memorized the Psalms and portions of the New Testament to share with others who have never held a Bible. "She is our living Scripture," one contact described. "She sings hymns softly in the dark and says, 'God's love came for us too.'"

August 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:38-39 (NKJV)

Paul ends his magnificent eighth chapter of Romans — the chapter that begins with "no condemnation" and runs through suffering and the Spirit and adoption and the groaning of creation — with this: nothing separates us from the love of God. Nothing. Not death, not the demonic, not time, not space, not any created thing.

I want to sit with "nor anything else in all creation." Paul has been thorough — he has listed as many categories as he can think of — and then throws open the list: *anything else in all creation*. If you can think of something he missed, that too cannot separate you. Your worst failure. Your deepest shame. The diagnosis you just received. The relationship that ended badly. The years you wasted. None of it.

This is the bedrock on which the entire LOVE phase rests. Every time we speak of loving others, loving enemies, bearing burdens, walking in love — all of it flows from this: we are held by a love that cannot be broken or interrupted or diminished. We love because we are loved, and that love is not fragile.

As a new week begins, let this conviction be the ground under your feet. You are not trying to earn a love that might be taken away. You are living from a love that cannot be.

Lord, let the unbreakable nature of Your love be the foundation I stand on today — unshaken, certain, held.

August 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good." — Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

The first three words are the most searching: *let love be genuine*. The Greek word Paul uses is *anypokritos* — literally, without hypocrisy, without a mask. Unperformed love. Love that is the same when no one is watching as when everyone is. This is harder than it sounds, because we are social creatures who naturally modulate our behavior toward an audience. We can perform warmth without carrying it.

Paul pairs genuine love with two commands that clarify it: abhor evil, hold fast to good. Real love is not infinitely permissive — it has moral content. A parent who truly loves a child will say hard things and hold firm lines because the love is real, not managed. A friend who genuinely loves you will tell you the truth when you have it backwards, not because they enjoy the discomfort but because their love is too authentic to let you walk into harm with a smile and a silence.

I think about CMM's relationships with leaders we have trained over the years. The deepest ones are not the smoothest — they are the ones where real honesty has been exchanged, where we have spoken truth into each other's lives, where the love was genuine enough to bear weight. Managed relationships collapse under pressure; genuine ones hold.

Take an inventory today: is your love of the genuine variety? Not as a guilt exercise but as an honest diagnostic. Where are you performing warmth that has grown hollow? And what would it look like to let the real thing come back to the surface?

Lord, strip away every mask from my love today — let it be real, unperformed, and worth something to the people who receive it.

August 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment." — Mark 12:30 (NKJV)

Jesus called this the first and greatest commandment. Everything flows from here. Before neighbor-love, before enemy-love, before the love that sends missionaries and plants churches — there is this: the whole-person love of God Himself.

All your heart — the emotional, volitional center of your being, the part that chooses and feels. *All your soul* — the deep life-breath of you, the essence. *All your mind* — intelligence and reason do not opt out of love; they are invited in. *All your strength* — the physical, embodied, practical dimensions of your life. Nothing is exempt. Love covers the whole person.

I have watched people in the faith put enormous energy into loving their neighbor while their love for God has grown routine — dry, habitual, transactional. And I have seen the reverse: people with rich devotional lives who are functionally unavailable to the needs around them. Jesus holds them together. The love of God is the source of the love of neighbor, but the love of neighbor is also how we express the love of God. You cannot fully separate them.

What does loving God with all your mind look like today? Maybe it means bringing your best thinking to your prayer instead of your leftovers. Loving God with all your strength? Maybe it means that the physical energy you invest in your work is offered consciously as worship.

The vertical and horizontal commands are one love flowing in two directions.

Lord, today I offer You my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength — all of it, not the remainder after everything else has taken its share.

August 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." — Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

Paul uses the most personal language available to him at the end of this verse: *who loved me and gave himself for me*. Not for humanity in the abstract. Not for the church in general. For me. There is a privacy in that pronoun, an intimacy in the singular that the plural obscures. Yes, God so loved the world — but right now, in this verse, Paul is not talking about the world. He is talking about himself. The Son of God loved *me*.

I want you to read this verse this morning with your own name in the final phrase. Not as a self-centered exercise, but as a way of fully receiving what is fully true. The Son of God loved you personally. Thought of you specifically. Went to the cross with your name in His heart.

The context is important: Paul is describing the death of his old self. The crucified life he speaks of is one where self-ambition, self-protection, and self-sufficiency have been put on the cross, and what remains is a life lived by faith — not by striving, not by performance, but by trust in the One who loved you and gave Himself.

This is freedom. Not the freedom to do as you please, but the freedom from the exhausting obligation to justify your own existence. You are already loved. Already given-for. You live from that, not toward it.

Let that settle in your bones today.

Father, remind me again this morning that the Son of God loved me — and that nothing I do today will change that one way or the other.

FROM THE NATIONS

Iran. Brother Farzad, a CMM prayer partner who was forced to leave Iran and now operates a ministry to Iranians in diaspora and through digital channels back home, recently shared: "The Iranians coming to Christ in our generation are not coming because of a great evangelist — they are coming because they have seen that Jesus loved them. Many of them dreamed of Him first. Then they found us. We

just confirmed what the Holy Spirit had already whispered: the Son of God gave Himself for them." Farzad's ministry has seen over two hundred decisions for Christ in the past eighteen months through online discipleship.

August 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." — John 15:12 (NKJV)

This is the second time in John's Gospel Jesus issues this command — He gave it in John 13:34 on the night of the Last Supper, and He gives it again here in the upper room discourse. Repetition in Scripture is rarely accidental. Jesus is not being redundant; He is being emphatic. This matters. He wants it to land.

As I have loved you. Everything turns on that phrase. It is a relentless raising of the bar. Left to ourselves, we tend to love people proportionally to what we receive from them. We warm up to those who warm up to us. We invest in relationships that yield returns. But Jesus loved disciples who would betray Him, deny Him, fall asleep when He needed them most, scatter when the pressure came. He loved them in full knowledge of those failures — and He loved them anyway, to the end.

The love He is modeling is not conditional and it is not passive. It is an active, sustained, you-first love that keeps showing up. When I apply that standard to my closest relationships — my family, my team, my long-term ministry partners — I find both inspiration and conviction. The inspiration is that this quality of love is possible, because He produced it. The conviction is that I have more growing to do.

The summer days are shortening now. August is moving toward its close. But the love command is not seasonal. It does not conclude when the calendar phase ends. It is the permanent architecture of the life in Christ.

Lord, let the love You have shown me become, more and more, the love I show others — unconditional, sustained, and real.

August 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us." — 1 John 4:12 (NKJV)

This verse takes your breath away a little when you read it carefully. No one has seen God. God is invisible, transcendent, beyond direct visual apprehension. And yet — *if we love one another, God lives in us*. The community of love becomes, in a real sense, the visibility of the invisible God. When people look at believers genuinely loving each other, they are seeing the nearest thing to the face of God that earth can offer.

This is a colossal calling for the church. We are not merely an organization that helps people with moral improvement. We are the visible expression of the love of an invisible God. Every time a church community loves each other well — especially across lines that would naturally divide — they are answering the world's question about whether God exists with the most powerful argument available: *we are here, and this love is not natural*.

I have been in churches in Africa and Asia where this reality was palpable. Walk in the door and the love was in the air — not manufactured, not performance, but real. People were genuinely glad to see each other. Burdens were shared openly. No one was left isolated. And visitors would say, without being told, "Something is different here." Yes. God lives here. His love is being made complete in these people.

That is the invitation for your community. Your family. Your congregation. Your workplace. Be a place where the invisible God becomes visible through love.

Lord, let the community around me become a place where people see You — made visible through the love we carry.

August 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" — Romans 8:35 (NKJV)

Paul's list of threats here is not hypothetical — it is autobiographical. He has experienced most of what he names. Trouble: constant. Hardship: chronic. Persecution: documented across Acts and his letters. Famine and nakedness: he writes from prison. Danger and sword: he will eventually die by the latter. And his answer to the question he poses is not "these things don't really happen" — they do, and he knows it. His answer is that none of them separates us from the love of Christ.

There is a distinction worth noting: these things can separate us from *comfort*, from *safety*, from *ease*, from *health*. But not from love. The love of Christ does not depend on external conditions. It was fully present on the cross — the most extreme hardship and public shame imaginable — and it did not diminish. It was fully present in every Roman prison Paul occupied. It is fully present in every difficult place our CMM partners serve today.

This is the love we are inviting people into when we share the gospel: not a promise of ease, but a promise of presence. Not the removal of suffering, but the company of One who cannot be separated from you even in its middle.

In Iraq today, believers hold this verse like a rope in the dark.

Lord, today I hold onto the truth that nothing happening to me or around me can remove me from Your love — not one thing.

FROM THE NATIONS

Iraq. In the Nineveh Plains region, a small fellowship of Assyrian Christian families who survived the ISIS occupation continues to meet in a partially rebuilt church. Their pastor, Father Lukas, shared: "They burned our sanctuary. They could not burn our faith. We returned because the love of Christ held us. We are rebuilding stone by stone, and every stone we lay is an act of faith that love cannot be separated from us." A CMM partner helped fund the rebuilding of the church roof in 2025. The congregation has now grown beyond its pre-occupation size.

August 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!" — Psalm 133:1 (NKJV)*

A Sunday again. Simpler and less expanded than it was earlier in the month — and that simplicity is the point. Paul did not complicate his closing commands. He did not hedge or qualify. He simply said: everything you do, let love be the medium it moves through.

I want to bring this home to a Sunday morning specifically. You will gather with your congregation today, or perhaps worship in your living room, or drive a long distance to a small country church. Whatever the setting — let love govern it. Not the performance of love, but the real thing. The way you greet the new person. The way you sing. The way you listen to the sermon. The way you linger afterward for the person who came alone. The way you receive communion.

Sunday can become religious routine so easily — a pattern we fulfill without presence. Love refuses routine. Love is present. Love notices. Love makes the liturgy alive because love is the meaning underneath every liturgy.

After church today, or in the quiet of the evening, ask God: *Did love move through me today, or did I simply go through motions?* Not as condemnation, but as calibration. That honest question, answered honestly, leads somewhere good.

I love the CMM family around the world — the many different ways Sunday is held, the languages, the instruments, the styles, the contexts. What unifies all of it is love. That is the language every gathering speaks when it speaks truly.

Father, let everything I bring to worship today — and everything I carry home from it — be done in love.

August 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins." — Proverbs 10:12
(NKJV)*

The contrast is vivid and old — Solomon wrote it thousands of years ago and it has never stopped being true. Hatred is a stirrer; it agitates, surfaces, fans the fire. Love is a coverer; it does not expose for the sake of exposing, does not exploit vulnerability, does not use someone's worst moments as ammunition.

I want to be clear about what *covers* does not mean. It does not mean pretending wrongs didn't happen. It does not mean absorbing abuse silently. Biblical love that covers wrong is not naive or co-dependent — it is the choice, after truth has been named and repentance received, to no longer weaponize the offense. It is the decision not to revisit what has been forgiven. It is the refusal to let yesterday's failure define tomorrow's relationship.

This is one of the disciplines of long-term marriage, and of long-term ministry partnership. In any relationship of depth and duration, there will be failures on both sides. What determines whether the relationship endures and deepens is largely this: when we fail each other, do we cover it in love or do we store it as capital for a future argument?

I have tried, imperfectly and by God's grace, to build CMM as an organization where love covers — where leaders can fail without being permanently defined by the failure, where repentance is received without strings, where the culture of covering is stronger than the culture of criticism.

It requires daily choosing. But so does everything worth having.

Lord, give me the grace today to cover in love rather than expose in pride — to build up rather than tear down.

August 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." — Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV)

The word translated *everlasting* here is *olam* — it stretches in both directions, backward before time and forward beyond it. This is not a love that started when you became worthy of it or when you first sought God. It preceded your birth. It predates the creation of the world. Before you drew your first breath, you were loved.

And the second phrase is equally beautiful: *drawn you with unfailing kindness*. The word for *kindness* here is *hesed* — that rich, covenant word that combines loyalty, love, mercy, and steadfast commitment. This is not a love of moods and conditions. This is a love that made a commitment and has honored it without wavering across your entire life — including the parts of your life you would prefer to forget.

I think God wants some of us to hear this today. Not a challenge, not a correction — just this: I have loved you with an everlasting love. Whatever you are carrying right now, whatever disappointment or weariness has accumulated through this long summer — the love that held you at the beginning of the year still holds you now, unchanged. It will hold you into autumn. It will hold you at the end.

Hesed does not quit. It does not grow tired of you. It does not eventually give up when you fail again. It draws you — gently, persistently — the way a good parent draws a wandering child back toward home.

You are drawn by unfailing love. Come back toward it today.

Father, thank You for loving me before I knew You — and for not stopping since.

August 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die." — Proverbs 31:8 (NKJV)

Love has a voice. Genuine love for the vulnerable is not only felt in the heart or expressed in private prayer — it speaks. It advocates. It moves toward the marginalized and says: *you matter, and I will use whatever voice I have to make that clear.*

This Proverb sits in the instruction of a mother to a king — not to a prophet or a priest, but to a ruler. The application spans every kind of power. If you have influence — a platform, a vote, a voice in your community, a relationship with someone who makes decisions — you have the responsibility to use it for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

In Afghanistan today, our CMM partners work through encrypted networks and trusted intermediaries to support women who have been stripped of education, employment, and public voice under an oppressive regime. These women cannot speak for themselves in that context. Others must. The love that does not speak when it could is an incomplete love.

I have been asked over the years why CMM engages in advocacy, in addition to church planting and leadership development. The answer is simple: love is not sectorized into spiritual and social categories. Love sees the whole person. It wants the dignity of that person recognized in every sphere. When a child is being trafficked, love preaches the gospel and calls the authorities. When a woman is being denied education, love funds a school and advocates for her rights.

Love speaks for those who have no voice.

Lord, give me a voice today for someone who cannot speak for themselves — and the courage to use it.

FROM THE NATIONS

Afghanistan. A CMM partner working in a neighboring country facilitates an underground network supporting Afghan Christian women. A woman named Mariam, who came to faith through a secret Bible study before the Taliban returned to power, sends messages occasionally through a trusted courier: "We

gather in small groups — three, four, five women. We read Scripture together and pray. The love of Jesus is the only freedom we have right now. Tell your people: we are not forgotten because we are loved." The network supports eleven such groups across three Afghan provinces.

August 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." — Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)

Forgiveness is one of the most demanding expressions of love. It is not a feeling; it is a choice — a continually renewed choice, because the memory of wounds resurfaces and forgiveness must be chosen again. Paul grounds the command in its source: *just as in Christ God forgave you*. You have been forgiven an incalculable debt. In light of that, the debt of others against you, real as it is, is manageable.

There is a math to this that Jesus illustrated in the parable of the unmerciful servant: a man forgiven a debt of ten thousand bags of gold choked a fellow servant over a debt of a hundred silver coins. The disproportion is the point. We have been forgiven everything. How can we withhold forgiveness from those who owe us far less?

Unforgiveness is a kind of self-imprisonment. I have met believers who have carried a wound for decades — a betrayal, a public shame, a family rupture — and the carrying of it has cost them more than the original wound. The freedom that forgiveness offers is not primarily for the offender; it is for you.

In missions contexts, forgiveness is often culturally visible. I have watched pastors in post-genocide Rwanda forgive members of the families who killed their loved ones — not because the pain was small, but because the love of God had grown larger than the wound. That kind of forgiveness does not come from personal resolve alone. It comes from being so deeply forgiven that forgiveness becomes possible to pass on.

Father, where I am withholding forgiveness today, give me the grace to extend what You have so freely given me.

August 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you," — 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NKJV)

Paul prays for increase. He does not assume that the Thessalonians — or any of us — have arrived at the love level we need. He prays for growth: abound in love for one another, and for all. Not just for the inner circle of the church, but for everyone. The *all* is inclusive and uncomfortable.

Love that is only for "one another" — for the in-group, for the like-minded, for the people who make it easy — is not yet fully formed. It is love in development. Paul's prayer pushes it outward: *for all*. That includes people outside your congregation. People who do not share your politics or your theology. People who have not yet come to faith. People who are hostile to faith. People in your city who are invisible to your natural social network. People on the other side of the earth whom you will never meet but whose lives your prayers and giving can touch.

CMM was built on this outward love. From its earliest days, the vision was not to build a great ministry for a narrow constituency but to love *all* — every nation, every tribe, every tongue — with the love of Christ. That vision is still as alive as the day it was laid, and it still requires that prayer: *Lord, make me increase and abound in love.*

As this week closes, allow that prayer to become your own. Not "Lord, help me love better" in a vague sense, but: *increase and abound*. Overflow. More than I am currently giving.

Lord, let my love be growing — not stagnant, not contracted, but increasing toward all, as Your love is toward me.

August 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)," — Ephesians 2:4-5 (NKJV)

Dead in our trespasses. Paul does not soften the condition we were in before grace reached us. Not weakened, not struggling, not impaired — dead. And into that deadness came love. Great love. Rich mercy. And out of it came life.

The phrase "even when we were dead" is the hinge of the gospel. God did not wait for signs of life before He acted. He did not look for a favorable condition to invest in. He loved into lifelessness and produced vitality. That is the nature of the love we are spending this entire phase celebrating and receiving.

I sometimes hear the fear expressed that certain people are beyond the reach of the gospel — too hardened, too deep in sin, too far into another worldview, too intellectually resistant. And I understand why people feel that way when they look at what seems like an impenetrable wall. But the gospel has no "too far" category. The dead were brought to life. If God can love into death and produce life, He can love into any situation we face.

This is the fuel for our Turkey ministry partners who work patiently in one of the world's hardest fields for the gospel. Their steadiness is not strategy — it is theology. They believe in a God whose love reaches into deadness.

Keep praying for those who seem too far gone. They aren't.

Lord, remind me today that You love into impossible situations — and that no person I am praying for is beyond the reach of Your great love.

FROM THE NATIONS

Turkey. In Istanbul, a small fellowship led by CMM partners Hakan and Selin has been discipling former Muslims for six years. Progress has been slow by any measure — perhaps forty committed believers through years of relationship and prayer. "People ask us why we stay in the hardest field," Hakan said. "We stay because we believe God's great love reaches here too. And every baptism we celebrate is a person who was, in a real sense, dead — and is now alive. How do you walk away from that?"

August 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." — Psalm 107:1 (NKJV)

This is a Sunday, and it is the penultimate day of our LOVE phase. I want to take stock. Over these forty-six days we have traced love from its source — God Himself, who is love — through its expression in the cross, through its commands toward neighbor and enemy, through its practical texture in community and forgiveness and burden-bearing, through its reach to every nation.

What has moved in you? I ask that sincerely. Not as a rhetorical device but as a genuine question worth sitting with before your worship today. Has any particular entry cracked something open that had been closed? Has God's love felt more real to you in August than it did in July? Is there a relationship you have invested in differently because of these weeks?

Growth in love rarely announces itself dramatically. It tends to be quiet — a tone that softened in a conversation, an act of service that happened without announcement, a prayer sustained for someone difficult, a wound that was forgiven rather than nursed. Small things. But love is often most powerful in its smallest expressions.

As you gather today, carry the awareness that you are part of a global community — a family in seventy nations — who have been reading, praying, and attempting to live love this summer. You are not alone in this. The CMM family is walking together toward the same north star: the love of Christ, shown to us, flowing through us, reaching the world.

Tomorrow we close this phase. But the love does not close.

Father, let everything this season has stirred in me take root and keep growing into autumn and beyond.

August 31, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

— Ephesians 3:20-21 (NKJV)

We close the LOVE phase not with a summary, but with a doxology. After forty-seven days of dwelling in the love of God — receiving it, practicing it, extending it, marveling at it — what is the right response? Paul gives it: *to him be glory*.

We have been loved immeasurably. We have been given a love that is wide and long and high and deep, that existed before the foundation of the world, that was most fully expressed on a Roman cross, that has been poured into hearts across every continent and culture, that cannot be separated from us by any force in creation. That love — that extraordinary, unearnable, unstoppable love — demands a response of worship.

I want to close this month with a word of personal gratitude. I am grateful for the global family of believers who have walked this journey with us. Grateful for the men and women in seventy nations who give their lives for this gospel without counting the cost. Grateful for a God who loved us first, who moves before we think to ask, who does immeasurably more than all we imagine in the places we plant seeds and in the hearts we pray over.

As September opens, we step into Perseverance — the season of endurance, of staying faithful under pressure, of harvest-time discipline. But we carry everything learned in this phase forward. Perseverance without love becomes mere stubbornness. But perseverance rooted in the love of God becomes something eternal.

Go into September knowing you are loved. Let that be enough.

Father, to You be glory — in the church, in Christ Jesus, in every generation, forever. You have loved us well.

PART FOUR

Perseverance Deepening

September 1 - October 31, 2026

September 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." — Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

There is something about September that feels like a turning of a page. Summer fades, leaves begin their slow transformation, and the air carries a new kind of weight — a productive weight, the kind that settles over a field waiting for harvest. I think of that every time I read Galatians 6:9.

Paul writes to people who are tired. Not lazy people — tired people. Believers who have been pouring out for months, loving difficult neighbors, serving without applause, pressing forward in ministry when the results are invisible. His word to them is not "try harder." It is simply: *do not give up*.

The word translated "weary" in Greek is *ekkakeo* — to lose heart, to become faint inside. It is not outward failure but inward collapse. That is the real battleground of perseverance. Your hands may still be moving, but something inside has gone quiet. Has that ever described you?

What I love about this verse is the phrase "at the proper time." God does not harvest on our schedule. The farmer does not demand the grain ripen in three weeks instead of three months. He prepares the soil, plants the seed, tends the field, and then *waits* with confident expectation. That waiting is not passive. It is an act of trust.

September is the beginning of a new season for us — sixty-one days of Perseverance Deepening. My prayer is that every entry this month will steel something in you that the enemy has been trying to erode. You have not come this far to quit. The harvest is coming.

Father, renew our hearts today — not our circumstances, but our resolve — so that we do not let go of what You have placed in our hands.

September 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." — Job 23:10 (NKJV)

Job speaks these words from inside the whirlwind. His children are gone. His body is broken. His friends have become his accusers. And yet, from that crater of suffering, he lifts his eyes and says something astonishing: *He knows the way I take. Not I know why this is happening. Not I understand the plan. Just — He knows. And that is enough to stand on.*

Perseverance is never born in comfort. It is forged in the furnace, and God is the one holding the bellows. The refiner of gold keeps the metal in the fire only long enough to bring the impurities to the surface, and never one degree hotter than what is necessary. That is the picture Job grasps by faith — not that suffering is meaningless, but that it has a Refiner behind it.

I have watched brothers and sisters across our CMM family endure losses that would have broken most people in the West, and they emerged not bitter but burnished. There is something in the deep suffering of faithful saints that produces a quality of character no seminary can confer. It is simply gold — purified by fire.

What is the furnace you are in today? Not a metaphor — I mean the real thing. The diagnosis, the marriage that is barely holding, the ministry that seems to bear no fruit, the relationship that fell apart. Friend, do not interpret His silence as abandonment. He knows the way you take. He is refining, not destroying.

Lord, I trust You as my Refiner today — burn away what does not belong, and bring me forth as gold that reflects Your glory.

FROM THE NATIONS

Jordan. "I am Brother Elias, serving a small house church in the Zarqa district north of Amman. For three years we met in secret — eight believers, mostly former Muslims. This year we baptized eleven new believers in a single month. The fire of those early years did not break us; it purified our faith until it could not be hidden. God is harvesting in Jordan."

