

OCTOBER 2017

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*

Psalm 34:8

SALVATION AND THE SENSES

A devotional from



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES

TODAY WITH DR. PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Global Ministries

Your Eyes and Your Soul



The ancient proverb says, “The eyes are a window to the soul.” Scientists and researchers agree: Our eyes reveal a great deal about

what’s inside us, both physically and emotionally. For instance, our pupils change size—shrinking or enlarging—in response to our level of interest in a person or subject.

Our eyes are also a way for information to enter our hearts and minds. With our eyes we can observe the glorious beauty of a sunset, and with those same eyes we can watch a horrifying act of violence. The things that we see affect all of our being: “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light” (Matt. 6:22).

Scripture often plays with metaphors of seeing and vision and sight to emphasize spiritual truths about belief. Some “see” but don’t, won’t, or cannot believe. Their eyes are blinded to the truth. Indeed, we are blessed when we look upon Jesus and “see” His truth.

Helen Lemmel wrote a well-known hymn about seeing our Savior. Born the daughter of a pastor in 1864 in Wardle,

England, Helen came to the United States when she was 12 years old. She became a talented musician and composer, authoring more than 500 hymns, and she taught music at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. In 1922, she wrote the words and music for a beautiful hymn, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” You may know the lyrics: “O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There’s a light for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free.”

Helen was inspired to write the hymn after seeing a gospel tract titled “Focused,” based on Hebrews 12:2: “So then, turn your eyes upon Him [Christ]. Look full into His face and you will find that the things of earth will acquire a strange new dimness.”

“I stood still and began to put the words to melody,” she said. The chorus is a good reminder to us today: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

What will you focus your eyes, minds, and hearts on today? Will you let this window to your soul get distracted and discouraged? Or will you turn your eyes and heart toward our Savior? ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

Senses and Sensibility

The five physical senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch) are all functions of the body. They require a body and a brain in order to exist, and without these there is no experience of what we call the senses. But is this all there is to us? When we die, does all human sensibility also disappear?

Our capacity to perceive and experience things is shaped by but not limited to these five senses. When the body dies and the brain ceases to function, human consciousness continues in a nonphysical state. Paul speaks of this when he says that he “would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). Paul did not view death as the cessation of his existence or his experience.

But this raises an obvious question. How can we continue to see, know, and experience things when the normal organs of sense are dissolved in death? The answer is that this sensibility occurs by nonphysiological means. The vehicle for this is what the New Testament sometimes calls the soul.

The soul (which some theologians see as synonymous with spirit) is that part of us that continues to exist after the body has been destroyed. Revelation 6:9–11 speaks of “the souls who had been slain

because of the word of God.” They are conscious beings who have memories of their former lives and possess the ability to speak. The fact that each one is given a white robe suggests that they must also have some kind of bodily form, even though they have not received their resurrection bodies.

Jesus distinguished the soul from the body when He warned: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). The soul is the undying conscious essence of the person that continues into eternity. God’s ultimate purpose is to reunite the soul and body at the resurrection.

Our bodies currently suffer from the debilitating effects of sin and cannot inherit the kingdom of God (see 1 Cor. 15:50). The problem is not its physicality but its perishable state. The Christian’s hope is that our perishable body will one day be replaced by an imperishable or “spiritual” body (see 1 Cor. 14:42–44), a body suited to the realities of eternal life and the kingdom of God. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more about the resurrection of the body, read *The Vanishing Power of Death* by Erwin Lutzer (Moody Publishers).

TODAY AT MOODY

Signing the Gospel: Reaching an Unreached People

When Shirley Anne was in high school, she volunteered as tutor for deaf children at a Christian school in Iquitos, Peru. Her heart was captured by nine-year-old Rosa, a girl she taught to communicate with sign language. “Rosa was from the poorest part of town, had had no schooling, and didn’t have any language or any way to communicate,” she says. “I loved her so deeply, just being with her day in and day out.”

On her last day at the school, Shirley Anne gave Spanish Bibles to more than a dozen students she had tutored and a picture Bible to Rosa. “I wanted to give something that pointed back to the gospel,” she says.

That mission trip set the course for Shirley Anne’s future in ministry to the Deaf community, people who use sign language as the main means of communication and have their own culture and behavioral norms. It also led her to Moody Bible Institute where she pursued the unique calling God had placed on her life. “Bible translation work for the Deaf is a huge need,” she says. She graduated from Moody Bible Institute this May with her degree in applied linguistics. Deaf people can be found in every culture and country, yet they often feel isolated from the hearing world, including churches. “A majority

of them have never heard the gospel. In the United States, they’re the most unreached people group