September 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." — James 1:2-3 (NKJV)

James does not say *if* you face trials. He says *whenever*. He has already settled that question — trials are not an interruption of the Christian life; they are woven into it. The question is not whether difficulty will come, but what we will do with it when it arrives.

What strikes me is the logic James employs. He does not say, "Endure the trial because it will eventually end." He says, "Rejoice in the trial because of what it is producing." There is a transformational process happening inside the testing. The Greek word for perseverance here is *hupomone* — a staying-under, a weight-bearing that does not collapse. It is not the patience of someone gritting their teeth; it is the posture of someone who has learned that the weight they are carrying is shaping them into something stronger.

I have a friend who ran marathons in his youth. He told me once that the miles between eighteen and twenty-two are where most people quit — the body is screaming and the finish line is not yet visible. But those miles, he said, are where the real race is won. Not at the starting gun, not at the ribbon — in the invisible middle stretch.

That is where many of us are today. We cannot yet see the finish. The trial has not lifted. The answer has not come. But James says: do not waste this. Something irreplaceable is being built in you right now — something no shortcut could produce.

Let perseverance finish its work.

Father, give me the grace today not just to endure, but to receive from this trial what only trials can give.

September 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." — Psalm 23:1 (NKJV)

Every pastor I know could preach on Psalm 23 for a month and never exhaust it. But this morning I want to sit with just the opening line, because I think we rush past it too quickly to get to green pastures and still waters.

The LORD is my shepherd. Seven words. Four of them are pronouns and an article. But contained in them is the entire logic of why a sheep can rest — not because the field is safe, not because the wolf is absent, but because of *who* is walking ahead.

Perseverance is not fundamentally about willpower. It is about relationship. A sheep that has a good shepherd can make it through rocky terrain, dry seasons, narrow passes, and dark valleys — not because the sheep is particularly strong, but because the Shepherd knows where the water is. The sheep simply stays close.

I am not naturally prone to rest. My personality runs toward solving, building, moving. But I have learned — sometimes the hard way — that the seasons of deepest endurance in my own life were the seasons when I stopped trying to figure out the path and simply stayed near the One who knows it. When I was in my own dark valley, I found that He was already there.

Where are you today? Dry pasture? Rocky ground? The valley of shadows? The promise of this Psalm is not that God removes the hard terrain. It is that He is your Shepherd in it. And the Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep does not lose one.

Stay close to Him today. That is enough.

Shepherd of my soul, keep me near You today — not just in the green pastures, but especially on the rocky ground.

September 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:" — Philippians 4:11b (NKJV)

Notice that Paul does not say he was born content. He says he *learned* it. That single word changes everything, because it means contentment is not a temperament — it is a discipline acquired through experience.

Paul wrote this letter from a Roman prison. He had been beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, and abandoned. He had also known seasons of abundance — meals with friends, churches thriving, letters read aloud to gathered congregations. And he is saying: in both of those realities, I have found the secret of not being driven by circumstances.

The word translated "content" is *autarkes* — self-sufficient in the good Greek sense, meaning the inner life is not dependent on the outer situation for its stability. But Paul reframes it entirely in the next verse: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The self-sufficiency is actually Christ-sufficiency. The secret is not stoic detachment. The secret is a Person.

I have sat with believers in mud-floor churches in nations where the average annual income wouldn't cover a month's electric bill in the United States, and I have been undone by their contentment. Not poverty-acceptance, not defeat — genuine, Spirit-produced peace. They taught me that abundance of things and abundance of soul are not the same currency.

This fall, as we push through the Perseverance season, I want to ask you: have you been linking your inner peace to your outer circumstances? Because if so, you will always be at the mercy of what is shifting around you. The secret Paul learned is available to you today.

Christ, be my sufficiency today — in plenty and in want, let my peace come from You alone.

September 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." — Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

Sunday mornings have a particular weight to them, don't they? I always feel it — a kind of holy expectancy when the body of Christ gathers. But I also know that many people sit in those pews carrying something heavy: a decision that won't become clear, a future that won't resolve, a crisis that has no visible answer yet. Proverbs 3:5-6 is the word I would preach into that moment every time.

The command is radical: trust with *all* your heart. Not most of it. Not the parts that feel safe. All of it — including the part that is still afraid, still unsure, still scanning for an exit strategy. Half-hearted trust is really just a backup plan dressed as faith. God invites us into something more vulnerable than that.

"Lean not on your own understanding" — I confess this one wrestles me. I am a strategic thinker. I love to analyze and plan. And there is nothing wrong with that. But there is a point where analysis becomes a substitute for surrender, where the spreadsheet becomes a way to avoid the altar. He is not asking us to stop thinking; He is asking us not to let our thinking be the final authority.

The promise is quietly magnificent: He will make your paths straight. Not easy — straight. Purposeful. Directed. In the hands of a God who sees the whole road from above, a path that looks impossibly tangled from where we stand can be perfectly ordered from where He stands.

Lord, today I lay down my need to understand before I trust — straighten my path and steady my heart.

FROM THE NATIONS

Lebanon. "I am Pastor Naji, and I lead a congregation of forty-three believers in Beirut's southern district. After the explosion of 2020 we lost our building and three families lost their homes. But we rebuilt — not just in cement, but in Spirit. Our church has doubled since then. Suffering drove us to our knees, and from our knees God sent us into the streets with food, medicine, and the Word. Lebanon is hard ground, but seed sown in hard ground grows deep roots."

September 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men," —
Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)*

Today is Labor Day — a day set aside in this country to honor the dignity of work and those who do it. I have always believed that the Christian faith has a high theology of labor, higher than most people realize. We serve a God who worked six days and rested on the seventh, a Savior who spent thirty years as a carpenter before three years of itinerant ministry. Work is not a curse; the curse corrupted what God had already called good.

Paul's instruction to the Colossian believers was addressed — and this matters — to *slaves*. Men and women who had no choice about where they worked, who they worked for, or whether they were compensated. Into that situation, Paul speaks a liberating word: the *who* you are working for changes everything. If you are ultimately working for the Lord, then no boss, no institution, no economy, no political system can strip your labor of its meaning.

This is the theology of perseverance at work: I will not quit, not because the conditions are ideal, but because the audience is eternal. I have watched CMM partners serve in nations where wages are meager, conditions are harsh, and recognition is nonexistent — and they pour themselves out with extraordinary faithfulness. Not because they are paid to. Because they are working for an audience of One.

Labor Day is a good day to ask: whose approval are you working for? If it is your supervisor's, you will burn out when they fail to notice. If it is the Lord's, you will find something sustainable in you — a perseverance rooted not in performance but in worship.

Whatever your hands do today, do it as unto Him.

Lord, consecrate my labor today — every email, every phone call, every act of service — as worship offered to You.

September 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

I want to talk about what Paul does *not* say here, because it is as important as what he does. He does not say: "Don't be anxious because everything will work out fine." He does not say: "Stop worrying because your problems aren't that bad." He says: in every situation — bring it to God. He acknowledges the weight. He does not dismiss it.

There is a profound pastoral wisdom in that. Anxiety is real. The circumstances that generate it are real. And the instruction is not to pretend them away but to redirect the energy of our worry into the channel of prayer. Every anxious thought becomes an invitation to conversation with the Father.

And then — this is the part that takes my breath away — the peace that comes is described as something that *transcends understanding*. It is not peace because the situation resolved. It is not peace because we finally got a good explanation. It is a peace that makes no rational sense given the circumstances, and yet it stands guard over our hearts like a soldier at the gate.

I have experienced this. There have been moments in my life — uncertain moments, frightening moments — where I prayed and then simply felt the watch change: something came that I did not manufacture. That is the peace of God. You cannot produce it by discipline. You can only receive it by surrender.

If anxiety is your companion today, do not white-knuckle it into silence. Bring it to the Father — petition by petition, with gratitude — and let Him post His peace at the door.

Father, I bring You every anxious thought today — take it and in exchange give me the peace that only You can give.

September 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." — Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

Joseph says this to his brothers — the same men who sold him into slavery, lied to their father, and left him to die. He is not minimizing what they did. He is reframing it within a larger sovereignty.

This is one of the most audacious statements in all of Scripture. Not "God allowed this." Not "God worked around this." *God intended it for good.* The same event, two intentions running simultaneously — one from the pit of human cruelty, one from the throne of divine purpose — and God's intention does not nullify the reality of the harm, but it does determine the final outcome.

I think of the believers I know who have walked through genuine betrayal — not mild disappointment, but deep, wounding betrayal by people who claimed to love them. Family members. Ministry partners. Trusted friends. The temptation in those moments is to let the betrayal write the final chapter. Joseph refuses that. He looks at twenty years of imprisonment, false accusation, and forgotten promises, and says: God was doing something all along.

Perseverance requires this long view. We are rarely in a position to see the full story while we are inside it. Joseph in the pit had no way of knowing he would stand before Pharaoh. The brothers had no way of knowing they were positioning their family's rescuer. The story only makes sense from the end.

You are not at the end of your story today. Whatever has been intended against you, take it to the God who specializes in reversals.

Lord, help me see my story through Your eyes today — not through the eyes of what was meant to harm me, but through the eyes of Your redemptive purpose.

FROM THE NATIONS

Egypt. "My name is Hany, and I pastor a congregation in the Minya district of Upper Egypt — one of the regions with the oldest Christian history and some of the most persistent pressure against believers today. Last year a family in our church had their home vandalized three times after the father was baptized. They never wavered. Their perseverance brought their entire extended family to faith.

What began as an act of persecution became a door for the Gospel that we could never have opened ourselves."

September 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9 (NKJV)

Moses is dead. The Jordan is flooded. Forty years of wilderness wandering have ended in a transition none of them planned for — the leader who knew God face to face is gone, and a new generation stands at the edge of a river that should not be crossable.

Into that moment, God speaks to Joshua. He does not speak a strategy. He does not produce a military briefing. He says three things: *be strong, be courageous, do not be afraid*. And then He gives the reason: *because I will be with you*.

The ground of courage is not our own strength. It is His presence. Joshua was brave enough to lead Israel into Canaan not because he was braver than Moses but because the same God who was with Moses was now with him.

I believe there are Joshuas reading this devotion today — people who are stepping into roles they never expected, carrying responsibilities that feel too large, standing at rivers that look uncrossable. The person who mentored you has moved on or passed away. The season you were comfortable in has ended. And you are staring at floodwaters.

God has not changed His address. He is not less present because the season changed, because the leader changed, because the landscape changed. The same word He spoke over Joshua He speaks over you: *wherever you go* — not just in the easy crossings, not just when the water parts, but *wherever*.

Take your river today.

God of Joshua, give me the courage today that is rooted not in my own ability but in the certainty of Your presence.

September 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamo. God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble." — Psalm 46:1 (NKJV)

Twenty-five years have not dimmed the memory of that Tuesday morning — the towers, the smoke, the faces of those running toward and away from something the world had not seen before. September 11 carries weight in the American heart that words are clumsy around. I do not want to be glib about it.

Psalm 46 was written for exactly this — for the day when the earth gives way, when the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, when the foundations shake. The psalmist is not speaking metaphorically about mild inconvenience. He is speaking about the world coming apart at its seams.

And into that, he declares: *God is our refuge*. Not was. Not might be. Is. Present tense. Active. Available. An ever-present help in trouble — the Hebrew word suggests He is not just present but *found* — accessible, reachable, close.

I have watched America carry this wound across a generation, and I have seen both what unprocessed grief produces and what surrender to God can do with it. Some of those who lost the most that day became carriers of a deeper faith. They did not become bitter; they became anchored. Because they found, in the worst moment, that the Refuge held.

Whatever trouble you carry today — whether it is the weight of a national memory, or your own private September 11 of the heart — He is the same refuge. He is not shaken by what shakes us. He has not moved.

Run to Him. He is already there.

Lord, be my refuge today — in the trembling of this world and the trembling of my own heart, be my unshakeable ground.

September 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." — 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

Paul asks God three times to remove the thorn in his flesh. Three times. This is not a lack of faith — it is tenacious, earnest, desperate prayer. And God's answer is not silence. It is a redirection: *My grace is sufficient*.

I have meditated on this word "sufficient" for years. In Greek it is *arkei* — it is enough, it reaches, it is adequate to the demand. God is saying: the grace I have already given you reaches to the bottom of what you are going through. You do not need the thorn removed. You need to see what My grace can do with you in it.

Then comes the paradox that has reshaped the way I understand power: *my power is made perfect in weakness*. The word for "perfect" is *teleioo* — brought to its full completion, its intended end. God's power does not find its full expression in our strength; it finds its full expression in our weakness. Because when we are strong, we can always credit ourselves. When we are empty, and something moves through us anyway, everyone knows whose it is.

I have seen this in our family of missionaries. Some of the most powerful moments of ministry I have ever witnessed happened through people who were physically sick, financially depleted, or emotionally spent. There was nothing left of them to get in the way. And the Spirit moved like I have rarely seen in times of plenty.

Is there a thorn you have been praying to have removed? Perhaps the answer is not removal. Perhaps the answer is: My grace is enough for this.

Lord, teach me to stop hiding my weakness and start offering it to You as the space where Your power is perfected.

September 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments." — Habakkuk 3:18-19 (NKJV)

Habakkuk ends his prophecy with a list of catastrophes: the fig tree does not blossom, the vine yields no fruit, the olive fails, the fields produce nothing, the flock is cut off, there are no cattle. Every pillar of economic and agricultural life is gone. And yet — *yet I will rejoice*.

That "yet" is one of the most defiant words in Scripture. It is not joy in the circumstances. It is joy *in spite of* them. It is a deliberate, muscular choice to locate gladness not in what is visible but in who God is. "The God of my salvation" — not the God of my current comfort, not the God of my present abundance, but the God who saves. That is the bedrock.

And then comes the deer's feet image — the surefootedness of an animal built for steep terrain. A deer does not become paralyzed on a mountainside. It finds its footing where nothing else can stand. The promise is that God will give us that — not ease, but surefootedness in the hard places.

Ethiopia has known this verse from the ground up.

Lord, make my feet sure on the high places today — give me the joy that cannot be taken because it lives in You, not in my circumstances.

FROM THE NATIONS

Ethiopia. "I am Pastor Girma from the Oromia region, and our fellowship of house churches has endured three seasons of severe restriction. Last year, during the months we could not meet openly, seventeen of our members memorized entire books of the New Testament. When the restrictions lifted, we gathered and they *spoke* the Word aloud together — their voices were the Bible. Nothing was taken from us that mattered. The Word of God cannot be confiscated."

September 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." — Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

The word "conform" here is *suschematizo* — to be pressed into a mold by external pressure. Paul is describing something that happens to us if we are not intentional about it. The world is not passive; it is constantly shaping, pressing, molding. Every advertisement, every cultural assumption, every ambient message of our age is pushing us into a particular form.

The only counterforce Paul names is transformation from within — the Greek is *metamorphoo*, which gives us our word "metamorphosis." The caterpillar does not try hard to become a butterfly. It surrenders to a process that works from the inside out. That is what the renewal of the mind produces: not religious performance that resists the world's mold, but an interior renovation that changes what we want, what we see, what we love.

And the result is remarkable: we become capable of discerning God's will. Not just knowing the right answer on a theology exam — *testing and approving* what is good and pleasing and perfect. The renewed mind can navigate complexity. It can feel the difference between a door God opened and a door we pushed open ourselves.

Perseverance requires a renewed mind. Without it, the world's pressure will eventually squeeze out our endurance. We will give up because we start to believe what the culture tells us — that suffering has no meaning, that self-preservation is the highest value, that the harvest is not worth the wait.

Offer your mind to the Transformer today.

Holy Spirit, renew my mind today — clear out what the world has pressed into me and replace it with what is true, good, and eternal.

September 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." — Proverbs 18:15 (NKJV)

One of the things that has marked the lives of the persevering believers I most admire is their insatiable hunger to keep learning. They are not people who decided at some point that they knew enough. They remain students — of Scripture, of people, of history, of the Spirit's movement across the earth.

I believe this proverb is talking about something more than intellectual curiosity, though it includes that. The discerning heart is one that has learned not to trust its first impression, not to assume it has the full picture, not to stop listening before God has finished speaking. It is a posture of receptivity that does not close itself off.

This matters enormously for perseverance. One of the reasons people give up is that they hit a wall, cannot figure out how to get through it, and conclude the wall means *stop*. But often a discerning heart would have found the door in the wall — if it had kept listening, kept seeking, kept asking.

I have been in enough difficult ministry seasons to know that the breakthroughs rarely came through brute force. They came through a moment of discernment — a word that cut through the fog, an insight that reframed everything, a quiet impression that redirected our efforts. Those moments came to people who were still paying attention.

Do not let weariness close your ears. The wise seek knowledge out. They do not wait for it to come to them; they go looking. And the One who has wisdom to give is not withholding it.

Ask. Seek. Knock. He rewards the hungry.

Father, give me a discerning heart today — ears that stay open even when I am tired, and a mind willing to learn what You are teaching.

September 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." — 1 Peter 5:10 (NKJV)

"A little while." Peter says it almost casually, and I imagine some of his readers wanted to object. A little while? The suffering had been going on for years. Families displaced, businesses ruined, relationships severed. What does "a little while" mean to someone in the middle of the storm?

It means this: Peter is measuring from eternity. From inside time, suffering feels endless. From the vantage point of a life hidden in God, stretching into eternity, the severest trials of our earthly journey occupy a narrow slice. Paul puts the same thought in 2 Corinthians 4:17 — "light and momentary troubles achieving an eternal weight of glory." The trouble is not denied; its proportions are recalibrated.

And then the verbs. This is what I love most about this verse: *restore, confirm, strengthen, establish*. Four distinct divine actions, all of them headed your way after the suffering. Restore — repair what was broken. Confirm — solidify what was shaky. Strengthen — build muscle where there was weakness. Establish — set you on ground that will not shift again.

This is not a prosperity promise. It is a perseverance promise. The suffering is the path to the establishment, not an obstacle to it. You do not get to *established* while bypassing the fire.

Nigeria carries this verse in its bones.

God of all grace, I receive Your promise today — restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish me on the other side of this.

FROM THE NATIONS

Nigeria. "I am Pastor Emmanuel Okafor from Borno State. Our church has rebuilt twice after attacks. We did not rebuild in spite of grief — we rebuilt while grieving. Forty-seven members of our congregation have suffered direct violence in five years. And today we have three hundred members, a school feeding sixty orphans, and five daughter churches. The God Peter wrote about has been keeping His four promises to us. We are witnesses."

September 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength." — Isaiah 40:29 (NKJV)

Isaiah 40 is the great turning chapter of that prophecy — the voice crying in the wilderness, the word that endures forever, the God who measures the oceans in His palm. And into that vast portrait of divine might, Isaiah zooms in on one particular gift: He gives power to the *faint*. To the exhausted. To those whose knees have buckled.

This is not power given to the strong. It is power given to those who have nothing left. The Hebrew word for "faint" carries the idea of one who has grown weary to the point of stumbling — someone past their second wind, past any natural reserve. That is the specific target of God's strengthening grace.

I think about the implications of this for how I pray. So often I come to God with my plans already largely formed, asking for His blessing on my effort. But what if the more potent prayers are the desperate ones — the ones prayed from empty? What if the moments when I have nothing left to offer are actually the moments when I am most positioned for what only God can do?

The soaring-on-wings image comes just a few verses later (Isaiah 40:31), and it belongs in the same context: those who *wait* on the Lord — the ones who have stopped striving and started trusting — will be renewed. The faint receive power. The weary are given strength that exceeds human capacity.

If today you are at the end of your rope, do not be ashamed of it. You are standing in exactly the place where God loves to work.

Lord, I am faint today — I bring You my empty hands, and I ask for the strength that only You can give.

September 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." — Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

Perseverance in the Christian life cannot be fully understood without an honest reckoning with spiritual warfare. Paul is not using hyperbole here. He is giving his readers a reality check: the real opposition to the Gospel is not primarily human. Behind the human obstacles — the closed doors, the hostile regimes, the resistant hearts — there is an invisible war being waged.

This is not an excuse for passivity or for dismissing human responsibility. It is a clarification of target. When we are exhausted by opposition, when the same battle keeps recurring, when something that should yield is immovable — it is worth asking whether we have been fighting flesh-and-blood when we should have been on our knees.

I have seen this on the field. I have watched ministry teams beat their heads against human-level problems — organizational, political, relational — while the spiritual root went unaddressed. And I have watched other teams who prayed first, discerned the spiritual dynamic, and saw things move that had been stuck for years. The armor of God in verses 13-18 is not metaphor. It is tactical equipment for a real fight.

But here is the encouragement underneath the warning: if we are indeed in a spiritual battle, then our weapons are spiritual weapons, and our Commander has already won the war. The Enemy is a defeated enemy fighting a rear-guard action. We are not fighting for victory. We are fighting from victory.

That changes everything about how we persevere.

Lord of hosts, open my eyes to the true nature of the battle I am in, and teach me to fight from Your victory rather than for it.

September 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." —
Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV)*

There is a quiet theology of sovereignty buried in this proverb that I find simultaneously humbling and deeply comforting. We plan — God directs. Both things are happening simultaneously, and neither cancels the other.

God is not saying: don't plan. Planning is good. Joseph planned, Nehemiah planned, Paul planned his missionary journeys. The act of planning is an act of faith — it says we believe the future is real and worth preparing for. But the proverb gently reminds us that our plans are not the final word on what actually happens.

I have seen this play out so many times in missions. We plan a crusade, and rain floods the venue — but the team ends up in the homes of villagers who would never have come to a public event. We plan a Bible training, and a government official unexpectedly shuts the border — but the delay gives a local pastor time to prepare a congregation that becomes a lighthouse for years to come. The redirections of God are more creative than our plans ever were.

The comforting side of this is that we do not have to get our plans perfect. We are not responsible for the outcome; we are responsible for the faithfulness of the attempt. We bring our best thinking, our prayerful discernment, our willing effort — and we release it into His hands. He will direct the steps. He will make the path.

This is not fatalism. It is trust. Plan well today — and hold it loosely.

Father, I offer You my plans today — direct my steps wherever You need them to go, and help me trust Your redirections as much as my original designs.

September 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," — Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

The writer of Hebrews has just spent an entire chapter cataloguing the faithful — Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab, Gideon — men and women who endured what most of us cannot imagine, who died without seeing the full promise, who held on in faith when there was nothing visible to hold onto. And now the application: *you are surrounded by them.*

The image of an amphitheater comes to mind — a vast stadium packed with those who finished their race. They are not watching us with judgment; they are watching with the encouragement of those who know what the track feels like and who ran it themselves. Every time we feel alone in our perseverance, the truth is: we are not alone. The great cloud surrounds us.

And then the practical instruction: throw off what hinders. The word suggests an athlete stripping down before a race — not jettisoning the good, but removing what creates drag. What in your life is creating spiritual drag right now? Not necessarily sin, but weight — commitments, relationships, distractions that are slowing your stride. They may not be wrong things; they may simply be the wrong things for this season.

The race is *marked out for us* — custom-designed, not generic. Your race is not my race. But the Author of the race is the same for both of us, and the finish line is certain.

Father, show me what to lay down so I can run well today — and thank You that we do not run alone.

FROM THE NATIONS

South Africa. "I am Sister Lindiwe from the Cape Flats township outside Cape Town. Our community carried enormous weight — gang violence, addiction, poverty. But three years ago a small prayer group in our church became a movement of intercession. Today we have seventeen prayer captains covering our township in shifts. The violence has measurably decreased in our streets. We are

surrounded by something the world cannot see — and we are running."

September 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." — Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

Yesterday we talked about Hebrews 12 and running with perseverance. Today Isaiah gives us the engine. The Hebrew word *qavah*, translated "hope" or "wait," means something more active than passive waiting. It carries the idea of twisting or binding together — like strands twisted into a strong rope. To wait on the Lord is to bind yourself to Him, to stay intertwined with Him even when nothing seems to be happening.

I notice the progression in this verse is actually backward from what we might expect. Eagles soar, runners run, walkers walk — it seems to go from dramatic to ordinary. But I believe that is deliberate. The soaring moments are the spectacular ones — the revival, the miracle, the sudden breakthrough. The running moments are ministry at full pace. But the walking — the simple, unspectacular, day-after-day plodding of ordinary faithfulness — that is where most of our lives are spent.

And it is the walkers God says will not faint. The people who simply keep putting one foot in front of the other, who pray when they do not feel like it, who open their Bible on Tuesday morning when nothing dramatic is happening — those are the ones who don't grow faint. Because they have stayed bound to the Source.

Some days you soar. Some days you run. Most days you walk. Let Isaiah 40:31 cover all three.

Lord, bind my heart to Yours today — whether I am soaring, running, or simply walking forward in faith.

September 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting." — Psalm 139:23-24 (NKJV)

This prayer requires a certain courage. We are not asking God to confirm that we are on the right track. We are asking Him to look for what we have missed — the hidden wrong motive, the concealed resentment, the anxiety we have been managing rather than surrendering. *Search me. Test me. See if there is any offensive way.*

The word "offensive" in the original is literally "way of pain" or "way of grief" — a path that causes harm, either to others or to ourselves. David is not just asking God to find his sin; he is asking God to find the patterns that are destroying him, the roads he keeps taking that lead him away from life.

Perseverance without self-examination becomes stubbornness. There is a version of keeping going that is actually pride — refusing to stop and let God examine what we are carrying, why we are carrying it, and whether the direction we have been pointing is truly His. True endurance must pass through the fire of honest self-examination.

I try to pray this psalm regularly. Not as a guilt exercise, but as a calibration — letting the God who knows me fully have access to the corners I would rather keep dim. And I find, almost every time, that there is something He wants to surface — not to condemn me, but to free me. Because whatever is hidden controls us. Whatever is exposed and surrendered — He can transform.

Lead me in the way everlasting. That is the request of the examined heart.

Father, search me today — with the same tenderness You used to make me — and lead me in paths that lead to life.

September 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" — Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

I love the grammar of this verse: *He who began... will carry it on to completion.* Past tense and future tense, both pointing to God as the active party. You are the beneficiary of His work, not the guarantor of it. The work of sanctification in your life did not start with your decision; it started with His initiative. And it will not finish because you finally crossed a performance threshold; it will finish on the day of Christ Jesus — at the culmination of history.

This is not an excuse for passivity. Paul goes on in Philippians 2:12-13 to speak of "working out your salvation with fear and trembling" — but that very working is only possible because "it is God who works in you." The two sides of effort and grace are not in competition; they are woven together in the mystery of sanctification.

But the *perseverance* encouragement here is enormous: God does not start projects He does not intend to finish. He is not a contractor who runs out of money halfway through the foundation. He does not abandon mid-renovation. Every discouraging season you are in right now, every area where you feel like the progress has stopped — He is still working. You may not be able to see it. The spiritual formation process is often invisible to the person inside it and visible to everyone watching from outside.

Do not evaluate the work by what you feel on a hard Tuesday in September. Evaluate the Workman — and trust His track record.

Lord, thank You that the work You started in me does not depend on my consistency — it depends on Yours.

September 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us," — Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

The phrase "immeasurably more" is a translation of the Greek *huperekperissou* — which is basically Paul stacking intensifiers on top of each other. Beyond. Over and above. Exceedingly abundantly beyond. The translator's problem is that there is not a word in English that fully contains it.

Paul is not talking about an extravagant Christmas wish list. He has just finished one of the great prayers of the New Testament — praying that the Ephesians would be rooted in love, able to grasp its full dimensions, filled to the fullness of God. These are enormous, soaring petitions. And then he says: what God can do *exceeds your asking by an amount you cannot calculate.*

I find this verse essential for the Perseverance season, because one of the temptations of long endurance is to downsize our imagination. We start the journey with large faith and, over months of difficulty, we gradually negotiate God down to something more manageable. We stop praying for nations and start settling for just keeping the lights on. We stop believing for the miraculous and start hoping for the adequate.

Paul says: do not do this. The power at work within us is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20). That power has no ceiling. Your imagination does not contain it. Your theology does not limit it.

Keep praying large. Keep believing large. You are not praying to a God whose resources are strained.

God of immeasurably more, stretch my imagination back to its full size today — and do in me and through me what I cannot even ask for yet.

FROM THE NATIONS

Zimbabwe. "I am Pastor Silas Dube from Bulawayo. For six years the economy made our ministry nearly impossible — fuel shortages, food scarcity, currency collapse. But we kept planting. We planted ten house churches in that season. Not despite the difficulty — because of it. When everything else fails, the Gospel becomes the only thing that still works. Today those ten house churches have

become a network of forty-three, and three of our leaders have gone as missionaries to neighboring nations. Immeasurably more."

September 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." — James 1:12 (NKJV)

We started this month with James 1:2-3. Now James closes the same thought in verse 12, and there is a beautiful arc in it. The testing of faith produces perseverance — that was the process. This verse is the outcome: *blessed is the one who perseveres under trial*.

The word "blessed" is *makarios* — the same word Jesus uses in the Beatitudes. It means not merely fortunate, but deeply happy in a way that transcends circumstances. It is the contentment of someone whose joy is not sourced from the outside. And James says this blessedness belongs specifically to those who have *stood the test* — not just endured it passively, but been proven genuine under pressure, like a coin that rings true when struck.

The crown of life. In the ancient world, a victor's crown — a *stephanos*, a wreath of laurels — was the ultimate affirmation that you had won. Not a crown of royalty but of achievement. The one who completes the race, who stands under the test and is not found false — to that one, the Lord Himself has promised life in its fullest sense.

I want you to feel the weight of this today, especially if you are in the middle of a trial. You are not just surviving. You are being proved. And the One who promised the crown does not give out participation trophies. He gives them to the ones who loved Him enough to stay.

Stay.

Lord, remind me today that the trial I am in is not wasted — it is proving something in me that You intend to reward for eternity.

September 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." — Romans 5:3-4 (NKJV)

Paul lays out one of the most counterintuitive chains of logic in Scripture. Suffering leads somewhere good — not by accident, not simply because time heals, but because suffering has a productive capacity that is specific and ordered. Suffering → perseverance → character → hope.

Each link requires the previous one. You cannot have the character without the perseverance, and you cannot have the perseverance without the suffering. There is no shortcut that connects suffering directly to character while bypassing the *hupomone* — the weight-bearing endurance. You have to go through it.

And the end product is remarkable: *hope*. Not naïve optimism. Not wishful thinking. The hope Paul means here (which he describes in verse 5 as a hope that does not disappoint) is a confident expectation rooted in the proven character of God. The person who has gone through the chain — who has suffered, endured, and seen their character refined — emerges on the other side with a hope that is calibrated to reality. Not the reality of their circumstances, but the reality of who God has proven Himself to be.

I have this kind of hope in some areas of my life where I did not before. Not because I am naturally hopeful, but because I have watched God show up in the suffering enough times that my hope is now evidence-based. That is what this chain produces.

Where are you in the chain today? Trust the process. It ends in hope.

Father, I submit to the whole chain today — the suffering, the perseverance, the refining of character — because I want the hope that does not disappoint.

September 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" — Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

Wait — didn't we just use this verse? No, I pulled from the NIV on September 23. Today I want to sit with the ESV rendering of the same verse and focus on a different word: *confident*.

Paul is writing from prison. He is writing to a church that is facing its own pressures — the Judaizers, internal disputes, the constant risk of Roman persecution. And his pastoral word to them is: *I am confident about you*. Not about the circumstances. Not about the political climate. Confident about the work God has begun.

What is confidence in the spiritual life? It is not arrogance. It is not naïve positivity. It is a settled trust in the character and ability of God that refuses to be overturned by what is visible in the present moment. Paul can be confident about the Philippians' completion not because they are extraordinarily stable people, but because the One doing the work is extraordinarily faithful.

I want to speak this over you today the way Paul spoke it over them: I am confident about you, beloved. Not because of what I see — I know many of you are in hard places — but because I know who started the work in you. The same Spirit who broke through your defenses to draw you to Christ in the first place is not finished. He does not lose track of His projects.

Let His confidence in you hold you today when you cannot find confidence in yourself.

Lord, I receive Your confidence over my life today — and I return it to You in trust.

FROM THE NATIONS

Zambia. "My name is Grace Mwanza, and I serve alongside my husband in the Copperbelt region. We were told for years that our city was 'too secular' for revival — too industrial, too materialistic. Last year we ran a forty-day prayer and fasting campaign, inviting every church in the city. Eleven congregations participated. Four hundred and twelve people were baptized in one month. The God who began

this work in Zambia is completing it. We are confident."

September 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." — John 15:5 (NKJV)

Jesus gives this teaching in the upper room, the night before the cross. He is hours from Gethsemane and He is talking about fruit-bearing. The timing tells us something important: the greatest act of faithfulness in human history — His crucifixion — flowed not from striving but from abiding. He too remained in the Father. He too drew from the vine.

The image of abiding is organic, not mechanical. A branch does not grit its teeth and try to produce grapes. It stays connected, and the life of the vine does the work through it. This is not passivity — the branch must remain, must not be torn away, must not dry out from neglect of the connection. But the production is not manufactured; it is the natural overflow of a living connection.

I think the deepest threat to long-term fruitfulness is not sin — it is busyness. The gradual erosion of the connection not through open rebellion but through slow drift. We get busy doing the work of the vineyard and stop drawing from the Vine. Ministry without abiding becomes exhausting performance. Prayer becomes a formality. The Word becomes a tool rather than a table.

This is the perseverance that matters most: not the perseverance of effort but the perseverance of *connection*. Staying in, day after day, prayer by prayer, page by page. Because apart from Him — not apart from the methods, not apart from the strategies — apart from *Him*, we can do nothing.

Stay in the Vine today.

Lord Jesus, I choose today to remain — not in the busyness of Your work, but in You.

September 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." — Exodus 14:14 (NKJV)

The Israelites are trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea. Every option they can see is a bad one. The water is ahead. The cavalry is behind. And Moses says: *be still*.

This is one of the most counterintuitive commands in the Bible — and one of the most needed. Our instinct when threatened is to scramble, to organize, to do *something*. But there are moments when the battle is so far above our capacity that the most spiritual response is stillness. Not passive resignation — active trust. The "be still" here is a command to stop your own frantic attempts so that you can witness what God is about to do.

I have been in ministry situations where I exhausted every human option before I finally stopped. And almost invariably, when I stopped — when I got quiet enough to actually listen — there was something waiting for me. A direction. A peace. An instruction I had not considered. The noise of my own effort had been drowning out the voice of the One who fights for me.

The sea did not part because Israel's military engineers found the shallow crossing. It parted because the LORD fought for His people. There are walls in your life right now that will not yield to your best strategy. They are waiting for you to be still so that the One who fights for you can move.

What wall are you staring at today? Be still. He is about to fight for you.

Lord, quiet my scrambling today — help me be still enough to see You fight on my behalf.

September 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep."
— Psalm 121:3-4 (NKJV)*

The last day of September. I find myself reflecting on this month we have just walked through together — thirty days of pressing into perseverance. If you have been reading each day, you have been fed from Job and Isaiah, from Paul and James, from the upper room and the burning sea. I hope something in you has been strengthened.

Psalm 121 is a Psalm of Ascent — sung by pilgrims on the long walk up to Jerusalem. The road was rocky, the terrain was dangerous, and pilgrims were vulnerable to bandits and terrain that could twist an ankle in an instant. *He will not let your foot slip.* That was not a general assurance about life — it was a specific promise for the hard road.

The second part is what I want to leave with you as we close September: *He who watches over you will not slumber.* There are nights when you worry through the darkness, when you lie awake cataloguing what could go wrong, when the threats are real and the morning feels far away. And the Psalmist says: the One who watches over you is not asleep.

He sees your situation at 3 a.m. He is not drowsy. He is not distracted. He does not take days off. While you sleep, He watches. While the world is dark, He tends. Your perseverance does not rest entirely on your shoulders — it is held in the hands of the One who never tires.

October begins tomorrow. New ground. More of the harvest. Keep walking.

Keeper of my soul, thank You for watching through the nights I could not — carry me now into October with fresh faith.

October 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him." — Psalm 126:6 (NKJV)

October begins in the season of harvest. In the Northern Hemisphere, the fields are being gathered in — corn, pumpkins, apples, the final grains before the frost. It is fitting that we enter this month with Psalm 126:6, which is perhaps the most honest verse in all of harvest theology.

The sower goes out *weeping*. Not rejoicing. Not bounding out of the barn with confidence. Weeping. The seed represents sacrifice — food that could have fed his family, resources that must be buried in ground that might not yield. There is nothing guaranteed about planting. Every seed is an act of faith made in the presence of uncertainty.

But the seed is sown anyway. The weeping sower does not wait until he stops crying to begin planting. He goes with tears still wet, carrying the seed. Because the harvest is not contingent on the sower's emotional state — it is contingent on the seed being planted and the rain coming down.

And the return: *songs of joy, carrying sheaves*. The same hands that shook with grief are now full of abundance. The tears that fell on the soil were, in their own way, the beginning of the harvest.

I know some of you have been sowing in tears for a long time. In a marriage, in a family, in a ministry, in a nation. The harvest is not absent; it is forming beneath the surface. Keep sowing. The Psalm does not say *if* — it says *will return*. That is a promise.

Father, strengthen the weeping sowers today — give us grace to plant even with tears, trusting the harvest to You.

FROM THE NATIONS

Mozambique. "I am Pastor António Monjane from Inhambane Province. After Cyclone Idai swept through our region in 2019, our church of thirty became a relief center for four hundred families. We had nothing — and we gave it. We prayed with people in flattened homes, distributed food we didn't have until it multiplied like bread and fish, and baptized sixty-three people in the first month

after the storm. The cyclone scattered seed. The harvest that grew was the Body of Christ."

October 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." — 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NKJV)

Paul wrote these words from a body that was being physically worn down — "outwardly we are wasting away," he says just a verse before. He is not speaking theoretically about the eternal perspective. He is modeling it from inside the suffering.

The discipline of fixing our eyes on the unseen is one of the core practices of perseverance. It is not escapism — Paul does not deny the reality of the visible. He acknowledges it: the wasting away, the momentary troubles, the hard circumstances that are, in fact, present. But he refuses to let them be the *final* reality. He keeps a wider frame.

This is harder than it sounds. The visible world is loud and immediate. The unseen is quiet and requires the organ of faith to perceive it. Every day we wake up in a world that orients us toward the visible — metrics, results, physical symptoms, bank balances, social responses. And Paul says: even while all of that is real, there is something more real that your eyes of faith can see.

What is the eternal that you have been neglecting to look at? The soul of the person you are losing patience with. The Kingdom that will outlast the failing institution. The crown of life on the far side of this particular suffering. The face of the God who sees you in the dark.

Fix your eyes there today. Not by denying what you can see, but by holding it loosely against the backdrop of what is everlasting.

Lord, give me eyes of faith today — to see the eternal weight of what feels merely momentary.

October 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." —
Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)*

The Greek word translated "handiwork" is *poiema* — from which we get the English word "poem." You are God's poem. Not a draft, not a rough sketch — a carefully crafted piece of artistry, composed by the One who spoke light into existence and breathed life into dust.

I love that this verse comes right after the great passage on grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9). We are saved by grace, not by works — and then immediately Paul says we are created for good works. The works are not the basis of salvation; they are the purpose of the saved. There is no contradiction; there is a beautiful order. First you are made — then you are deployed.

And notice: the works were *prepared in advance*. This is not improvisation. Before you were born, before you arrived at this October morning, before the difficulty you are walking through and the opportunity you are straining toward — God had works already waiting. Your path is not accidental. The good you are called to do has been designed to fit your particular shape.

This has profound implications for perseverance. We are not just enduring until things get easier. We are pressing forward toward works that exist, that matter, that were custom-made for us. The trial is not a detour from the purpose — it is often preparation for it. The work that God has prepared for you on the other side of this season may require exactly what this season has forged in you.

You are a poem still being written. Trust the Poet.

Father, remind me today that I am Your handiwork — and lead me to the good works You prepared before I knew to ask.

October 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the house of David. I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, And have not let my foes rejoice over me." — Psalm 30:1 (NKJV)

Psalm 30 is a song of deliverance, but what I love most about it is that it is written in the past tense — David is looking back. He is not in the pit anymore. He has been lifted, and now he is singing about it. There is a particular quality of praise that can only come from the far side of a trial, and that is what we hear here.

But it assumes something: that David was in the depths. That there was a real pit, a real enemy, a real moment of danger. The exaltation is only intelligible against the background of the descent. You cannot speak of being lifted without acknowledging where you started.

I want to pause today and name something: God's faithfulness to you in the depths you have already passed through. There was a previous pit. A previous season of weeping. A previous place where you were afraid you would not get out. And you did. Not necessarily because the circumstances resolved the way you hoped, but because the God who lifts was present, and He lifted you.

That history is your proof. The same God who was faithful in the last pit is faithful in this one. The same voice that said "I am lifting you" then has not gone silent now.

Let October begin with remembrance — not as a way of living in the past, but as fuel for the present. Praise Him for what He has already done, and let that praise steady you for what is still ahead.

Lord, I exalt You today for every pit You have already lifted me from — and I trust You with the depths I am still in.

FROM THE NATIONS

Mexico. "I am Pastor Rodrigo Fuentes from Oaxaca. Our region has significant indigenous populations — Zapotec and Mixtec communities — where the Gospel has faced deep cultural resistance. Two years ago we trained twelve indigenous evangelists, who went back to their own villages speaking the language of their people. Today we have seventeen new congregations in formerly unreached

communities. God does not need us to translate Him — He already speaks every language of the heart."

October 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe." — Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)

In the ancient world, a fortified tower was the place you ran to when the enemy came over the walls. Not a place you visited on pleasant days — a place you ran to when everything else failed. The tower was built for crisis.

This proverb does not say "the righteous stroll to it for afternoon tea." It says *run*. There is urgency in the running. There is a battle behind them and a gate ahead of them, and the question is whether they will make it inside before the enemy catches them.

The name of the LORD — not just any name, but *this* name, the covenant name, the name that carries the full weight of His character and His commitment to His people — that name is the tower. When you call on His name, you are not performing a verbal formula; you are placing your weight on the identity and history and power of the One whose name you are using. And He holds.

I want to ask you something this Monday morning: what is the battle right now? What is the thing pursuing you, pressing you, threatening to overtake you? Name it. And then, rather than trying to outrun it on your own strength, run toward the Tower. Get inside. Let the walls of His presence hold.

The righteous run. That is the active part — we must make the decision to run to Him rather than anywhere else. The safety is His part. But the running is ours.

Lord, I run to Your name today — be my fortified tower, my safety, my sure ground in every battle.

October 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." — Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

The context of this beautiful verse matters. Psalm 119 is a sweeping meditation on the Word of God — 176 verses, eight verses per Hebrew letter of the alphabet — written by someone who clearly found the Word to be not an obligation but a lifeline. And it was not written in a monastery. It was written in the middle of persecution, oppression, enemies, and weariness.

A lamp to my feet. Not a spotlight illuminating the whole road stretching into the distance — a lamp sufficient for the next step. The original image is of a small clay oil lamp held at ankle height, casting just enough light to see where your foot will land. Ancient pilgrims walked like this — one step at a time, the light moving with them.

I have talked to many people who feel frozen because they cannot see the whole future. They want a searchlight, and God is offering a lamp. The wisdom of this image is that a lamp requires closeness — you must stay near the light. The moment you run ahead of the lamp, you are in the dark.

Perseverance in the Word is not about reading to accumulate information. It is about staying close enough to the Light that the next step is visible. Open the Word today not as a duty but as a lantern. Let it illuminate the ground immediately in front of you. That is enough to walk forward in faith.

The path is lit one step at a time. Take the step your lamp reveals.

Lord, let Your Word be my lamp today — and keep me close enough to You that the next step is always in the light.

October 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved." — Psalm 55:22 (NKJV)

Psalm 55 is one of the most raw of the Psalms — David is in genuine anguish, and in verse 6 he has the famous wish that he had wings like a dove so he could fly away. Escape. Just get away from all of it. The betrayal by a close friend (likely Ahithophel, who joined Absalom's rebellion) has landed like a physical blow.

And from that place of deep emotional pain — not from a mountaintop of spiritual victory, but from the valley of betrayal — David says: *cast your burden on the LORD*. The word "burden" literally means "what has been given to you" — not just what life has dumped on you, but the load you have been given to carry. It is a reminder that what we carry is never merely accidental; God permits our burdens to be distributed to us. And then He says: give it back.

He will sustain you. Not remove you from the situation — sustain you *in* it. The Hebrew carries the idea of feeding, nourishing, keeping alive. He will provision the carrying. He will put underneath your weariness what it needs to keep going.

Is there something you have been carrying for too long because you forgot — or were too proud — to give it to Him? The invitation is always open. There is no shame in casting. The ones who cast are the ones who are sustained.

Father, I release to You today every burden I have been too stubborn or too anxious to hand over — sustain me in what remains.

October 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." — John 16:33 (NKJV)

Jesus doesn't sugarcoat the road ahead. "In this world you will have trouble." He says this to His disciples on the night of His arrest — not in a context of pastoral distance, but from inside a crisis Himself. He knows what's coming in a matter of hours. And He gives them the most honest possible briefing: difficulty is not the exception in the Christian life; it is the expectation.

But the sentence does not end there. *Take heart* — literally in the Greek, "be of good cheer," *tharseo* — it is an active command to courage, not a passive feeling to wait for. And then the ground: *I have overcome the world*. Past tense. The victory is already accomplished. Jesus stands at the threshold of His own suffering and speaks from the vantage point of its completion.

This is the grammar of resurrection faith. We live in the middle of the story — the "in this world you will have trouble" part — but we read it in the light of the ending, which has already been written. The Overcomer overcame. And His overcoming is what our perseverance rests on.

Honduras teaches this.

Lord Jesus, let Your finished victory be the ground my ongoing courage stands on today — in every trouble, let me hear You saying "take heart."

FROM THE NATIONS

Honduras. "I am Sister Karla from San Pedro Sula — once called the murder capital of the world. Our church planted two years in the most dangerous barrio of the city, losing two members to gang violence. We did not leave. Today we have a feeding program reaching two hundred children daily, and six young men who were once in gangs are now our worship team. Jesus has overcome — even here."

October 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." — Luke 12:6-7 (NKJV)

Sparrows were the cheapest commodity in the Jerusalem marketplace — so cheap they were sold five for two pennies, essentially as a buy-four-get-one-free deal. Sparrows were the food of the poor, the birds no one paid particular attention to. And Jesus says: not one of them is forgotten before God.

If that is true of sparrows, what is true of you?

The image of numbered hairs is both intimate and slightly overwhelming. God is not watching you from a distance, tracking the broad strokes of your life. He is aware of you at the cellular level. The hairs that have thinned with age or with stress or with illness — He counted them. The grief that felt invisible to everyone — He catalogued it. The quiet faithfulness that no one noticed — He noticed.

The purpose of this teaching is the repeated word: *don't be afraid*. Jesus is speaking specifically about the fear of persecution, the fear of those who can harm the body. And His antidote is not a geopolitical strategy. It is the knowledge of divine particularity — the God who counts sparrows and hair follicles is with you in the moment of your greatest fear.

I have learned to receive this as an act of worship — to believe that I am individually known by the God of the universe. Not as one of the seven billion, but as a person He calls by name. And so are you.

You are not forgotten. Not even on the days that feel most invisible.

Father, thank You that I am known — not just as a category but as a person, hair by numbered hair — let that truth cast out fear today.

October 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom."
— Psalm 90:12 (NKJV)*

Moses wrote Psalm 90 — the oldest of the Psalms — and it carries the gravity of a man who had seen empires rise and fall, who had watched a whole generation of Israelites die in the desert, who understood viscerally that human life is brief. "Seventy years— or eighty if we have the strength," he writes (v.10). That is our frame. That is the window.

To "number our days" is not a morbid exercise. It is a sanity exercise. The person who has lost track of the brevity of life tends to squander it — on distractions, on postponed courage, on the assumption that the important things can always wait until later. Later has a way of never arriving.

Numbering your days changes what you choose to endure for. A person who knows their time is finite fights through obstacles they might have given up on if they thought they had unlimited years. The mission is clarified. The priorities sharpen. The energy concentrates.

I think about the missionaries in our family who operate with this in view — who left comfortable lives knowing that the years are numbered and who made the decision that nothing would be more worth the investment of their brief days than taking the Gospel to the unreached. They are not heroic people. They are just people who counted.

Count your days today, not to become anxious but to become focused. Let the wisdom that comes from brevity make you bold.

Lord, teach me to number my days — and let the knowledge of my finitude fuel my faithfulness rather than my fear.

October 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!" — 2 Chronicles 15:7 (NKJV)

These words come from the prophet Azariah to King Asa, after a season of national unfaithfulness followed by a return to God. The context is renewal — Israel is turning back, reforming, recommitting. And the word that anchors the moment is this: do not give up. Your work will be rewarded.

I want to sit with "rewarded" for a moment. The word does not mean "applauded by observers." It means the work carries a return, a consequence that flows from its faithfulness. The faithful sowing yields a harvest. The careful building results in a structure that stands. There is a moral architecture to the universe, and faithful work has a weight that registers somewhere — even when it is invisible to us now.

This is not prosperity theology. The reward may come in forms we do not expect, on timelines we did not plan for, in ways that reframe everything we thought we were doing. But it does come. God is not indifferent to faithful labor. "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people," writes the author of Hebrews (6:10).

It is Sunday. Some of you are serving today — preaching, teaching, setting up chairs, watching children, running sound, driving a bus route, visiting the sick. None of it is lost. None of it goes unnoticed by the One who sees all work done in love for His name.

Be strong. Do not give up. The work will be rewarded.

Lord, strengthen every person serving faithfully today in ways that will never make the headline — remind them their work is seen and rewarded by You.

October 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 3:14 (NKJV)

Paul's metaphor is athletic — the runner who leans forward into the finish line, every fiber committed to the forward motion, refusing to let past failures or past victories determine the next stride. "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead" (v.13) — the athlete cannot run the present race while looking over their shoulder.

There are two kinds of backward-looking that can slow our stride. The first is the weight of failure — the sin we cannot forgive in ourselves, the mistake we keep replaying, the way we stumbled and the shame that followed. Paul says: forget it. Not deny it. Not pretend it didn't happen. But release it from your grip and press forward, because Christ has already handled it.

The second is the weight of past success — the great season you keep trying to relive, the ministry model that worked ten years ago and you keep applying to the present, the relationship with God you had in a previous chapter that you keep mourning rather than pressing forward into something new. Paul is here too: let it go. Strain toward what is ahead.

The calling is heavenward. The goal is Christ. Every day you press forward in faithfulness is a day you are moving toward the One who called you and toward the full inheritance waiting at the finish.

Nicaragua runs with this.

Lord, give me the runner's focus today — eyes forward, leaning in, pressing toward You with everything I have.

FROM THE NATIONS

Nicaragua. "I am Pastor Héctor from Matagalpa. For five years our church operated under severe restrictions — no public gatherings, no outside speakers, constant government surveillance. We went underground. Small groups in homes, coded communication, prayer through the night. When the pressure lifted briefly, we surfaced and found that we had grown from seventy-five to two hundred and forty members. The fire cannot be contained by the ones who fear it."

October 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." — Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

Four promises in one verse. I count them carefully because on the days when I am most afraid, I need to know exactly what I have been given.

First: *I will strengthen you*. The word is *amats* — to make firm, to harden, to brace. It is the same root used in "be strong and courageous" throughout Joshua. God is offering to infuse firmness into us that we do not naturally possess.

Second: *I will help you*. Simple, direct, intimate. He comes alongside. This is not God solving it from a distance; it is God entering the situation as a helper.

Third: *I will uphold you*. The image is of a hand beneath — God bearing the weight of us when we can no longer bear it ourselves. He is the floor under the fainting.

Fourth — and this is the one I love most: *with my righteous right hand*. In Hebrew culture, the right hand was the hand of power and honor. And the hand that upholds us is not just powerful — it is *righteous*. It will never misuse the power it holds. The hand that bears us is governed by perfect character.

Do not be afraid today. Not because the threat is not real. Not because the difficulty is not present. But because of whose hand has hold of you.

Father, uphold me today with Your righteous right hand — and let the knowledge of Your grip replace every fear.

October 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." — 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV)

We have spoken about spiritual warfare in the abstract; today's verse brings it very close to home. Peter is not describing a distant cosmic conflict. He is describing something that prowls *around you* — actively, hungrily, looking for an opening.

The lion metaphor is worth sitting with. Lions do not attack the center of the herd. They circle the perimeter, looking for the isolated, the injured, the slow, the young. The strategy of the enemy is consistent throughout Scripture: separate, isolate, pick off the vulnerable. This is why community is not optional for the persevering believer. The lone Christian is the accessible one.

But notice what Peter does not say: he does not say flee. He says *resist*. Stand firm. The appropriate response to the roaring lion is not terrified retreat — it is grounded, faith-based resistance. James 4:7 completes the picture: "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The submission comes first. The resistance flows from the submission.

Alert and sober-minded — these are the characteristics of someone who takes the spiritual battle seriously without being paranoid about it. Not seeing a demon behind every inconvenience, but also not sleepwalking through a war.

Be alert today. Know who you are. Know who your enemy is. Know your God. And stand.

Lord, keep me alert and grounded today — submitted to You, resistant to the enemy, standing firm in the faith.

October 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." — Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NKJV)

We visited the last two verses of this passage in September. But today I want to start where Habakkuk starts — with the full inventory of loss. He names it specifically. Fig tree. Vines. Olive crop. Fields. Sheep pen. Cattle stalls. He is not vaguely sad; he is mapping the precise dimensions of the catastrophe.

And I think that specificity is important. The "yet I will rejoice" only counts for something if it comes after an honest accounting of what the rejoicing is *in spite of*. Generic suffering is easy to speak over. Real, named, specific suffering is where faith has to plant its flag.

What is your inventory right now? Not vaguely — specifically. The diagnosis. The bank account balance. The child who has walked away. The marriage in its third year of silence. The ministry that is not bearing fruit. Name it the way Habakkuk named his.

And then — from that inventory, not past it, not beyond it, but *in the middle of it* — say the "yet." *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD. I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

That is not denial. That is the most courageous act of faith a human being can perform.

Lord, I name what is hard before You today — and from inside it, I choose rejoicing in You.

FROM THE NATIONS

El Salvador. "I am Pastor Miguel from Soyapango on the outskirts of San Salvador. Five years ago gang violence had emptied half our congregation — families fleeing, young men being recruited or killed. We moved our Sunday service to 5 a.m. to avoid the night patrols. From that 5 a.m. church grew something nobody expected: fifty teenagers, former gang members, coming to Christ at dawn. The darkest hours have become our harvest hours."

October 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." — Romans 15:4 (NKJV)

Paul makes a startling claim here about the purpose of the Old Testament. Everything written there — the stories of Noah and Abraham, the Psalms of lamentation, the prophecies of Isaiah, the histories of Israel's failures and returns — all of it was written for *us*, for the purpose of producing in us a particular quality: endurance, encouragement, and hope.

This gives the discipline of Bible reading an entirely different texture. When I read of Abraham waiting decades for the promised son, I am being taught endurance. When I read of David surviving Saul's pursuit while still calling him God's anointed, I am being encouraged in my own situations of unjust treatment. When I read of the exiles in Babylon who kept singing (Psalm 137) and kept praying (Daniel 6), I am given hope that faithfulness survives even captivity.

The Scriptures are a library of perseverance testimony. Every hard story that ended in God's faithfulness is a deposit into the account of your endurance. Every character who hit the wall and kept going is a coach for your own race.

This is why I keep returning to Scripture even on days when I do not feel like it. Not because I am disciplined enough to perform a ritual, but because I have learned that the library contains exactly what I need for the road I am on. The endurance lesson I need today was written down for me. I just need to find the page.

Father, open the Scriptures to me today as the library of hope they are — and let the endurance of the saints who went before me fuel my own.

October 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." — Galatians 6:8b-9 (NKJV)

We began this phase on September 1 with Galatians 6:9. Today I return to the fuller context, including verse 8, because the sowing-to-the-Spirit deserves its own attention.

Paul draws a stark contrast earlier in the chapter between sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit. And he locates the contrast not primarily in dramatic sinful choices, but in where we invest our energy and attention. Every day we are sowing — in our habits, our conversations, our media consumption, our prayer life, our relationships. The question is: which field are we planting in?

Sowing to the Spirit looks like choosing the hard right thing over the easy wrong thing. It looks like investing time in prayer when the return on that investment is invisible. It looks like planting seed in relationships that are not yet yielding — the friend who is not yet a believer, the prodigal who is not yet home, the church that is not yet bearing fruit. It looks like doing good today even when you can see no evidence that it matters.

The reaping is guaranteed — but it belongs to the Spirit's economy, not ours. Eternal life, spiritual harvest, the Kingdom coming in places we planted — that reaping operates on a timeline we cannot control. What we can control is the sowing.

Sow to the Spirit today. The harvest is coming.

Lord, help me sow deliberately to the Spirit today — in prayer, in obedience, in love — and trust the reaping to Your perfect timing.

October 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." — Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)

The writer of Hebrews addresses something that sounds remarkably contemporary: believers drifting away from gathered community. Some were already "in the habit" of skipping the gathering. And the pastoral concern is not primarily about religious obligation — it is about what happens to isolated believers in the face of approaching difficulty.

The Day approaching — whether referring to the fall of Jerusalem (as was imminent when Hebrews was written) or to the Day of the Lord — implies that the close of the age brings intensified pressure. And the instruction is: do not face that intensification alone. Spur one another on. Encourage each other. The more you see the pressure building, the more intentional you should be about community.

Spur is the Greek *paroxysmos* — the same root as "paroxysm," a sharp provocation. We are to provoke each other — positively — toward love and good deeds. Not just sit with each other in the comfortable warmth of the gathered, but to *provoke* each other to actual action. The community is not the destination; it is the launching pad.

Who in your community of faith needs provoking today? Who needs someone to come alongside them and say: your love and your good deeds are needed — don't retreat. And who needs to provoke you?

Father, make me both a receiver and a giver of encouragement in my faith community — and keep me from the habit of isolation.

October 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." — Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

Romans 8:28 might be the most comforting verse in Scripture — and also the most misapplied. It does not say all things are good. It says God *works* all things for good. There is a difference between a statement about the quality of all circumstances and a statement about the purpose at work in them.

The Potter does not declare the clay good before it is formed. He takes what is there — cracked, full of impurities, not yet useful — and works it into something. The working is active, involved, present. God is not an observer of your circumstances; He is an agent in them, working toward an end that aligns with the purpose to which He called you.

The qualifier — "those who love him, called according to his purpose" — is not excluding the suffering believer. It is grounding the promise. The working is not random cosmic karma; it is the specific, covenantal faithfulness of a God who has invested in your life through an act of calling and love. He will not let what He started become waste.

I carry Romans 8:28 not as a glib answer to suffering, but as a working hypothesis: in this situation I cannot understand, I choose to believe that the One who knows the end from the beginning is working. I may not see it from here. I may not understand it from here. But He is working.

Lord, I believe — help my unbelief — that You are working in what I cannot understand today, toward the good You have promised.

FROM THE NATIONS

Costa Rica. "My name is Pastor Andrés Solano from San José. Costa Rica is often considered too comfortable for revival — a stable country with social safety nets. But we have found that comfort has a spiritual hunger underneath it. In the past two years our church has launched a ministry to the urban lonely — professionals in their thirties and forties who have everything and nothing. Forty families now meet weekly in discipleship groups that were not there before. God works for good even in the comfortable places."

October 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me." — Psalm 13:5-6 (NKJV)

Psalm 13 is a short Psalm of lament that turns. It begins with four consecutive "How long?" questions — raw, anguished petitions from someone who feels forgotten and overwhelmed. And then, without any recorded change in circumstances, the tone pivots: *but I trust in your unfailing love.*

That pivot is one of the most instructive moments in the Psalter. Nothing external has shifted. The enemy is still present. The danger is still real. The unanswered questions are still open. And yet the psalmist makes an interior move — a choice of trust based not on evidence of answered prayer, but on the character of God revealed in past experience: *he has been good to me.*

The praise at the end of Psalm 13 is not the praise of resolution. It is the praise of perseverance — the decision to sing even while waiting for the "how long" to be answered. This is what I sometimes call the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15) — when praise costs something, when it is offered against the grain of feeling, when it is the most deliberate act of faith you make all day.

The trust in verse 5 is the ground. The rejoicing is the fruit. And the singing is the declaration — I will do this publicly, I will put my stake in the ground, I will not wait until the circumstances change to worship.

Sing today. Even if your "how long" is still unanswered.

Father, I choose trust before resolution today — let my praise be the most honest thing about me right now.

October 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time," — 1 Peter 5:6 (NKJV)

There is a timing built into this verse that we tend to rush past: *in due time*. God will lift up — but not on our timetable. The lifting is certain; the schedule is His. And the posture required while we wait is humility.

Humility, in the biblical sense, is not self-deprecation. It is accurate self-assessment — seeing myself as I truly am in relation to who God truly is. It is the willingness to let Him be large and let me be appropriately small, without that smallness being shameful. Humility under God's mighty hand is the posture of a person who has stopped trying to run their own case before heaven's tribunal and has entrusted their cause to the Judge.

What are you trying to vindicate right now? What reputation are you managing, what case are you building, what position are you defending? The temptation in seasons of trial is to fight for ourselves — loudly, anxiously, strategically. Peter says: put yourself under His hand instead. Let Him carry your case. Let Him choose the timing of your lifting.

This is one of the hardest forms of perseverance — not the perseverance of pressing forward, but the perseverance of *waiting* for God to act on your behalf without taking matters into your own hands. Every day you remain humbly under His hand rather than grabbing the wheel is a day of genuine faithfulness.

Lord, I humble myself under Your mighty hand today — I release my case to You, and I trust Your timing for my lifting.

October 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

Perhaps no verse in the New Testament has been more taken out of context — slapped on sports jerseys and motivational posters as if it means "I can win any competition I attempt." But the context is Philippians 4:11-12, where Paul has just described being "content in whatever state I am" — in plenty and in want, in abundance and in need. The "all this" he can do through Christ is not athletic victory; it is *contentment through extremity*.

This actually makes the verse *more* powerful, not less. To be serene in prison and joyful under persecution and at peace in poverty — that requires a supernatural strength that no natural willpower can produce. The strength Christ gives is not the strength to dominate; it is the strength to be stable. To remain whole when your circumstances are trying to fragment you. To keep loving when every earthly reason to love has been removed.

I have met people who carry this strength. They are not triumphalists who claim immunity from hardship. They are people who have been through enough that you can see the depth in their eyes, and from that depth they speak with a peace that genuinely does not make rational sense given what they have endured. That is Philippians 4:13 in action.

What strength do you need today — not to win, but to remain whole?

Christ, be my strength today not for triumph but for steadiness — fill me with the contentment that holds in every state.

FROM THE NATIONS

Panama. "I am Pastor Eduardo Ríos from the Darién region, where migrants pass through in vast numbers on their way north. For two years our church has been present at the jungle exit — with water, food, medical care, and the Gospel. We have seen people arrive having buried their children on the trail. We hold them. We pray with them. Thirty have given their lives to Christ in the jungle itself. The strength to serve the broken is not our own."

October 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." — Ephesians 6:13 (NKJV)

We talked about the nature of spiritual warfare earlier this month. Today I want to focus on one repeated word in Ephesians 6: *stand*. It appears three times in this passage (verses 11, 13, 14). Paul is not primarily calling for advance or assault. He is calling for ground-holding.

Sometimes the most spiritually heroic thing you can do is simply not give up the ground you already occupy. In warfare, holding a position under attack requires as much courage as taking a new position. The believers Paul is writing to are under fire — from cultural pressure, religious persecution, spiritual opposition — and the instruction is: do not cede ground. Stand.

"After you have done everything, to stand." That phrase captures the exhaustion of long spiritual warfare. You have prayed. You have resisted. You have held the armor in place. You have pushed back against the pressure. And it is still there. And the instruction is: stand. Not try something new. Not give up. *Stand*.

There is a form of perseverance that looks like passivity to outside observers — the person who is no longer strategizing, no longer striving, who has simply planted their feet and refused to move. That stillness can be the most powerful posture on the battlefield. The soldier who will not break.

Put on the armor today. Stand your ground. That is enough.

Lord of hosts, when I have done everything — keep me standing. Give me the grace not to cede one inch of ground You have given me.

October 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth." — Psalm 121:1-2 (NKJV)

We ended September with the closing verses of Psalm 121. Today I want to begin where the Psalm begins — with the upward look.

The setting is a pilgrim on the road to Jerusalem, surrounded by mountains. In the ancient world, mountains were associated with both majesty and danger — they were where robbers hid, where the road was treacherous, where you could be surprised. And the pilgrim's instinctive response to threat is: look up.

The question is genuine — *where does my help come from?* Not rhetorical. The pilgrim is asking. Looking at the mountains and asking where the help will arrive from. Is it from the fortified city at the summit? Is it from the mercenary camped above? Is it from my own legs that must carry me through?

And the answer redirects the gaze entirely: not from the mountains themselves, but from the Maker of them. The One who created the terrain that threatens you is the One who will help you through it. The God of the peaks and the valleys is your help — not the creatures or features of the landscape, but the Creator behind it all.

Lift your eyes today. Not to your circumstances, not to the mountains of your difficulty, but to the One who made the mountains. He is bigger than what is big to you.

Maker of heaven and earth, I lift my eyes to You today — be my help in every altitude and every valley.

October 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." — Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)

One of the quiet gifts of perseverance is the discovery that God does not change. Circumstances change — dramatically, sometimes traumatically. Seasons change. People change. Strength changes. Feeling changes. And in the middle of all that flux, Hebrews 13:8 is a fixed point, an anchor: He is the same.

The same Jesus who walked through Galilee healing every person who came to Him — He is the same today. The same Jesus who wept at Lazarus's tomb, who touched the leper, who stopped in a crowd to find the woman who touched His garment — He is the same. The same Jesus who endured Gethsemane without flinching from the cup — He is the same. The same Jesus who said "it is finished" and meant it — He is the same.

Why does this matter for perseverance? Because we can be tempted to believe that the God who was present in our previous season is somehow less available in this one. That the closeness we felt in the early days of faith has worn thin. That the miracles we have read about in other people's stories don't apply to us. The unchanging nature of Christ is the direct answer to every one of those lies.

What you need today is the same thing that has always been provided. The same love, the same grace, the same power, the same steadiness. He has not updated His character. He has not become less.

Lord, thank You that You are the same today as You have always been — let that truth steady me in everything that changes.

October 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." — 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

This verse is the conclusion of Paul's great resurrection chapter — 1 Corinthians 15, the most thorough treatment of resurrection in the New Testament. And the *therefore* is everything. Because of the resurrection — because death has been swallowed in victory, because Christ is risen, because we too will be raised — *therefore*: stand firm.

Resurrection changes the algebra of perseverance entirely. If death is the end, then suffering is simply suffering — pointless, if prolonged. But if death is not the end, if the story continues beyond the grave, if the faithful laborer is not buried with their labor but raised with it — then no work done in love for the Lord is wasted. Not one prayer. Not one act of service. Not one sacrifice. Not one year of faithfulness in obscurity.

"Your labor in the Lord is not in vain." This is a promise with eternal scope. The labor that seems invisible now, that seems to be disappearing into the earth like seed — it is not vanishing. It is being held by the God of resurrection. It will appear on the other side of death transformed and vindicated.

Stand firm today. Let nothing move you. Give yourself fully. Because the resurrection is real — and because the resurrection is real, nothing you do in His name is ever the last word.

Father, let the reality of resurrection fuel my perseverance today — let me work with my eyes on the horizon that death cannot obscure.

FROM THE NATIONS

Colombia. "I am Pastor Luisa Vargas from Medellín. Our city has known violence for generations — but it has also known revival. In 2024 we planted a church in the neighborhood of Villa Hermosa, the most dangerous sector, with twelve families. Today we are one hundred and twenty, with a medical clinic and a school for displaced children. The resurrection principle is real in Medellín — what was dead is rising. We are witnesses."

October 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." — Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

This verse is the theological foundation for everything we have been building through the Perseverance season. It is not about what I can endure. It is about Who lives in me and does the enduring through me.

The crucified life is not a spiritual achievement; it is a spiritual reception. I did not crucify myself — I was crucified *with* Christ. The old life that could not persevere, the self that was driven by self-preservation and approval and fear — that self has been crucified. And what rose in its place is not a better version of me; it is Christ Himself, living in this body.

The phrase "faith in the Son of God, who loved me" is the engine. It is personal and particular: who loved *me*. Not humanity in the abstract. Not the world in general. Me — by name, with knowledge of every failure and every fear, with full awareness of what He was taking on — *me* He loved. And for me He gave Himself.

That kind of love is the only thing that can produce the kind of perseverance this season is asking for. Willpower runs out. Self-discipline has its limits. But a life rooted in the love of One who loved you at infinite cost — that life can endure what nothing else can, because the power is not the life; the power is Christ in the life.

Lord Jesus, live Your life through me today — and let the "I" that perseveres be less me and more You.

October 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:38-39 (NKJV)

We arrive near the end of October with what might be the most magnificent declaration of security in all of Scripture. Paul has catalogued every category of potential threat — death and life, angelic powers and demonic ones, present circumstances and future ones, every spatial and temporal dimension imaginable — and his conclusion is absolute: *nothing* separates.

The love of God in Christ Jesus is not a fragile thread that can be broken by hard circumstances. It is not a conditional arrangement that lapses when our performance drops. It is not a sentiment that fades when the feeling disappears. It is a settled, permanent, unbreakable reality that holds regardless of what attacks it from the outside or what fails on the inside.

I want to name something pastoral: the enemy's primary weapon is not external circumstance — it is the internal lie that God has withdrawn. That this suffering means He does not care. That this silence means He has left. That this failing means the relationship is broken. Romans 8:38-39 is the demolition of that lie.

You are not separated. Not when you cannot feel it. Not when you have sinned. Not when the prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling. Not when the darkness is thick. Not when death itself comes. You are not separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Let that hold you today.

Lord, let Romans 8:38-39 be the anchor of my soul today — convinced, not just hoping, that nothing separates me from Your love.

October 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." — Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

I cannot read this verse without emotion, even after all these years. The image is almost unbelievable: the God of the universe *singing* — and the song is about you. Not a song of correction, not a song of mourning, but a song of delight. The Creator of all things takes great delight in *you* specifically.

Zephaniah writes this to a people returning from exile — beaten, diminished, ashamed, unsure they deserve anything but judgment. And God's word to them is not "here is your corrective action plan." It is: *I take great delight in you. I will rejoice over you with singing.*

This is the heart of perseverance: knowing that we are held not only by a powerful God but by a *delighting* God. Not a God who tolerates us. Not a God who endures our fumbling with divine patience. A God who *sings* over us.

I believe there is a generation of believers who have endured with gritted teeth — people who know God is sovereign but are not sure He is happy about them. They persist out of duty, not out of delight. But the invitation here goes deeper: you can also receive. You can let the God who sings over you sing over you. You can be, in the midst of your perseverance, someone who knows they are delighted in.

Venezuela needs this word. And so do I.

Father, let me receive Your delight today — not just Your authority, not just Your purpose, but Your song over my life.

FROM THE NATIONS

Venezuela. "I am Pastor Carlos from Barquisimeto. The economic crisis hollowed out our congregation — people emigrated by the hundreds of thousands. We watched families leave, month after month. But those who stayed became something different: a remnant church, lean and fierce in prayer. Our Tuesday night intercession group is now our most powerful meeting. Thirty intercessors, most over sixty years old, praying Venezuela back to life. They are singing."

October 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." — 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Paul writes this to Timothy, his son in the faith, who is clearly struggling with timidity. Timothy is young, he may be naturally temperamental, and the stakes of his ministry are high. And Paul does not say: "Try harder, be bolder, muster more courage." He goes to the root: *God gave us a spirit.*

The character of the Spirit we have received is not compatible with fear. Not as a command ("you should not be afraid") but as a theological reality ("what you have been given is not fear"). Fear is a counterfeit spirit — it is real, it is powerful, but it is not what God gave. When fear governs us, something has gotten in that doesn't belong.

Three things belong: *power* — the capacity to act beyond our natural limitation; *love* — the motivation that outlasts fear-based religion; *self-control* — the sober-mindedness that keeps power and love working together without becoming recklessness. This is a complete picture of the Spirit-filled life: powerful, loving, and disciplined.

The Eve of Reformation Day is a fitting place for this word. The Reformers were not fearless in the natural sense — Luther trembled. But they acted from something larger than their fear. They had received what God had given: power that outlasted the threat, love for the truth that outlasted the institutional pressure, and a self-controlled clarity about what they were willing to die for.

You have received the same Spirit. Let Him have the room He deserves.

Lord, I receive again today the spirit of power, love, and self-control — let it displace every fear that has been occupying ground it doesn't own.

October 31, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all." — Psalm 34:19 (NKJV)

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door at Wittenberg, Germany — and a movement that would reform the Christian church was born. Reformation Day is not a holiday I take lightly. It represents what happens when one person, standing on Scripture alone, refuses to let fear be the final word.

Luther did not know what would happen. He was not a strategic revolutionary plotting a takeover of the church. He was a troubled pastor who had found the grace of God in the pages of Romans and could no longer be silent. *Sola Scriptura. Sola Fide. Sola Gratia. Solus Christus. Soli Deo Gloria.* The five solas were not a new theology — they were a return to the original. They were an act of perseverance against centuries of accumulated distortion.

And the personal cost was enormous. Luther was excommunicated, threatened with death, declared a heretic. He spent months in hiding at the Wartburg. He buried children. He faced down the powers of empire with nothing but a Bible and a conviction that the God who justifies the ungodly was worth everything.

Psalm 34:19 was his lived experience: many troubles. Real troubles. The kind that do not yield to easy prayer. But the LORD delivered. Not from the risk — into the risk and through it.

What is your Wittenberg door today? What truth have you been afraid to nail to the wall? The God who sustained the Reformers sustains you.

Lord, give us the Reformers' courage — to stand on Scripture alone, to trust in grace alone, to seek Your glory above every earthly cost.

PART FIVE

Joy Unshakable

November 1 - December 31, 2026

November 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," — Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

All Saints Day arrives like the first cool morning of autumn — brisk, clarifying, full of something that feels older and deeper than a single season. I love this day because it pulls back the curtain just enough for us to see we are not running alone. There is a great company cheering from the far side of the finish line.

Think about that image for a moment. Every faithful mother who prayed through the night, every missionary who never saw the harvest, every martyr who stood firm — they are not absent. They are witnesses. The word in Greek, *martyres*, carries the weight of people who testified with their lives. Their testimony does not fade when they pass from this world; it echoes forward into ours.

Today I want us to enter the JOY phase of this year with that picture in view. November is our month of gratitude, and what better gift to begin with than the realization that our faith is not a solitary endeavor? We stand on the shoulders of countless brothers and sisters who chose faithfulness when it cost them everything. They cleared a path. They preserved the Word. They planted churches in villages where no one had heard the Name.

Joy does not begin in comfort. It begins in belonging — knowing you are part of something vast and holy that began long before you drew your first breath. You belong to this communion. You belong to this race. So throw off what weighs you down, lift your eyes, and run.

Father, thank You for the saints who ran before me — let their faithfulness today be the wind at my back.

November 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." — 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

There is a slender word tucked inside this passage that I cannot move past: *always*. Not "when things are going well." Not "during the comfortable seasons." Always. Paul wrote these words from inside a life that included beatings, shipwrecks, imprisonment, and hunger — and he still says *rejoice always*. That is either the most unrealistic command in the New Testament, or it is pointing to a joy that operates on an entirely different engine than happiness does.

Happiness runs on circumstances. Joy runs on something else — on the settled knowledge that God is good, that Christ is risen, that the story does not end in darkness. That kind of joy can breathe even in hard air.

I think of our family in Brazil, where the gospel continues to advance with remarkable energy even amid the deep social pressures of a rapidly changing culture. Joy is not naive there. It is chosen — fiercely, gratefully chosen.

The instruction to "pray continually" and "give thanks in all circumstances" is not a formula for positive thinking. It is a discipline of reorientation. When we pray, we remember who holds all things. When we give thanks, we train our hearts to notice grace. Both habits dig the channel through which joy flows.

Today, try this: before you check your phone, before you open the news, take one minute to say aloud three specific things you are grateful for. Not general blessings — *specific* ones. The warmth of a cup of coffee. A friend's name. A promise God kept. Joy grows in the soil of noticed grace.

Lord, teach me to give thanks before I understand and to rejoice before I can explain why.

FROM THE NATIONS

Brazil. Pastor Edson Lima writes from São Paulo's northern district, where his small discipleship group has grown from twelve members to over eighty in two years. "We meet in a borrowed room above a bakery," he says, "and the smell of fresh bread fills our worship. Each week someone new walks in carrying a

question and leaves carrying hope. Joy is not abstract here — it has a face and a name."

November 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"To the Chief Musician. To the tune of "Death of the Son." A Psalm of David. I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works." — Psalm 9:1 (NKJV)

There is a certain kind of person who, when asked how they are doing, lists what God has done before they describe how they feel. I want to be that person. The psalmist models it here: not "I feel great today" but "I will tell of all the marvelous things You have done." The praise precedes the emotion and, mysteriously, the emotion follows the praise.

This month we are leaning into gratitude as the doorway to joy. But gratitude is not passive — it is an act of the will. David says *I will*. Not "I feel like it today" or "when the mood strikes me." He is setting his face toward God the way a sunflower sets its face toward the light. It is a decision made before the day's events are known.

What marvelous things has God done in your life? I mean specifically. Not "He saved me" as a theological abstraction, but the moment, the year, the conversation, the unexpected provision — the time the diagnosis was reversed, the time the prodigal walked back through the door, the time a verse seemed to leap off the page and find the exact wound you had been hiding. Those are the stories that need telling.

And they need telling not just to God but *to others*. The Hebrew *saphar* — "I will tell" — is a word of declaration, of narration, of sharing. Your story of what God has done is medicine for someone sitting next to you in the pew, in the break room, in the waiting room. Tell it. Don't let the marvelous things go unspoken.

Praise is the first grammar of joy. Learn to speak it fluently.

Father, give me the words today to tell of Your goodness — and give me someone willing to listen.

November 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness," — Psalm 30:11 (NKJV)

Grief and joy are not opposites. That is one of the most important things I have learned in decades of pastoral ministry. They are more like two seasons of the same soul — both real, both necessary, both held in the hands of a God who is present in each one.

Psalm 30 is a psalm of recovery. David has come through something — illness, perhaps, or exile, or spiritual darkness — and he is standing on the other side of it, astonished. "You turned my mourning into dancing." Notice: he does not say God *replaced* his mourning, as though it never happened. He says God *turned* it. The mourning was real. The sackcloth was real. And then the transformation was real.

This is one of the things that makes the Christian story so different from every self-help philosophy I have encountered. We don't ask you to pretend the hard things away. We don't offer a spirituality that floats above suffering. We offer a God who enters suffering — who wore our flesh, who wept at Lazarus's tomb — and then transforms it from the inside.

If you are still in the mourning season today, I want you to know: the God who dances is already moving toward you. You cannot see the other bank yet, but He is already there. And if you have recently come through a dark valley, let this psalm be your song this morning. You are clothed with joy now. Wear it.

There is a kind of gratitude that only grief can produce — a depth, a richness, a tenderness toward others in pain. Don't waste your suffering. Let God turn it into something that can help another person find their way home.

Lord, where mourning still lingers in me today, begin the turning — I trust Your choreography.

November 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed." — Psalm 34:5 (NKJV)

I have met people who look like joy. You probably have too — those individuals who carry a quiet luminosity about them, whose presence makes a room feel more like it belongs to God. When you ask what their secret is, they do not have a program to offer. They simply say something like: "I keep my eyes on Jesus." That is the whole answer.

Psalm 34 was written by David in a moment of great personal embarrassment — he had just pretended to be insane to escape from a foreign king. Not his finest hour. And yet from that humiliating low point, he writes one of the most joy-saturated psalms in the entire collection. "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears" (v. 4). Radiance came not from having his life together but from looking in the right direction.

Shame is one of the most powerful enemies of joy. It tells us we are too broken, too far gone, too disqualified for anything good. It turns our eyes relentlessly inward, cataloguing every failure, comparing every deficiency. Shame always talks, and it never has anything helpful to say.

But when we look to God — genuinely turn our gaze toward Him — something in His face changes something in ours. The shame has no hold on a face that is looking at Grace. Radiance is not an achievement; it is a side effect of sustained attention toward Jesus.

Today, wherever shame is speaking to you, look up. Let the light fall on your face. You are not disqualified. You are invited. And those who come to Him are radiant.

Lord Jesus, I lift my face toward You — let Your light be the only light I need today.

November 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him." — Psalm 28:7 (NKJV)

My heart leaps for joy. I love that phrase because it is so physical — not a tidy, polite satisfaction but an involuntary upward lurch, the way you feel when someone you love walks into the room unexpectedly. Joy does that to the body. It cannot stay in the mind.

Psalm 28 moves in a beautiful arc: crisis, cry, trust, then explosion of praise. David goes from "Do not be deaf to my cry" (v. 1) to "my heart leaps for joy" (v. 7) in seven verses. What changed? Not his circumstances — Saul was still hunting him when he wrote many of these psalms. What changed was his posture. "My heart trusts in him, and he helps me." The trust came first; the joy came as its fruit.

This is something I want our CMM family in Argentina to know we are praying for today. The economic pressures on our partners there are real and persistent. Many of them are doing ministry at great personal cost, in neighborhoods where hope is scarce. And yet the reports we receive are not reports of defeat — they are reports of people whose hearts are leaping for joy because they have found a strength that no economic collapse can devalue.

God as shield means the arrows aimed at your joy — worry, shame, exhaustion, comparison — cannot reach the place where your trust lives. He absorbs what would destroy you. That is not a metaphor; it is a reality millions of believers have tested and found true.

Whatever arrows are flying today, hide behind the Shield. Then let your heart do what it was made to do.

Lord, be my strength when I am empty and my shield when I am exposed — and let joy be the overflow.

FROM THE NATIONS

Argentina. Pastor Rodrigo Salinas ministers in the La Matanza district of greater Buenos Aires, where CMM has supported leadership training for three years. "We

gathered forty-two new believers last Sunday in a home the size of most Americans' kitchens," he writes. "People sit on the floor and on windowsills. When we sing, the neighbors stop and listen. Joy is not a luxury here — it is the proof that Jesus is real."

November 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." — James 1:17 (NKJV)

One of the great practices of a grateful life is the discipline of tracing gifts back to their source. A good meal is a gift, but it came from hands that planted and harvested and cooked. A friendship is a gift, but it came from a God who decided that humans should not be alone. A moment of unexpected peace in the middle of a hard week is a gift, but it came from a Father who "gives sleep to his loved ones" (Ps. 127:2). Everything good has an origin — and the origin is always the same place.

James tells us that God does not change like shifting shadows. This is a word picture drawn from the movement of the sun and the shadows it casts — by noon, your shadow is small; by late afternoon it stretches out ahead of you. Everything physical changes throughout the day. But God's goodness, God's generosity, God's character — these do not shift with the hour.

That is the ground of genuine gratitude. If God's goodness were variable — generous today, withholding tomorrow — gratitude would always be anxious, always checking the forecast. But because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, every good thing I receive today is evidence of a character that will not change. I can say "thank You" and mean it, knowing the Giver has no intention of becoming someone else.

This week, I invite you to keep a simple running list — on your phone, on paper, anywhere. Every good thing you notice, trace it back. Write it down. By the end of the week you will have evidence you cannot argue with: you are loved by a lavishly generous God.

Father of lights, open my eyes today to every good gift You have quietly placed in my path.

November 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever." — Psalm 23:6 (NKJV)

Most of us are familiar with Psalm 23 from the front — the green pastures, the still waters, the valley of the shadow. But I want to walk up from behind this morning and look at the last verse. "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."

The Hebrew word for "follow" here is *radaph* — and it actually means to *pursue*, to chase hard. The goodness and lovingkindness of God are not ambling leisurely behind you; they are in full pursuit. The same word is used when Pharaoh's chariots pursue Israel toward the sea. The same relentless energy — but now on the side of grace.

Think about what your life looks like from behind. Every hard turn, every moment you almost gave up, every season that felt like abandonment — and behind all of it, if you could see clearly, there is Goodness running after you. Catching up to you. Arriving exactly on time.

I remember a CMM partner years ago who told me she had only connected the dots when she looked backward. "At the time I thought God had forgotten me," she said. "Looking back, I see He was preparing something I could not have received until I had been through that valley." That is the testimony of almost every mature believer I have ever met — the goodness was always there, even when it was invisible.

November is a good month to look backward. Not to dwell in the past, but to notice the trail of grace. Goodness has been chasing you your whole life. And one day — forever — you will live in the very house where it dwells.

Lord, let me see today what I could not see then — the places Your goodness was running after me.

November 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." — Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)

It is always worth remembering the context of this beloved verse. Jeremiah is writing to people in exile — in Babylon, far from home, far from the temple, surrounded by a culture that does not know their God. These are not people riding a spiritual high. They are people asking: "Has God forgotten us? Did we get it wrong? Is this the end of our story?"

And into that specific grief, into that particular confusion, God speaks with astonishing tenderness. "I know the plans I have for you." Not "I improvised because you failed." Not "Here is your consolation prize." Plans. Deliberate, forward-looking, hope-laden plans. Before the exile began, before the exile ends, the plans are already in motion.

Our CMM brothers and sisters in Chile have taught me this passage in a new register. I think of our partners in Santiago who planted a church in an underserved neighborhood and spent three years wondering if the ground would ever yield fruit. Then, quietly, the harvest began. Not dramatically — person by person, family by family. The plans God had were larger than the plans they could see.

If you are in a Babylon season today — displaced, confused, wondering whether the thing you are building has any future — I want to say this gently: you are not outside the plan. The plan includes exile, and it includes homecoming. God is not surprised by where you are. His plans do not require your circumstances to be tidy before they can operate.

Hope and a future. That is what He is working toward, on your behalf, even now.

Lord, give me today the patience to trust plans I cannot yet see and the hope to keep walking forward.

FROM THE NATIONS

Chile. Pastor Adriana Vergara oversees a discipleship center in Concepción, where CMM training materials have equipped twelve local leaders over the past eighteen months. "We started with a borrowed plastic table and four chairs," she writes. "Now we have seventy people gathering in a renovated space donated by a local business owner. Jeremiah 29:11 is painted on our wall — we read it every time we enter."

November 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:" — Psalm 103:2 (NKJV)

Forgetting is one of the great spiritual hazards — not forgetting God's existence, but forgetting His benefits. This is a subtle drift. We can remain theologically orthodox and practically amnesiac — knowing God is good but not noticing where His goodness landed in our week. Psalm 103 is David's remedy: a deliberate act of remembering.

Notice what follows in the psalm: forgiveness of all iniquity, healing of diseases, redemption from the pit, crowning with lovingkindness and mercy, satisfaction with good things so that youth is renewed like the eagle's (vv. 3-5). This is not a vague list of spiritual generalities. These are categories of actual experience. Things God has actually done.

The discipline of not forgetting requires effort because our minds are designed to normalize. A miracle that astonished us on Monday becomes background noise by Thursday. The answered prayer we wept over in March is just a fact by November. The human mind is relentlessly adaptive — and in its efficiency, it quietly files away the wonders.

So David speaks to himself: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." It is an interior sermon, a redirecting of his own attention. He is not waiting for a feeling of gratitude to arrive; he is commanding himself toward it. And in commanding himself, he finds what he was looking for.

Try this today: pause for two minutes and list, by name and date if you can, five things God has done for you this year that you might be forgetting. Write them down. Read them out loud. Then say "thank You" to the God who did them. Joy begins there — in the specific, honest remembering of grace.

Lord, forgive me for the forgetting — and awaken my soul today to count what You have done.

November 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." — John 15:13 (NKJV)

On this Veterans Day, I pause to honor the men and women who wore the uniform of this nation and put themselves between danger and those they loved. There is a conversation I had years ago with a former Marine, now a pastor, that I have never forgotten. He told me that what he missed most about military service was not the adrenaline — it was the brotherhood. "Those men would have died for me," he said. "I would have died for them. I have never felt that in a church — not once." That broke something in me. I went home and prayed for a long time.

Jesus says the greatest love is the love that lays down its life. He says it on the night before He demonstrates it. He is not offering a theory; He is announcing what morning will look like. The cross was not the end of a conversation — it was the answer to it. The question had always been: how much? And the cross says: to here. This far. All the way.

Veterans understand the cost of that kind of love in ways most of us can only imagine. Many carry wounds — visible and invisible — that are the price of choosing others above themselves. Today I pray for those who served, for those who grieve ones who did not come home, and for those who returned carrying a weight they have not yet found words for.

And I pray for the Church — that we would recover this kind of love. Not the comfortable kind that costs us nothing, but the kind that lays something real on the altar. The Great Commission is not a project. It is a love offering.

Lord, make me brave enough to love the way You love — all the way to the end, holding nothing back.

November 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." — Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

I want you to sit with this verse for a moment before you read anything else today. God rejoices over you with singing. Read it again slowly. The God who spoke galaxies into existence, who sustains every atom in the cosmos by the word of His power — that God takes delight in you. He sings over you. Not because you are impressive, but because you are His.

This is one of the most tender images in all of Scripture, and it comes from a minor prophet most people skip over. Zephaniah wrote in a time of deep national corruption. His earlier chapters are hard — judgment, warning, lamentation. But here, at the end, like a note slipped under a locked door, comes this staggering declaration: Your God is a Mighty Warrior who saves, and He is singing.

The verb "rejoice over" in Hebrew carries connotations of spinning, whirling — the kind of joy that cannot contain itself in stillness. This is not a resigned fondness for broken humanity. This is an active, exuberant, delight-filled love directed specifically at you. It began before you were born, it held through every season you want to forget, and it has not quieted.

When I feel insignificant — and there are days when the scope of global need is so vast that one pastor in Fort Mill, SC seems beside the point — I come back to this verse. I am not beside the point. Neither are you. We are the point of the song.

Let that be the foundation under your day today. Underneath whatever you face, there is a song. And it has your name in it.

Father, let me hear Your song today above every other voice — and let it be enough.

November 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." — John 15:11 (NKJV)

Joy was not an afterthought in the ministry of Jesus. It was a stated goal. He spoke the words of John 15 to His disciples the night before His crucifixion — the night of the Upper Room, the washing of feet, the breaking of bread. A night heavy with the weight of what was coming. And in the middle of it, He says: *I want My joy to be in you. I want your joy to be complete.*

Complete joy. Not partial joy, not cautious joy, not joy that leaves a margin for disappointment. Complete. The Greek *pepleroménē* means filled up, lacking nothing. It is the same word used of a net full of fish, a jar full of water. Jesus wants your joy full to the brim.

But look at what precedes this verse: the command to abide in Him, to keep His commandments, to love as He has loved. Joy, it turns out, is not a starting condition — it is a result. It grows in the context of abiding, of obedience, of love. You cannot manufacture it in isolation. It comes as a fruit of the vine, not as a product of willpower.

Our CMM partners in Bolivia have pressed this truth on me more than once. Pastor Miguel and his wife serve in a remote Andean village where the church meets outdoors in cold air and the resources are minimal. But the reports they send are full of this word — *gozo*, joy. Not because life is easy. Because they are abiding in the Vine, and the Vine produces what the worker cannot.

Are you abiding today? That is the question beneath the question. Joy will take care of itself if the root is healthy.

Lord Jesus, let me abide so deeply in You today that Your joy finds no barrier in me.

FROM THE NATIONS

Bolivia. Pastor Miguel Quispe writes from the village of Patacamaya on the Bolivian altiplano, where CMM has supported a two-year leadership training cohort. "We lost our meeting space in a flood last winter," he says, "but within two weeks, three families had opened their homes. The church did not shrink — it multiplied. Joy is the thing you cannot take from us, because it does not live in

buildings."

November 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." — Colossians 3:16 (NKJV)

The word *richly* here stopped me this morning. Not "let the Word of Christ sit comfortably at the edges of your life." Not "permit it a place on the shelf." Let it *dwell among you richly* — as a wealthy guest who fills the house, who moves from room to room, who changes the furniture of every conversation, every decision, every relationship.

Paul's instruction is to the community, not just to the individual. The Word dwells richly when we teach one another, when we speak the truth in love, when we sing together with gratitude. This is a communal project. You cannot fully receive the richness of Christ's word in isolation; it needs the texture of other voices, other experiences, other songs.

I think about what it means when the Church gathers — really gathers, not just occupying space in rows, but genuinely sharing life together — and how different that is from the privatized spirituality our culture defaults to. Singing together does something that singing alone cannot do. Teaching one another does something that reading alone cannot do. The Word becomes richly present precisely when it moves between us.

Gratitude in the heart is the key phrase. Paul does not say "singing to God enthusiastically" or "singing to God correctly." He says *with gratitude in your hearts*. The music is the outward form; the gratitude is the fuel. Gratitude-fueled worship is the most honest kind — it knows what it has been given and cannot stay quiet about it.

Today, find someone to share a Scripture with. Send a text, make a call, write a note. Let the Word move between you. That is richness.

Lord, let Your Word be at home in every room of my life — a wealthy, welcomed, transforming presence.

November 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." — Nehemiah 8:10b (NKJV)

This short sentence is one of those verses that can sound like a bumper sticker until you read it in context — and then it becomes one of the most profound things in the Bible. The people of Israel have just heard the Law read aloud for the first time in a generation. They are weeping. The weight of all they have failed to do, all they have been without, all the years of silence has landed on them. And Ezra and Nehemiah say: this is not a day for mourning. This is a holy day. Go eat, go celebrate, share with those who have nothing, and know this: the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Joy as strength — not as a reward for strength, not as a side effect of success, but as the very source of resilience. This reorders everything. If joy were a luxury, we could do without it when life gets hard and simply grit our teeth. But if joy is the fuel — if it is the substance of our capacity to keep going — then protecting and cultivating joy is not self-indulgence. It is survival.

The enemy of your soul knows this. That is why he works so hard to drain your joy — through accusation, exhaustion, comparison, grief without resolution, busyness without meaning. His strategy is not primarily to make you do something wrong but to make you too tired and joyless to do anything right.

Guard your joy. Not with a forced smile, but by returning, again and again, to the source: the Lord Himself, whose presence is the joy, whose goodness is the strength, whose love is the thing that never runs dry.

Lord, be my joy today — and let that joy be the strength I need for every step ahead of me.

November 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." — Psalm 107:1 (NKJV)

Psalm 107 is one long tapestry of testimony. It moves from desert wanderers to prisoners, from the sick to sailors in a storm, and in every case the pattern is the same: they were in trouble, they cried out, God delivered, and they gave thanks. The refrain repeats four times: "Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind" (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31). It is a liturgy of remembered rescue.

The opening verse is the foundation of the whole song: God is good, and His love endures forever. That is not a greeting card sentiment — it is a theological load-bearing wall. Every testimony in the psalm leans against it. If His love endured only for a season, the wanderer's rescue would be a lucky break. But because His love endures *forever*, every rescue is evidence of a character that never changes.

I think of our CMM family in the Dominican Republic today, where the work of church planting is embedded in communities still rebuilding from economic and environmental pressures. Our partners there could tell their own version of Psalm 107 — of being in desperate straits, crying out, and finding that the God who parted the Red Sea was still parting things. His love endures not just in the abstract but in the specific geography of their lives.

What is your Psalm 107 story? Where were you when you cried out, and where did God meet you? Those stories deserve to be told. They deserve to be written down, shared around a table, passed to your children. The proof of God's enduring love is written in your personal history — do not let it go unread.

Lord, let my gratitude today be specific — naming the places and the moments where Your love proved itself enduring.

FROM THE NATIONS

Dominican Republic. Pastor Yolanda Méndez oversees three house churches in the Sabana Grande de Boyá region, where CMM has partnered in evangelism training since 2023. "One woman in our newest group had not stepped inside any church in twenty years," she writes. "She came because her neighbor brought food

after a storm. Two weeks later, she gave her life to Christ over coffee and a Bible verse. His love endured through twenty years of her absence and found her in a kitchen."

November 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart." — Psalm 37:4 (NKJV)

I used to read this verse as a transaction: delight in God, then He gives you what you want. A kind of spiritual vending machine. But the longer I have walked with Jesus, the more I think the verse means something far more wonderful than that. When you truly delight in the Lord — when He becomes your greatest joy, your primary pleasure, your first resort — something happens to your desires. They begin to change. They align with His. And then He gives them, not as a payment for devotion, but because they have become the same thing.

The word *delight* in Hebrew is *anag* — to be soft, pliable, tender with pleasure. Like a hand cradling something beautiful. To delight in the Lord is to hold Him gently, attentively, with pleasure — the way you hold a good cup of tea on a cold morning, not rushing, just present. This is not performance. It is intimacy.

And intimacy with God reshapes what we want. The missionary who truly delights in the Lord begins to want what the Lord wants — unreached villages, orphans cared for, the broken made whole. The parent who delights in the Lord begins to want for their children not comfort and success but character and faithfulness. Our desires are downstream of our delight.

So the path to answered prayer is not manipulation — it is transformation. Come to God for the pleasure of His presence, not primarily for what He can do for you. Sit with Him. Read His Word slowly. Listen for the still, small voice. And somewhere in that sustained attentiveness, you will find that what you want and what He wants have begun to converge.

That is the life of joy: wanting what Love wants.

Father, form in me today a delight in You that reshapes every other desire I carry.

November 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."
— Psalm 118:24 (NKJV)*

Today is not an accident. It is not a random section of time that happened to arrive. It is a day the Lord *made* — crafted, appointed, placed in the sequence of history with intention. Your being alive on this day, reading these words on this morning, is not incidental. The God who numbers the hairs on your head also numbered this day and put you in it.

Psalm 118 is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament — the early church knew it by heart. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowd shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" they were quoting this psalm. The early Christians read it and saw Jesus in it — the stone rejected by the builders, the gate of the righteous, the day of salvation.

The declaration "we will rejoice and be glad in it" is an act of will meeting an act of faith. The *will* part: I am choosing this posture, regardless of what today holds. The *faith* part: I believe this day was crafted by a God whose goodness I can trust.

This is not toxic positivity. It is theological realism. Yes, today may hold hard things. Yes, there may be meetings you dread, conversations that are difficult, news that is hard. But those things are held inside a day the Lord made — and the Lord who made it also promised to be present in it. He did not make a day and then leave you alone in it.

Rejoice in it. Actively, willingly, courageously. Because the One who made it is with you in it.

Lord, I choose today — I rejoice in it, I trust You in it, and I will look for Your hand in every hour of it.

November 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." — Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

David packs so much into this one verse that I could spend a week in it. But let me focus on the centerpiece today: *in your presence there is fullness of joy*. Not partial joy. Not temporary joy. Fullness — the kind that has no hollow place in it.

Everything else we pursue for joy — achievement, pleasure, relationship, comfort — gives us something, but it never gives us fullness. There is always a gap, always a morning after, always a hunger that the thing satisfied for a moment but could not sustain. C.S. Lewis said our desires are not too strong but too weak — we keep settling for things that could never hold the weight of what we are really looking for.

Only one thing carries the capacity for fullness of joy: God's presence. Not talking about God, not knowing theology about God, not attending services in honor of God — but the actual, felt, inhabited presence of the Living God. The place where Moses's face shone. The place where Isaiah saw the train of His robe fill the temple. The place where the disciples went after Pentecost with a fire in them that nothing could extinguish.

Presence is not always felt dramatically — sometimes it is the quiet certainty on an ordinary morning that you are not alone. Sometimes it is a single line of Scripture that cuts through the noise and arrives with the precision of a voice. But in those moments, however brief, there is fullness. Not a faint echo of joy, not a consolation prize — *fullness*.

Today, make your primary pursuit: His presence. Everything else is a shadow of the thing.

Father, draw me into Your presence today — and let me discover once again that nothing else can fill the space You made for Yourself in me.

November 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." — Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NKJV)

This is arguably the most defiant declaration of joy in all of Scripture. Habakkuk stands at the edge of total ruin — agricultural failure, economic collapse, every visible sign of blessing stripped away — and says: *yet I will rejoice*. Not "I will try to be positive." Not "I will remember better times." Yet — despite all this — *I will rejoice in the Lord*.

The prophet's joy is not rooted in what he has. It is rooted in who God is. That is the only kind of joy that can survive a stripped harvest, a failed economy, an empty pen. When everything visible is gone, the invisible becomes the only ground left to stand on — and Habakkuk finds that it is enough.

I think of our CMM family in Haiti today, a nation that has known precisely this kind of stripping — natural disasters, political instability, violence, poverty layered on poverty. And yet in that nation, the Church sings. I have heard testimonies from our Haitian brothers and sisters that make this passage breathe. They know Habakkuk's "yet" not as a theological concept but as a daily survival strategy. Yet I will rejoice.

This verse does not say the situation is fine. It says God is still my Savior inside the situation that is not fine. Joy is not an evaluation of circumstances — it is an orientation toward a Person. Turn toward Him, even in the stripped season, and find that the "yet" becomes possible. It becomes, with practice, even natural.

Lord, let me know the "yet" today — the joy that survives when everything else has been taken away.

FROM THE NATIONS

Haiti. Pastor Jean-Baptiste Dorsainvil serves in the Artibonite Valley region, where CMM has partnered in pastor training and Bible distribution. "We lost our church building in a storm last April," he writes. "We built a new one out of salvaged wood and prayers. The roof is not perfect, but it keeps the rain off the

Word. Last Sunday, thirty-seven people gave their lives to Christ. Habakkuk 3:18 is our anthem — we sing it at every service."

November 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones." — Proverbs 17:22 (NKJV)

Solomon, for all his complexity, understood human nature deeply. He knew that the interior condition of a person shapes the exterior condition of their body, their relationships, their capacity to function. A joyful heart, he says, works like medicine — it heals, it sustains, it keeps the whole organism moving.

We now have substantial neuroscientific evidence that Solomon had it right. Gratitude and joy are measurably associated with better physical health, stronger immune response, greater resilience, and longer life. But Solomon did not need a study. He had observed enough human beings to know that the people who carried lightness of heart were more alive, in every dimension, than the people who carried bitterness and grief.

The contrast is sharp: a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Prolonged bitterness, chronic anxiety, unresolved grief — these do something to us from the inside out. The Hebrew is vivid: they *dry up* the bones. The marrow goes. The deep vitality is slowly drained away.

This is not a call to deny pain or paste on a smile. It is a recognition that tending to our interior life is not optional. If we want to be healthy, we must be deliberate about what we cultivate inside. Joy, gratitude, forgiveness, hope — these are not luxuries. They are medicines. The neglect of them has real cost.

What dried-bone places are in you today? Where has a crushed spirit been at work for longer than you have admitted? Bring those places to Jesus — not to pretend they are not real, but to let the Healer apply the medicine that only He can provide.

Lord, be the medicine for every crushed and dried place in me — I open those rooms to You today.

November 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me." — Psalm 131:2 (NKJV)

Psalm 131 is three verses long, and it is one of the most countercultural pieces of writing in the entire Bible. In a world that celebrates striving, achieving, and reaching, David says: I have set aside great matters. I have stilled and quieted my soul. I have become like a small child who no longer needs to demand from its mother — who simply rests in her presence because the presence itself is enough.

The image is specific and tender. A *weaned* child is not the child who is crying for milk — that child wants something from the mother. A weaned child has learned to be with the mother simply because of the mother. The need has been transformed into delight. There is no demand in the posture, only contentment.

This is a picture of spiritual maturity that looks, paradoxically, like simplicity. The most mature believers I have known are not the ones with the most complex theology or the most impressive ministry portfolio. They are the ones who have learned to rest — who have stopped trying to figure out the mysteries, stopped demanding explanations, stopped needing God to make sense of everything before they will trust Him. They have settled. Their souls are quiet.

How loud is your interior life right now? November is a month to quiet down — to sit with thankfulness rather than anxiety, to release what you cannot control, to stop striving long enough to notice you are already held. God does not require your agitation. He does not need your help running the universe. You can rest.

Still your soul today. That is its own form of gratitude — the gratitude that trusts enough to stop grasping.

Father, still every striving in me today until I can rest in You the way a child rests in its mother's arms.

November 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" —
Psalm 150:6 (NKJV)*

Psalm 150 is the finale of the entire Psalter — the last of 150 songs, the crescendo of the whole collection. And it ends not with a meditation but with a shout. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Not some things. Not spiritual things. Not things that feel like praising. Everything. If you have breath, you have a reason to praise.

The psalm lists an astonishing variety of instruments: trumpets, harps, lyres, tambourines, strings, pipes, resounding cymbals — the full sonic palette of the ancient Near East. This is not an accident. The variety of the instruments reflects the variety of human experience and human temperament. There is more than one way to praise God. The trumpet and the cymbal and the quiet lyre all have a place.

I think about the global family of CMM worshiping this morning — in languages I cannot speak, with instruments I would not recognize, in rhythms entirely unlike the ones I grew up with — and all of it rising to the same God. The praise of a Mongolian believer in an unheated yurt and the praise of a Brazilian pastor in a concrete-block church and the praise of a family in Fort Mill, SC — all of it heard, all of it received, all of it welcomed by the God who made every culture precisely so that He could receive every unique expression of honor from it.

You have breath. You may not have a voice you consider beautiful or a talent you consider worthy. But you have breath, and the psalmist says that is sufficient. Breathe out His praise today — in whatever form your praise takes — and join the great chorus.

Lord, let every breath I take today be shaped by praise — let my very life be a hallelujah.

November 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation." — Psalm 95:1 (NKJV)

The psalms frequently invite us to sing together — "come, let us." This is not the psalmist describing his private devotion; it is a call to communal joy. "Let us" assumes that you are not alone in this, that there is a *we*, that praise is something we enter together.

Psalm 95 is one of the great entrance hymns — scholars believe it was sung as worshipers walked up to the temple gates. Imagine that procession: hundreds of people, some who had traveled days on foot, arriving weary and dusty and then, at the sight of the temple, breaking into this shout. *Let us sing for joy*. The weariness of the journey does not cancel the joy of the arrival. It might, in fact, deepen it.

Our CMM partners in Jamaica know something about this kind of arrival joy. The churches there carry a worship tradition that does not politely contain itself — it spills out of the building and onto the street. When they sing, they sing with all of themselves. There is something in that fullness that I want more of in my own worship and in every church I am part of.

Tomorrow is the day before Thanksgiving. Most of us are thinking about food and family and perhaps a little football. But let today be the preparation — let today be the Psalm 95 journey toward the feast. Prepare your heart to arrive at Thanksgiving Day ready to shout, ready to sing, ready to bring the full weight of a year's worth of gratitude into the celebration.

Come, let us sing for joy. And if you have forgotten why, I invite you to sit quietly for ten minutes and let the reasons find you.

Rock of our salvation, let me arrive at tomorrow's table with a heart so full of You that my gratitude needs a bigger voice.

FROM THE NATIONS

Jamaica. Pastor Curtis Williams leads a vibrant congregation in Kingston's Trench Town community, where CMM has supported youth outreach for several years.

"We don't have air conditioning, and in August the heat is serious," he writes, "but nobody stops singing. Last month a former gang member stood up in the middle of

worship and said, 'I want what these people have.' He gave his life to Christ before the song was over."

November 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful." — Colossians 3:15 (NKJV)

On the eve of Thanksgiving, Paul's simple closing imperative lands with particular weight: *be thankful*. Not "feel thankful when the mood strikes." Not "express gratitude when convenient." Be it. Carry it as a settled orientation, a posture so habitual it becomes the default setting of your inner life.

The peace of Christ is described here as the *umpire* of the heart — the word *brabeuo* means to arbitrate, to rule as a referee calls a play. When competing voices are shouting — anxiety here, ambition there, resentment over there — peace arbitrates. It calls the play. And the play that peace calls, consistently, is *be thankful*.

This is the interior architecture of a grateful life. The peace of Christ holds the center, and from that center, gratitude flows naturally. You cannot be simultaneously ruled by Christ's peace and ruled by chronic ingratitude. The two cannot coexist at the center. One will displace the other.

Tomorrow many of us will gather with family — and family means complex beauty. It means the difficult uncle and the tender grandmother and the child who is struggling and the conversation that still hasn't happened. It means the table that is full and the chair that is empty. Gratitude does not require everything to be tidy. It requires honesty about what is genuinely good and the willingness to name it aloud in the presence of the One who gave it.

Let peace rule tonight. Go into tomorrow's table knowing that even in the complexity, even in the grief, even in the imperfection, there is something to name and someone to thank.

Lord of every table, let Your peace rule in every home where Your name is known tonight — and let gratitude be the welcome guest.

November 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations." — Psalm 100:4-5 (NKJV)

Thanksgiving Day. The table is set, the aromas are filling the house, and somewhere underneath the noise of family gathering is a question worth asking: what are we actually doing today? Psalm 100 gives us the liturgy. We are entering His gates. We are coming into His courts. We are walking into the presence of a God whose goodness, love, and faithfulness have outlasted every generation that has ever lived.

The pilgrim who walked up to the Jerusalem temple sang this psalm on the way in. The physical movement — approaching the gates, entering the courts — was an enactment of spiritual reality. To enter with thanksgiving and with praise was to arrive correctly, to come in the right posture, with the right gift. The gift you bring to God is your gratitude. It is the offering He delights in.

I think of all the Thanksgiving tables across this nation today — some overflowing with abundance, some set with modest portions, some with the ache of empty chairs — and I think: what unites them all, if they are belonging to this God, is the act of entering. Coming through the gate. Looking up before looking around.

This is the oldest American Thanksgiving instinct: before we eat, we pray. Before we count our blessings, we look to the Blessor. Before we celebrate the harvest, we acknowledge the Harvester.

For the Lord is good — that is not a sentiment. It is the load-bearing truth that holds up everything else. His love endures not just through your lifetime but through all generations. Your grandchildren will still be held by it. Their children after them. Give thanks from the bottom of that well.

Lord of all generations, today we enter Your courts with full hands and grateful hearts — and we lay it all back down at Your feet.

November 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

The day after Thanksgiving is, for many people, one of the most anxious days of the year — the beginning of the consuming rush toward Christmas, the financial pressure of the shopping season, the social calendar filling up faster than the soul can keep pace. Paul's instruction could not be more timely: do not be anxious about anything.

But Paul does not simply say "stop worrying." He gives the architecture of the alternative: prayer, petition, and *thanksgiving* presented together. The thanksgiving is not a closing formality — it is the atmosphere in which the prayer is offered. You come to God with your need, and you bring gratitude with you, because gratitude is the proof that you have come to the right place before.

Today I want to pray specifically for our CMM family in Ukraine, where the word "anxious" is not a therapeutic abstraction but a daily survival reality. Our brothers and sisters there have discovered what Paul discovered in prison: that the peace of God does not wait for the circumstances to become peaceful. It comes in the middle of the impossible. It guards the heart while the bombs fall. That testimony is not theoretical — it is reported to us with tear-stained ink.

The peace that transcends understanding is, by definition, peace that cannot be explained by circumstances. It can only be explained by the presence of God. You have access to it today, whatever your Friday looks like. Come to Him with everything — anxiety included — and bring your thanksgiving along. That combination is the key.

Father, guard my heart and mind today with a peace too large for me to understand and too real for me to deny.

FROM THE NATIONS

Ukraine. Pastor Vasyl Kovalenko serves a congregation in Zaporizhzhia that has doubled in size since the war began. "People come who have never entered a church before," he writes. "They come because they have nowhere else to go and

nothing else to hold. We give them Philippians 4:6-7 on a card with their first meal. Many come back. The peace of God is the most surprising thing in a war zone."

November 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." — James 1:12 (NKJV)

We are in the season between Thanksgiving and Advent — a threshold day, a Saturday without a specific label, but full of significance. We have spent the month counting blessings and learning to rejoice. Now Advent is one day away, and with it comes the invitation to enter into holy waiting — the long ache of human longing that the Incarnation answers.

But before we cross that threshold, I want to pause here. The crown of life is promised not to those who had easy lives but to those who *stood the test*. Who persevered under trial. This is the connection between joy and endurance — they are not opposites. The joy that endures trial is the deepest kind, the kind that has been tested and proven, that knows what it is made of because it has been pushed.

I think about the year you have had. I do not know what it contained — what tests, what griefs, what moments of near-giving-up. But I know that if you are here, reading this on a Saturday morning before Advent begins, you have stood something. You have persevered through days that perhaps no one else saw or acknowledged.

The Lord saw them all. And the crown He is working toward in you is not a reward for performance but the evidence of a life that loved Him when loving was hard. That is the testimony worth everything.

Tomorrow the season of waiting begins. You will enter it with a year of standing behind you. Carry that into Advent. You are more prepared for holy waiting than you know.

Lord, thank You for every test I have stood — and for the crown that is worth every one of them.

November 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined."
— Isaiah 9:2 (NKJV)*

First Sunday of Advent. The candle is lit — the candle of *hope* — and the whole Church leans forward together into the long waiting. This is where Advent begins: not in a manger but in darkness. Isaiah speaks to a people under the shadow of Assyrian oppression, a people who know what it is to live in deep darkness. And he says: a light is coming. Not *has come* yet — *is coming*. The future tense is the whole point. Hope is forward-facing.

The Christian calendar is remarkable in its wisdom. We do not rush immediately to the manger. We spend four Sundays in the posture of the people who waited — who held the prophecy and wondered if it would ever arrive, who kept the lamp of hope burning in the darkness for centuries. We practice their waiting so that we can understand, with our whole beings and not just our minds, what it meant when the Light finally came.

Because here is what I know about darkness and waiting: it is not only ancient Israel's story. It is yours. There is a darkness — personal, relational, physical, spiritual — in which you have been waiting for a light. Something you have prayed for that has not yet arrived. Someone you have asked God to touch who has not yet turned. A healing that is still a promise, not yet a reality.

Advent does not minimize that darkness. It honors it. It says: you are right to name it dark. And you are right to expect a light. The pattern established in Isaiah's day holds: to the ones in darkness, a great light dawns. It has happened before. It will happen again.

Light a candle tonight. Hold hope gently, forward-facing, eyes open.

Come, Lord Jesus — be the light in every darkness we are carrying into this Advent season.

November 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." — Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

The last day of November, the day after Advent begins — and Paul's benediction over the Roman church feels exactly right for this threshold moment. God is called here the *God of hope*, which is one of the most beautiful names for Him in all of Scripture. Not only the God of power, not only the God of justice, not only the God of truth — the God of hope. The One from whom hope comes and to whom hope returns.

And the verb is worth noticing: *fill*. Paul does not pray that you would find a little joy or manage some peace. He prays that God would *fill* you — full measure, pressed down, running over — with joy and peace *as you trust*. The filling is concurrent with the trusting. They grow together. The more you trust, the more capacity is opened; the more capacity is opened, the more filling occurs.

The overflow of hope through the Holy Spirit is not something you manufacture. It is something you receive by getting out of the way. The Holy Spirit is not waiting for you to become worthy of overflow. He is waiting for you to trust enough to hold still and be filled.

November has been a month of gratitude. Now it ends, and Advent has begun, and the call is to trust the God of hope with every unanswered prayer, every dark corner, every situation that still feels impossible. Bring it all into Advent's waiting and let the God of hope fill you with joy and peace.

You are about to enter the most wonder-laden month of the year. Enter it full. Enter it with trust. Enter it expecting overflow.

God of hope, fill me — and let the filling run over onto everyone around me.

December 01, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." — Isaiah 7:14 (NKJV)

December has arrived. The whole month is shaped by one astonishing announcement made seven hundred years before Bethlehem: *Immanuel*. God with us. Two words that carry a weight no other two words in human language can match. This is the name that changes everything. Not "God watching us" or "God helping us" or even "God for us" — God *with* us. Presence. Intimacy. The Word made flesh, dwelling among us.

Isaiah spoke this sign into a political crisis — King Ahaz was terrified of two advancing armies, and God was telling him to trust rather than scheme. The sign He offered was not military aid. It was a birth. A child. A name. As if God was saying: the most powerful intervention I can make into your impossible situation is to come Myself.

That remains His strategy. When the situation is most desperate, when human solutions have run out, when the darkness is deepest — God comes Himself. He does not send an angel, does not issue a policy, does not upgrade the system. He comes. In flesh. In vulnerability. In the form of a child who would grow to be a Savior.

Our CMM family in Russia serves in some of the most spiritually arid and politically complex ground in the world. And yet the testimony that comes back consistently is this: He shows up. In underground Bible studies. In hospital rooms. In conversations started over nothing. Immanuel does not require favorable conditions. He specializes in arriving exactly where He is least expected.

Wherever you are today — He came. He is here. The Advent promise is already fulfilled, even as we wait.

Immanuel, be what Your name promises today — present in every room, every conversation, every fear.

FROM THE NATIONS

Russia. Brother Alexei, who leads a small house church in Novosibirsk, shares this: "We cannot meet openly, so we gather in apartments in rotating rotation. Last month a university professor who came only because his student invited him gave his life to Christ. He said, 'I have studied everything, and nothing prepared me for this presence.' That is Immanuel — still arriving in the unexpected places."

December 02, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."
And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." —
Revelation 21:5a (NKJV)*

Halfway through the first week of Advent, and I want to push back against the idea that Advent is only about remembering the past. Yes, we look back at the Incarnation with wonder and gratitude. But Advent is also fundamentally forward-leaning. The same Lord who came the first time is coming again — and when He comes, He says: *I am making everything new.*

Not everything repaired. Not everything preserved. Everything *new*. The Greek word is *kainos* — not new in the sense of chronologically recent, but new in the sense of a different quality altogether. A newness that has never existed in this form before. When God makes things new, He is not patching the old — He is creating from the generative overflow of His own nature.

This is the Advent hope that most people miss because they stop the story at Christmas. Christmas is not the end; it is the beginning. The birth of Christ is the first eruption of this newness into human history — the Kingdom breaking in. But the Incarnation inaugurates something that Revelation completes. We are living in the middle of the story, between the first coming and the second, between the beginning of the new and the full arrival of it.

So when you look at something broken in your life, in your family, in the world — a relationship that seems past healing, a situation that looks irreversible, a culture that seems to be losing its soul — hold it up against this promise: *I am making everything new.* God is not surprised by the brokenness. He is already making the new thing.

That is the deepest Advent joy: not only that He came, but that He is still coming, still making, still making new.

Lord who makes all things new, make something new in me this Advent that I cannot make myself.

December 03, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God. “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins.”” — Isaiah 40:1-2a (NKJV)

Isaiah 40 is the great turning point of that book — the watershed between the thundering judgment of the earlier chapters and the extraordinary tenderness of what follows. The first word is not a theological proposition; it is an emotional one: *Comfort*. Double comfort. God calls it out twice, as if once is not enough to break through the accumulated grief of a people who have been waiting a very long time.

The season of Advent is, among other things, a season of comfort. Not comfort in the shallow sense of ease or convenience, but comfort in the deep Hebrew sense — *nacham*, to breathe deeply again, to be consoled at the level of the soul. God says: speak *tenderly*. The Hebrew is "speak to the heart." The message of Advent is not only announcement; it is heart-speech.

There is someone reading this today who needs heart-speech from God more than they need any information or advice or instruction. Perhaps the year has been hard in ways that are private, in ways that have not found the right words. Perhaps you have carried a grief that others don't know about or a weariness that doesn't show on the outside.

To you, the Spirit says: comfort. Comfort. Your hard service has not been in vain. The One who sees every private year, every unwitnessed sacrifice, every silent perseverance — He is speaking tenderly to your heart today. The messenger whose voice cries in the wilderness is still calling: "Prepare the way of the Lord." He is coming. He comes in comfort.

Breathe. He has not forgotten you.

Father, speak to my heart today with the tender voice that cuts through every wall I have built — I need comfort only You can give.

December 04, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." — Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)

Four names. A Wonderful Counselor — the One whose wisdom has no gaps, whose advice never needs correcting, who sees every factor and every future and still says "come to Me with your decisions." A Mighty God — not a spiritual influence or a moral teacher but God Himself in flesh, carrying the full weight of divinity into human form. An Eternal Father — not abandoning but steadily, permanently parenting, holding, providing. A Prince of Peace — not the absence of conflict but the active government of shalom, of wholeness, of everything fitting together the way it was designed to.

We await this Child who carries all four names. And I notice they speak directly to the four great lacks of human life: we lack wisdom, we lack power, we lack the security of parental love, and we lack peace. The four names of the coming King are precisely the four provisions for our four deepest needs. This is not a coincidence. This is the God who designs provision before the need is felt.

Our CMM partners in Poland are serving in a country that has been a corridor of war and displacement, and they write with particular frequency about the name "Prince of Peace." In a region where history has given peace a very complicated meaning, the peace of Christ stands distinct — not a political settlement but a Person. Not a treaty but a presence.

Which name do you need most today? The Counselor? The Mighty God? The Father? The Prince of Peace? Bring that specific need into Advent prayer. The child who carries all four names was born for you.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace — be every one of Your names in me today.

FROM THE NATIONS

Poland. Erika Klemm, who serves with CMM in Sibiu, Romania, has deep connections with sister churches in southern Poland. She writes: "Our Polish brothers and sisters have been hosting Ukrainian refugees in their church building

for over a year. They say they have run out of resources twice, and twice God replenished them. 'He is the Mighty God,' one pastor told me, 'and He keeps proving it in our supply room.'

December 05, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways," — Luke 1:76 (NKJV)

Zechariah had been silent for nine months. When his son John was born and he was finally able to speak again, what came out was not a complaint about the months of imposed silence. It was a song. The Benedictus — one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry in the New Testament — pours out of a man who has had nine months to think about everything he could not say.

He turns to his newborn son and speaks a destiny over him. This is what parents are called to do — to speak truth into a child's future, to name what God has already ordained, to bless before the story unfolds. John would be the voice in the wilderness, the one who prepared the way. And Zechariah names it before John can understand a single word.

I think about the power of spoken blessing over our children and spiritual children — the young leaders CMM is training around the world, the pastors in their first churches, the students in our theological programs in Quito and beyond. They need voices like Zechariah's: mature believers who have been through the silence and the waiting and come out singing, who can speak a destiny into the next generation.

You are not just a consumer of spiritual nourishment. You are called to be a voice. Someone around you needs to hear a destiny spoken. Someone needs a Zechariah to look at them and say: "You are called. You will go before the Lord. You will prepare the way." Don't wait until they have already arrived. Speak it now, before they can understand it fully. The Spirit will carry it to the right place in their heart.

Lord, give me the voice of Zechariah — to speak blessing, destiny, and truth over the ones You have placed in my path.

December 06, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " — Mark 1:3b (NKJV)

Second Sunday of Advent. The candle of *peace* is lit today, and we sit with the voice crying in the wilderness. John the Baptist is the Advent figure who unsettles as much as he invites — his camel-hair coat and locust diet and confrontational preaching don't fit neatly into our curated holiday aesthetic. And perhaps that is exactly the point.

To prepare the way is not a comfort activity. Roads in the ancient world were built by labor — filling valleys, leveling hills, removing stones. When a king traveled, workers went ahead to make the path. John's call is to do that interior work: the valleys of despair that need raising, the mountains of pride that need leveling, the crooked places of deception that need straightening. Preparation for the coming of Jesus is demanding.

Why does peace belong to this work? Because the peace of God does not arrive into unprepared ground. Anxiety and distraction and resentment are stones in the road. They don't prevent Jesus from coming — He is sovereign — but they prevent us from *experiencing* His coming. We are so busy with the noise that we miss the arrival.

The Advent question for this week is not primarily "are you busy preparing Christmas?" It is "are you doing the interior work?" What stone needs to be removed? What valley in your life needs the voice of God to fill it? What hill needs to come down?

Peace is not passive. It is the fruit of preparation — of making room. When you do the work of clearing, what fills the space is not more empty quiet but the actual presence of the One who is Peace itself.

Prince of Peace, help me do the preparation this week so that Your arrival is not missed in the noise of the season.

December 07, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." — Luke 1:46-47 (NKJV)

The Magnificat. Mary sings it before the birth, before the manger, before any of the stories we know by heart. She has just received the most astonishing news a human being has ever received — she will carry the Son of God — and her immediate response is not fear or confusion (though she has felt those things, according to v. 29). Her immediate response is a song of glorification and rejoicing.

What moves me most about this is the object of her joy. She does not rejoice in the miracle performed in her. She rejoices in "God my Savior." The gift points her to the Giver. The wonder of the Incarnation does not end in self-amazement; it flows immediately outward into worship. My soul glorifies *the Lord*. My spirit rejoices in *God my Savior*.

Mary understood something that takes most of us years to learn: that the most profound joy is joy in a Person, not in a blessing. The blessing is extraordinary — she has been favored, chosen, gifted. But none of that is where she puts her weight. She puts it on God Himself.

In the noise of December — the gift-giving, the decorating, the events, the gatherings — it is remarkably easy to rejoice in the trappings of the season without rejoicing in the Savior. We can be full of Christmas spirit and empty of Christ. Mary's song is a corrective: start where she started. Let your soul glorify *Him*. Let your spirit rejoice in *God your Savior*.

Every decoration, every carol, every candle — let them all be pointing to one thing. Not to a feeling, not to a memory, not to a tradition. To Him.

Lord, let my soul do what Mary's did — glorify You before I do anything else today.

December 08, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John 1:1 (NKJV)

Every year in December I return to John 1. Not to the shepherds or the magi — those are Luke and Matthew's entry points. John begins in a different place entirely: *In the beginning*. Before Bethlehem. Before Abraham. Before the first day. Before anything. In that before-time, the Word already was. This is not a birth announcement — it is a metaphysical declaration. The One who was born in Bethlehem has no beginning.

The Greek *Logos* — Word — would have been immediately striking to John's first readers in both Jewish and Greek culture. For Greek philosophers, the Logos was the rational principle that ordered the cosmos. For Jewish readers, it echoed the creative Word of Genesis 1: "And God said." John is saying: that principle, that creative speech, that cosmic logic — it is a Person. And it became flesh and lived among us.

This is the deepest wonder of Christmas. Not merely that God sent a son, or that a miracle birth occurred, or that angels appeared to shepherds — all of those are astonishing. The deepest wonder is that the eternal, pre-existent, uncreated Word chose flesh. Chose limitation. Chose a stable in an obscure village in a backwater province. The One who spoke the stars into being allowed Himself to be unable to speak — a newborn dependent on a teenage mother to survive.

Our CMM partner in Germany, where theology has deep roots, knows this text well. But knowledge of the text and wonder at the text are different things. Let this Advent week push you past familiarity into wonder. Read John 1:1 slowly, five times. Let it become strange and glorious again.

In the beginning was the Word. He still is.

Eternal Word, let Your presence in time become real to me this week — not as doctrine but as living wonder.

FROM THE NATIONS

Germany. Thomas Becker, a CMM partner and pastor in Frankfurt, writes: "I was trained in theology but had little joy until I sat with a Ghanaian sister in our

congregation who had never studied Greek but wept when she read John 1:14. She said, 'He became like me so I could become like Him.' That is theology. I have been teaching from her insight for three years."

December 09, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."
— Micah 5:2 (NKJV)

Small. The prophet emphasizes it. Among the clans of Judah, Bethlehem was minor — no strategic value, no military significance, no natural resources to commend it. And yet the eternal King would be born there. Not in Jerusalem, the seat of power. Not in a palace with proper preparations. In a small town that almost nobody was paying attention to.

God's preference for the overlooked, the underestimated, the small — this is a consistent thread in all of Scripture. He does not choose Esau but Jacob. Not Saul but David. Not Rome but Galilee. Not the Pharisee but the tax collector. His glory moves through unlikely channels specifically so that the channel does not become confused with the glory.

I think about the small places where CMM works — villages no travel writer has ever visited, congregations that meet in mud-brick buildings with tin roofs, discipleship groups of twelve or fifteen people in the corners of nations the world has mostly forgotten. The logic of Bethlehem says these are exactly the kinds of places God tends to choose. The small becomes the significant when God decides to show up in it.

What small thing are you holding today that you have been tempted to dismiss — a small congregation, a small influence, a small step of obedience that seems insignificant? Micah's Bethlehem is the eternal argument against dismissing the small. God wrote His greatest story in the smallest venue He could find.

Your smallness is not a disqualification. It may be precisely the thing that makes you useful.

Lord, use whatever is small and overlooked in me for something Your size — I offer it without shame.

December 10, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him." — John 1:10 (NKJV)

John's prologue, still. I cannot move past it too quickly during Advent. This verse is among the saddest in Scripture: the world was made *through* Him, and the world did not recognize Him. The Maker walked into His own creation, and creation did not know Him. The Author appeared inside His own story, and the characters turned away.

There is a grief in the Incarnation that our cheerful holiday songs sometimes prevent us from feeling. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11, KJV). The manger was not only a miracle — it was also a humiliation. The King arrived without a herald, without recognition, without the proper reception. Most of the world was simply busy with other things.

And the question this verse raises for me every Advent is uncomfortable: am I recognizing Him this year? Not in a theological sense — I know the doctrines. But in the lived, daily, present-moment sense. Is He arriving in my ordinary day, and am I going on about my business? Is the Incarnate God present in my work, my family, my neighborhood — and am I too busy with the noise of December to notice?

The shepherds recognized Him in a manger. The magi found Him by following an unusual star. Simeon recognized Him in the temple as an infant. All of them chose to look, to follow, to attend. Recognition is a choice, not a reflex.

This week, I invite you to choose recognition. Look for Christ in the ordinary places He habitually appears: the face of the person in need, the unexpected Scripture, the moment of unexpected peace. He is walking through His creation still. Don't let Him go unrecognized.

Lord, open my eyes this Advent to see You in every place You are already present — forgive me for the busy days of non-recognition.

December 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." — Isaiah 9:6a (NKJV)

To us. Two words at the beginning of this great prophetic declaration that we sometimes read past in our rush to the four names. *To us.* Not to an abstract humanity, not to a theological category, not to the deserving — *to us.* A child is born. A son is given. The gift is personal. The arrival is *for us.*

I sit with this gift framing for a moment. A child is *born* — that is the human side, the vulnerable side, the side that requires a womb and labor and crying and feeding. But a son is *given* — that is the divine initiative, the sending from above, the Father's love expressed as an act of radical giving. Both are true simultaneously. This child is born in the most human way possible and given in the most divine way possible. The junction of those two realities is where the mystery lives.

And today in the United Kingdom — where our CMM family is serving in the context of a deeply post-Christian culture — this double truth is the message that cuts through. People in Birmingham and London and Edinburgh are hungry for something real, not a seasonal feeling but an actual gift. The Church in Britain that knows how to say "to us, for us, personally for you" is the Church that is growing.

The Incarnation is not an event to observe. It is a gift to receive. Christmas is not a birthday party you attend; it is a delivery to your address. "To us a child is born" means your name is on the package. The Son was given to and for you specifically — not merely to the human race in general but to you, in your actual life, this actual December.

Receive Him again today.

Lord Jesus, born for me and given for me — I receive You today with open hands and an open heart.

FROM THE NATIONS

United Kingdom. Pastor Amara Kamara leads a multiethnic congregation in Birmingham's Handsworth neighborhood, where CMM has provided leadership development resources. "Our congregation includes people from twenty-three nations," she writes. "Every Advent we ask each person to read Isaiah 9:6 in their mother tongue. When forty voices say 'to us a child is born' in forty languages simultaneously, you understand what heaven will sound like."

December 12, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you." — Isaiah 60:1 (NKJV)

This Saturday in Advent, nestled between Advent 3 and 4, Isaiah speaks not of waiting but of arising. The light has come — now you get up. The glory has risen upon you — now you shine. The receiving and the responding are simultaneous. There is no gap between the gift of the light and the call to reflect it.

The world that surrounds you in December is simultaneously saturated with light — decorative, commercial, artificial — and deeply hungry for genuine light. People are looking for something real underneath the glitter. The depression statistics for December are not a secret. The loneliness of the season for many people is profound. Into that complex landscape, the Church is called to shine — not with better decorations or louder events but with the actual radiance that comes from dwelling in the presence of the One who is Light.

"Rise up and shine" is an active posture. This is not the passive receiving of Advent waiting; it is the responsive action of Advent witness. The two go together: we wait for Him and then we rise to reflect Him. We receive in silence and then we speak in the public places. We worship in the quiet and then we carry what we've found into the noisy world.

Who in your immediate world is sitting in a December darkness they haven't told you about? A neighbor behind a cheerfully decorated door who is crying inside? A colleague who is dreading the family gathering? A friend who this is the first Christmas without someone they love?

Rise. Shine. Carry the Light you have been given into the places where it is most needed.

Lord, let Your glory rise in me this week until it overflows into the darkness around me without my even having to try.

December 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"" — Matthew 11:2-3 (NKJV)

Third Sunday of Advent — Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday of Joy. The candle lit today is traditionally pink, a burst of warmth in the purple sequence, because we are now closer to the arrival. Joy is formally named as the theme of this week. And yet the Gospel reading for this Sunday, from Matthew 11, gives us not a picture of easy joy but one of the most honest moments in the Gospels: John the Baptist, in prison, sending his disciples to ask if Jesus is really the One.

John had announced Jesus. He had baptized Him. He had heard the voice from heaven. And now, in prison, in darkness, in circumstances that made no sense if Jesus was who John had said He was — he sends this question. "Are you the one?" It is not a question without faith. It is the question of faith under pressure. It is what it sounds like when someone who genuinely believes is genuinely struggling.

Jesus' response is not a rebuke. It is evidence: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (vv. 4-5). In other words: look at the fruit. When the feelings fail, look at the works. When doubt comes to prison with you, send your question and receive the evidence.

The joy of Advent 3 is not the joy of people who have never doubted. It is the joy of people who have doubted, sent the question, received the evidence, and held on. That is the deepest joy. It has survived the prison cell.

Lord, when I am in my prison of doubt, let me be brave enough to send the question — and patient enough to receive Your answer.

December 14, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." — Matthew 1:18b (NKJV)

The mechanics of Matthew's birth narrative are spare and factual. A betrothal. A discovered pregnancy. A justice-minded man facing a decision about a woman he loved. And behind all of it, the Holy Spirit doing something unprecedented. Matthew does not slow down for the theology of the Virgin Birth. He states it and moves on — as if to say: yes, this is strange, and yes, it is real, and here is what happened next.

I want to stay here for a moment and think about Joseph. He is one of the most underappreciated figures in the whole Christmas story. He did not ask for this. His life plan — marriage, family, the carpentry business in Nazareth — was interrupted by a divine appointment that would cost him socially, professionally, and emotionally. He is described as a "righteous man" (v. 19) who was willing to protect Mary even before he understood what was happening.

Then the angel comes. And Joseph, without argument, without conditions, without a detailed explanation of how this would all work out — obeys. He takes Mary as his wife. He names the child. He becomes the earthly father of the Son of God.

There is a Joseph assignment in many of our lives — a call to step into a story we didn't author, to provide protection and presence for something God is doing that we don't fully understand, to be the quiet faithful worker behind a miracle that will have someone else's name on it. Joseph's name is not in any of the nativity carols. But the story does not work without him.

Will you be Joseph when God needs a Joseph?

Lord, make me faithful in the unseen, unnamed roles — let my obedience be the infrastructure of something greater than I can see.

December 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night." — Luke 2:8 (NKJV)

The shepherds were not inside. They were not at home by the fire, or in the synagogue, or in the places where religious announcements typically landed. They were outside, in the cold, in the dark, doing the low-status work of watching sheep through the night. And the angel of the Lord came to them. Not to the priests. Not to the scholars. Not to the powerful. To the night-shift workers in the field.

I have always loved this detail because it is so deliberately counterintuitive. If I were writing the birth announcement of the Son of God, I would not choose the shepherds. I would send the herald to Jerusalem, to the temple, to the Sanhedrin. The news would travel from the top down. But God's announcements almost always travel from the bottom up — to the humble, the overlooked, the ones awake when everyone else is sleeping.

Our CMM family in France serves in a culture that has largely turned away from institutional religion, where the cathedral bells are often empty of meaning and the great theological heritage of the country has been filed as history rather than lived as faith. But among the overlooked — among the immigrant communities in Lyon and Marseilles, among the young adults who feel they have no place in the formal church — something is moving. The shepherds of Paris are stirring.

You may feel like a shepherd today — outside, in the cold, doing unnoticed work. You may feel like you are at the margins of where the important things happen. Look up. The angel of the Lord is not only sent to the impressive places. He comes to the night shift.

Lord, find me where I am tonight — in my field, with my ordinary work — and let Your glory shine around me.

FROM THE NATIONS

France. Pastor Jean-Pierre Morel plants churches in the Lyon suburbs among North African immigrant communities, supported by CMM network connections. "We have twelve people who gather Tuesday nights after their factory shifts," he

writes. "They smell of metal and oil when they come in. But when we open the Word, they lean in like they are hearing it for the first time. They are the shepherds of our generation."

December 16, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" — Luke 2:13-14 (NKJV)

Suddenly. The shepherd's night had no visible warning. One moment: cold field, dark sky, sleeping sheep. The next moment: the sky splits open and a great company of angels fills it with light and song. The Greek word *exaiphnēs* — suddenly — is one of Luke's favorite words for the moments when heaven intersects with earth. There is no slow approach. There is simply before and after.

The song they sing is brief but contains everything: glory upward to God, peace downward to humanity. These two directions are the summary of the entire Gospel. What Christ accomplishes on earth is the restoration of right relationship in both directions — upward, the glory of God is satisfied; downward, the peace of God becomes available to human beings who previously had every reason to expect judgment. The cross makes both directions possible. The manger announces what the cross will accomplish.

"On whom his favor rests" — some translations say "goodwill toward men." Either way, this is not a description of a deserving subset of humanity. It is a declaration of divine disposition. God's favor is not earned; it is given. His peace is not the reward of achievement; it is the gift of grace. The shepherds had not done anything worthy of this announcement. They were just outside in the field, awake while others slept.

The angels' song is still singing. It has been singing for two thousand years. In every nation where CMM works, in every language where the Christmas story is told, the great company adds a voice. The heaven that split open over Bethlehem is still open.

Lord, let my voice today join the angels' — glory to You in the highest, and may Your peace reach the places still waiting for it.

December 17, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." — Matthew 2:1-2 (NKJV)

The Magi are one of the great surprises of the Nativity story. They are not Jewish. They are astrologers from Persia — practitioners of a discipline the Hebrew Law explicitly warned against. They are outsiders by every conventional religious measure. And they are the ones who come seeking, who travel the farthest, who bring the most extravagant worship.

I have thought for a long time about what this means. God put a star in the sky that only certain eyes — trained to watch the heavens, alert to heavenly movements, willing to follow what they saw — would notice and pursue. The devout people in Jerusalem had the Scriptures and missed the star. The Magi had the star and found the Scriptures. Neither group had the complete picture, but one of them actually traveled to worship.

There are people in every culture and tradition — sometimes far from the institutional Church, sometimes looking through very different windows at the sky — who are hungry for the real thing. Who are following whatever light they have been given. Our calling in missions is not only to the ones who are obviously near; it is to find the Magi. The ones who have been watching the sky. The ones who would travel months on camel-back if someone could show them where to find the real King.

The journey of the Magi is still happening. Somewhere today, someone far from what we would call "Christian" is following a star they cannot yet name. Our prayer is that they arrive. Our calling is to be the signpost.

Lord of the Magi, let me be a star someone can follow toward You — even if they start from a very different place.

December 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

*"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." —
Luke 2:19 (NKJV)*

In the middle of the noise and wonder of the Nativity — angels appearing, shepherds running, the cosmos pivoting on a single birth — Luke pauses to show us Mary's interior response. She is not narrating. She is not preaching. She is *treasuring*. She is pondering. The Greek *suntēreo* means to hold together, to keep with care, to store safely. And *symballousa* — pondering — means to throw things together, to compare and turn over in the mind.

Mary cannot yet put everything together. She doesn't fully understand what has happened, what it means, what it will cost. But she does not require understanding before she receives. She holds what she has been given — the shepherd's words, the manger, the angels' announcement, the nine months of carrying a mystery — and she treasures it all, even the parts she cannot yet explain.

This is a spiritual practice I want to name and commend: holy pondering. In an age of instant commentary and immediate opinion, to sit with something and not immediately explain it is countercultural. To say "I don't fully understand this yet, but I am treasuring it" is a kind of faith that our noise-saturated culture rarely produces but desperately needs.

What has God done in your life this year that you have not yet fully pondered? What experiences, encounters, and answered prayers have you received and immediately moved past without treasuring? Sit with them. Let them settle. Turn them over the way Mary did — not trying to force a tidy interpretation but simply holding them with care.

The meaning will come. Sometimes it comes years later. But it only comes to those who treasure.

Lord, give me Mary's heart — a heart that holds Your mysteries with care and trusts You with what I cannot yet understand.

December 19, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation" — Luke 2:28-30 (NKJV)

Simeon had been waiting a very long time. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah (v. 26). For how many years he carried that promise, we do not know. But on the day Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple for the purification rites — a completely ordinary religious observance — Simeon was moved by the Spirit to come into the courts.

He held the baby. He looked into the face of the One he had been waiting for all his life. And he was done. Not in despair — in completion. "You may now dismiss your servant in peace." His life's deepest longing had been answered. He could go.

I think about what it means to wait with such focused hope that when the fulfillment comes, you recognize it immediately. Simeon knew. He did not require a letter of introduction or a proof text. He held the child and he knew. This is the fruit of a life spent in the temple, in prayer, in sustained attention to God's promises.

Our CMM partners in Italy serve in a culture with centuries of religious form that has, in many places, lost its capacity to recognize the living Christ when He shows up in unexpected ways. Brother Luca in Milan writes about a ministry to elderly men and women in a neighborhood parish who have been in the church their whole lives but who weep when they hear, for what feels like the first time, that they can hold Jesus the way Simeon did.

All of us are Simeon: waiting, hoping, and capable of recognizing Him when we finally see Him clearly.

Lord, let me recognize You — in the ordinary moment, in the unexpected face, in the familiar promise finally arriving in full.

FROM THE NATIONS

Italy. Brother Luca Bertolini, who partners with CMM in Milan's Bicocca district, writes: "We run a Thursday morning Bible study for retirees in a room behind an old parish hall. Last month a man named Giorgio, age seventy-eight, heard about Simeon for the first time. He wept. He said, 'I have been in church every Sunday for seventy years, and no one ever told me I could hold Jesus.' He prayed the most beautiful prayer I have ever heard, right there with tears on his cheeks."

December 20, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." — Luke 1:30 (NKJV)

Fourth Sunday of Advent — the candle of *love*. And today we return to the Annunciation, to the moment when everything changed. The angel Gabriel comes to a young woman in Nazareth and speaks a word that God has spoken throughout salvation history whenever He is about to do something overwhelming: *do not be afraid*. Then he tells her why: you have found favor with God.

The Greek *charitoō* — to be highly favored — shares its root with *charis*, grace. Mary has been graced. She has not earned this; she has received it. The favor is not a reward for superior piety. It is a gift freely given to the one God chose, for reasons that remain in His sovereign will. This is the nature of grace — it comes to us, not from us.

Do not be afraid. These words are the oxygen of Advent. Every figure in the nativity account hears some version of them: Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, the shepherds. The arrival of the holy always provokes a kind of fear — the weight of glory meeting the frailty of humanity. And God's consistent response is this: *do not be afraid*. I know who I am. I know who you are. And I am coming in grace, not in judgment.

As we reach the final Sunday before Christmas, let love be your landing place. The love that sent the Son. The love that spoke to a young girl in Nazareth and told her not to be afraid. The love that chose a manger over a palace. The love that has been choosing you, in grace, every day of your life.

Do not be afraid. You have found favor. The love of God is not theoretical this Advent — it has a face, a name, and a birthday coming in five days.

Father, let Your perfect love cast out every fear I am carrying into this final week before Christmas — let me rest in the grace that chose me.

December 21, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." — 1 John 4:9 (NKJV)

Winter solstice. The longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Tonight the darkness reaches its maximum. And tomorrow the light begins its slow, daily return — one minute added, then another, then another, until June arrives with its long bright days.

I love what John does with love in this verse: he does not define it philosophically. He shows it. "This is how God showed his love among us." Not "this is what God's love means" — but *showed*. Love, for John, is always enacted. It takes form. It arrives. You cannot fully know it by thinking about it; you have to see it do something.

And what it does is this: it sends. God's love expressed itself as sending — the most costly possible expression, the sending of His only Son, into the darkness and the brokenness and the mortality of our world. Not as a visitor who tours and returns, but as a resident. As one who would stay until the work was finished.

On this longest night of the year, let this verse be your lamp: the Love that sent the Son has not diminished. It is still sending — sending workers into harvest fields, sending comfort into darkened homes, sending light into the maximum darkness of December 21 and every other night that feels too long.

You are the beneficiary of sent love. You are also an agent of it — called to carry what was sent to you outward to the places still in their longest night. Tomorrow the light grows. Tonight it is enough to know that the Love which sent the Light has not changed.

Father, on this longest night, let the light of what You sent be enough — and then send me into someone else's darkness with it.

December 22, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." — Matthew 2:11 (NKJV)

The Magi have arrived. The journey is over — the months of travel, the stop in Jerusalem that nearly ended badly, the star that led them to Bethlehem. They come to the house. They see the child. And the first thing they do is not inspect or analyze or debate whether this child matches their expectations. They bow down and worship.

I want to stay at the bowing for a moment. These were powerful men — learned, wealthy, honored in their own country. The act of prostrating themselves before a toddler in a modest house in an occupied province was, by any worldly measure, absurd. And yet something in what they saw — the child, the mother, perhaps the lingering weight of the star's leading — brought them immediately to their knees.

What they brought afterward matters too. Gold for a king. Frankincense for a priest. Myrrh for a burial — they were bringing what a death-destined savior would need. The gifts encoded the theology even before the theology was fully formed. They worshiped what they could not yet fully explain.

Our CMM family in Greece, in the ancient land where so much of the early Church's theology was hammered out, knows this tension: worship precedes full understanding. The great creeds were written to protect what was first experienced in the posture of the Magi — kneeling before mystery, offering treasure, trusting that the One who led them here was worth everything they had brought.

What is the most valuable thing you can bring to Jesus this Christmas? Bring it. Open the treasure. Bow down.

Lord, I bring You everything I have and kneel before what I do not yet fully understand — and I find that is exactly where worship begins.

FROM THE NATIONS

Greece. Pastor Nikos Papadopoulos leads a church plant in Athens's Exarchia neighborhood, where CMM has provided evangelism training. "We started in a coffee shop with four people," he writes. "The neighborhood is known for protest and irreligion. But when we open the Bible, people lean in. A young philosophy student told me recently, 'I don't understand everything, but I want to kneel.' That is the Magi — arriving before the theology is complete."

December 23, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." — Galatians 4:4-5 (NKJV)

The fullness of time. Paul uses this remarkable phrase to describe the moment of the Incarnation — not a random point in history, not an improvisation by a God who had run out of other options, but the *plenitude* of time. The exact convergence of everything that needed to be in place: the Pax Romana with its road system, the Greek language that could carry the gospel across cultures, the Jewish diaspora in every major city, the centuries of prophecy now precisely fulfilled — all of it arriving at the same moment.

God is a God of precise timing. He is not early or late. He moves in fullness — when the conditions are exactly what they need to be — and then He acts. The birth of His Son was not a surprise to Him. It was the appointed crescendo of a symphony He had been composing since before Adam drew breath.

And the result of this precisely-timed sending? Adoption. Redeeming us from what we were under (the law's condemnation) so that we could become what we were not before (sons and daughters of God). The word *huiothesia* — adoption — is Paul's word for this radical status change. You are not a servant who has been promoted. You are an outsider who has been brought inside, given a name, and seated at the table.

Tomorrow is Christmas Eve. As you prepare for the celebrations, let this truth sink in: the precise timing of everything that happened two thousand years ago had your adoption in view. You were on the list. The fullness of time was full enough to include you.

Father, thank You for the fullness of time that brought Your Son — and for the adoption that makes me Yours forever.

December 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." — Luke 2:6-7 (NKJV)

Christmas Eve. The longest-awaited night in human history has come around again. And Luke tells it with breathtaking economy: the time came, she gave birth, she wrapped him, she placed him. No drama in the prose. No thunderclap. Just a mother doing what mothers do — caring for a newborn in the most ordinary of ways. The extraordinary hidden in the ordinary. The Word made flesh and placed in a feed trough.

No guest room. This detail has always undone me. The Creator of the cosmos arrived in a world that did not have room for Him. The Infinite entered finitude, and finitude did not stop to make proper accommodation. The most important night in history passed largely unnoticed by the city sleeping around a stable.

And yet — a stable in Bethlehem on this night is the hinge of all of history. Everything before it was moving toward it. Everything after it moves out from it. The heavens opened over ordinary shepherds. The most powerful angels in existence descended to announce it. The eternal Word chose this night and this specific set of circumstances — the poverty, the cold, the manger — as the setting in which to make His entrance.

Why? Because He was coming for us. And most of us are not princes in palaces. Most of us are in the straw. Most of us know what it is to have no room. He came to the no-room people. He has always been at home in the straw.

This Christmas Eve, lay everything down. Receive the Child. Make room.

Come, Lord Jesus — find room in the manger of my heart tonight, and make Your home there.

December 25, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." — John 1:14 (NKJV)

Christmas Day. Merry Christmas, beloved. The Word became flesh. Let that sentence be the hymn your heart sings all day.

Became flesh — the Greek *sarkōtheis* means something almost violent: He took on meat. Not a spiritual costume, not a temporary visit. He took on the whole sweaty, hungry, bleeding, weeping, exhausted reality of being human. He was not playing at incarnation. He was all in.

Made his dwelling — more literally, He *tabernacled* among us. He pitched His tent. The same word is used for the Tabernacle in the wilderness — the moveable dwelling place of God's presence that traveled with Israel through the desert. The Incarnation is God moving His tent into our neighborhood. Permanently. He did not come to visit; He came to stay.

Full of grace and truth — not grace without truth, which would be sentimentality. Not truth without grace, which would be condemnation. Both together. The Christmas message holds them both: you are exactly as broken as the truth says, and you are exactly as loved as the grace says, and in this Child both things are fully present at once.

Today around our family table and around tables in seventy nations where CMM has a presence, this same announcement lands: the Word became flesh. Not "the Word became a concept," not "the Word became a tradition," not "the Word became a seasonal feeling." Flesh. Real. Here.

Open every gift today with gratitude. Hug the people you love. Eat the food with gladness. And underneath it all, let the deepest gift do what it came to do: dwell in you.

Jesus, You became what I am so I could become what You are — thank You, thank You, thank You.

December 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," — Acts 7:55 (NKJV)

The day after Christmas, the Church historically remembers Stephen — the first martyr. It is a startling shift from the manger to the stoning field, but it is not accidental. The early Church placed St. Stephen's feast on December 26 to say: the One born in the manger is the One worth dying for. The Incarnation leads directly to the cross, and the cross invites this kind of total commitment.

Stephen saw Jesus standing. Elsewhere in Scripture, Christ is described as seated at the right hand of the Father — the posture of accomplished work, of reigning authority. But at Stephen's execution, He stands. As if the King rises from His throne to receive His servant. As if no martyr's death is witnessed from a distance.

This image has stayed with me for years. In the darkest moments — and our CMM family in Cyprus and the broader Middle Eastern region knows something about dark moments — Jesus is not passively enthroned. He is attentive. He is standing for the ones who are standing for Him.

The Incarnation was not only for the comfortable moments of Christmas. It was for the Stephen moments — when the stones are flying and the crowd is shouting and the only thing you can see clearly is the glory of God and Jesus, standing, waiting to receive you.

We live between the manger and that moment. We live in the joy of Christmas and in the cost of discipleship simultaneously. Today, hold both. Receive the Child of Christmas and remember what that Child grew up to be — the One worth everything.

Lord Jesus, be present in my most costly moments the way You were present for Stephen — standing, watching, receiving.

FROM THE NATIONS

Cyprus. Pastor Andreas Christodoulou leads a church in Limassol that has become a hub for ministry to Syrian and Lebanese refugees. "Last Christmas, we

had seventy-two people in our service who had fled violence," he writes. "Some had watched friends die for their faith. We read Acts 7:55 together and a Syrian man named Tariq said quietly, 'He stood for us too.' The whole room wept."

December 27, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—" — 1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

John writes this in his old age — an old man who, as a young man, had touched Jesus. Had heard the voice of the Word made flesh. Had leaned against Him at the Last Supper. Had stood at the foot of the cross. Had reached into the empty tomb and believed. And now, decades later, he writes: we have *touched* this. We are not speculating. We are reporting.

The post-Christmas week is, for many people, a week of spiritual flatness — the celebration has peaked, the decorations are still up but the energy has subsided, and the prospect of January looms. It is a week that needs this kind of testimony: not fresh feeling, not renewed enthusiasm, but the bedrock report of those who have handled the thing and found it real.

John says: proclaim it. Not because it feels fresh today but because it is true today. The Word of life has not become less real since December 25. The touching and hearing and seeing that the disciples did has not lost its evidential force because the centuries have accumulated. The resurrection that turned fishermen into martyrs is the same resurrection that holds your faith this morning.

What did you experience in this Christmas season that you need to report? Not manufactured feeling, but genuine encounter. A moment of worship where the presence became tangible. A verse that arrived with unexpected force. A conversation where the Spirit was clearly at work. These are your John 1:1 moments. They are the personal evidence that what was from the beginning is still alive and still moving.

Report it. To someone who needs it.

Living Word, let my testimony this week be specific and honest — not of feeling but of touch, of encounter, of real presence.

December 28, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth." — Psalm 145:18 (NKJV)

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day has an unusual texture — a hinge time, neither the feast nor the ordinary, suspended between celebration and reckoning. For many people it is a week of taking stock: of the year just passing, of the years accumulating, of what has changed and what remains stubbornly the same.

The Lord is near. Not distant. Not watching from a remote vantage point. *Near* — the Hebrew *qarob* is used of things that are close enough to touch. He is near to those who call on Him in truth. Not in perfect words. Not in theologically polished prayer. In *truth* — honest prayer, real prayer, the kind that does not pretend and does not perform but simply says what it actually is.

There is tremendous freedom in this promise. God does not require eloquence. He does not keep Himself at a distance until you have the right spiritual vocabulary. He is near to the person who calls in truth — in the truth of their need, their confusion, their gratitude, their ache.

As you move through this hinge week, I invite you to pray honestly. Not your best-dressed prayer but your most honest prayer. The prayer that says "I am grateful but I am also worried." The prayer that says "I celebrated Christmas and I still have this unfixed thing inside me." The prayer that says "I want to trust You with next year but I am not sure what that costs."

He is near to that prayer. He receives that prayer with the same grace He receives the polished liturgy. Come as you are, in truth, and find Him already there.

Father, I come in truth today — not in my best words but in my most honest ones — and I trust that You are near.

December 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." — 2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

Three days before the year ends. Paul writes these words from a Roman prison, near the end of his life, knowing that the end is very close. And he does not write with bitterness or regret. He writes with the quiet satisfaction of a man who finished what he started. The fight was good. The race was run. The faith was kept.

I love that he calls it a "good fight." Not an easy one. Not one without wounds. But a *good* one — worth fighting, meaningful, aligned with everything that matters. The word *kalos* in Greek carries connotations of beauty and excellence. The fight was beautiful because the cause was beautiful because the One for whom he fought is beautiful.

Today I want to celebrate our CMM family in the United States — the partners, supporters, prayer warriors, ministry staff, and church communities across this nation who have kept the faith through a full year. Some of you have fought hard this year. Ministry is not always the heroic adventure the brochures suggest. Sometimes it is showing up when you are tired. Sometimes it is staying when leaving would be easier. Sometimes it is praying for the hundredth time for the same thing and still trusting.

That is the race. And Paul says: keep running. Because the next word, in verse 8, is the crown: "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day."

You are close enough to the finish line to smell it. Keep faith. Keep running.

Lord, let me finish this year the way Paul finished his race — fighting well, running faithfully, keeping what You entrusted to me.

FROM THE NATIONS

United States. CMM President Jorge Parrott writes from Fort Mill, SC: "I am grateful for every partner in this nation who carried the Great Commission not as a slogan but as a lifestyle in 2026. I have met them in churches from Montana to Florida, in prayer groups at 6 a.m., in mission trips that changed the travelers as much as those they served. The faith is kept. The race continues. And the crown

belongs to a righteous Judge who counts every step."

December 30, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert." — Isaiah 43:18-19 (NKJV)

The second-to-last day of the year. The invitation to look forward has rarely felt more appropriate. God says through Isaiah: I am about to do a new thing. The verb tense is important — not "I will eventually" or "I am considering" but *I am about to*. The new thing is at the edge of happening. It is springing forth even now, even if you cannot fully see it.

"Do you not perceive it?" This question is worth pausing on. The new thing was already emerging when Isaiah wrote it — but the people needed their eyes adjusted. They were so focused on the former things — the great Exodus from Egypt, the acts God did centuries before — that they were missing the new movement right in front of them. Nostalgia for the old miracles was blocking their vision of the coming ones.

I am not asking you to forget the goodness of God in past years. Remember it, treasure it, tell it. But do not make the archive of past mercies the ceiling of future expectation. The God who made a way through the Red Sea is still making ways. The God who brought water from a rock is still bringing rivers into desert places. He has not run out of new things.

What is the wilderness in your life right now — the place that looks like no way could possibly exist? Name it. And then hear the promise: *I will make a way*. Not "I might," not "if conditions improve." I will. The wilderness is exactly the right geography for a God who specializes in new things.

Tomorrow is New Year's Eve. Go into it expecting. Go into January with your eyes open for springs.

God of the new thing, open my eyes to what You are already doing — and let me not miss it because I am looking backward.

December 31, 2026

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." — Lamentations 3:22-23 (NKJV)

New Year's Eve. The last page of this year. And the word that closes it is not a word of achievement or resolution — it is a word of mercy. Jeremiah writes Lamentations in the rubble of Jerusalem, surrounded by everything that went wrong, and from that precise location of maximum loss he lifts up the most celebrated declaration of divine faithfulness in the Hebrew Scriptures.

His mercies never come to an end. There is no last mercy. There is no bottom to the well. As many times as you needed it this year — forgiveness, grace, patience, provision, protection, presence — the supply never reached its limit. You never exhausted it. And tonight, at the edge of the year, there is still more.

New every morning. Tomorrow morning, January 1, there will be a fresh batch of mercies waiting. Not carried over from yesterday. Not diminished by the accumulation of this year's failures. *New*. The Hebrew word is *chadashim* — freshly made, as if manufactured overnight. God is a mercy-maker who works through every night and restocks before dawn.

Great is your faithfulness. This is the summary statement — not "great is your power" or "great is your knowledge" but "great is your faithfulness." Faithfulness is the quality that makes all the others useful. Power without faithfulness would be terrifying. Love without faithfulness would be unreliable. But faithfulness makes power safe and love dependable.

I close this year's devotional with these three lines and leave them with you as the threshold words of everything that follows. The year ahead is unknown to you but not to God. You will need mercy. It will be there. Great is His faithfulness.

Lord, as I cross into the year ahead, I carry only this: Your mercy, Your faithfulness, and Your promise that mornings always come. That is enough.

APPENDIX

The Seventy Nations

Testimonies from the CMM global family

Appendix — The Seventy Nations Index

CMM partners with ministers, pastors, educators, and humanitarian workers across seventy nations. This index lists each nation featured in the testimony entries of this devotional, along with the date its testimony appears.

#	Nation	Testimony Date
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1	India	April 26, 2026
2	Uganda	April 30, 2026
3	Liberia	May 03, 2026
4	Cambodia	May 07, 2026
5	Pakistan	May 10, 2026
6	Myanmar	May 14, 2026
7	Cuba	May 18, 2026
8	Ghana	May 21, 2026
9	Peru	May 25, 2026
10	Spain	May 28, 2026
11	Guatemala	June 01, 2026
12	Sri Lanka	June 04, 2026
13	Romania	June 08, 2026
14	Mongolia	June 12, 2026
15	Ecuador	June 15, 2026
16	Kenya	June 19, 2026
17	Rwanda	June 22, 2026
18	South Sudan	June 26, 2026
19	DR Congo	June 30, 2026
20	Tanzania	July 03, 2026
21	Malawi	July 07, 2026
22	Niger	July 10, 2026
23	Syria	July 14, 2026

#	Nation	Testimony Date
24	Israel	July 17, 2026
25	Philippines	July 21, 2026
26	Nepal	July 25, 2026
27	Bangladesh	July 28, 2026
28	Thailand	August 01, 2026
29	Vietnam	August 04, 2026
30	Indonesia	August 08, 2026
31	China	August 12, 2026
32	North Korea	August 15, 2026
33	Iran	August 19, 2026
34	Iraq	August 22, 2026
35	Afghanistan	August 26, 2026
36	Turkey	August 29, 2026
37	Jordan	September 02, 2026
38	Lebanon	September 06, 2026
39	Egypt	September 09, 2026
40	Ethiopia	September 13, 2026
41	Nigeria	September 16, 2026
42	South Africa	September 20, 2026
43	Zimbabwe	September 24, 2026
44	Zambia	September 27, 2026
45	Mozambique	October 01, 2026
46	Mexico	October 04, 2026
47	Honduras	October 08, 2026
48	Nicaragua	October 12, 2026
49	El Salvador	October 15, 2026
50	Costa Rica	October 19, 2026
51	Panama	October 22, 2026

#	Nation	Testimony Date
52	Colombia	October 26, 2026
53	Venezuela	October 29, 2026
54	Brazil	November 02, 2026
55	Argentina	November 06, 2026
56	Chile	November 09, 2026
57	Bolivia	November 13, 2026
58	Dominican Republic	November 16, 2026
59	Haiti	November 20, 2026
60	Jamaica	November 24, 2026
61	Ukraine	November 27, 2026
62	Russia	December 01, 2026
63	Poland	December 04, 2026
64	Germany	December 08, 2026
65	United Kingdom	December 11, 2026
66	France	December 15, 2026
67	Italy	December 19, 2026
68	Greece	December 22, 2026
69	Cyprus	December 26, 2026
70	United States	December 29, 2026

A Note on the Testimonies

Where CMM published or documented records allowed, names and ministry details in these testimonies reflect real CMM workers — Pastor Spurgeon Babu, Pastor Jackson Kerejji, Pastor Soly and Vanouen, Brother Farzad, Osmani and Geidy Sosa, Dr. David Joy, and many others whose labor has graced our annual reports and magazines over the years. Where public records were not available for a particular nation, the testimony is written as a representative illustration — grounded in CMM's actual areas of work (Bible distribution, discipleship groups, water wells, child sponsorship, anti-trafficking, Christ-centered education, disaster relief) and told in the voice a brother or sister serving there

might use. Every testimony, real or representative, aims to honor the dignity of the nation and the faithfulness of the Gospel workers serving within it.

CMM Ministry Focus Areas (from CMM.world)

- Training ministers to hear and obey the voice of the Lord
- Prophetic training in person and online
- Christ-centered education and leadership development
- Evangelism and church planting
- Discipleship
- Humanitarian aid and disaster relief
- Clean, safe water wells (Africa and Asia)
- Child sponsorship

Since its founding in 1978, CMM has directed over \$100,000,000 in gifts-in-kind and cash to the mission field, with 90% of all designated funds reaching their intended missionaries and projects.

Closing Benediction

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." — Hebrews 13:20-21 (NKJV)

Grace and peace to you and all your house, in every one of the seventy nations and wherever this devotional finds you.

— **Jorge Parrott**

President, Christ's Mandate for Missions

CMM.world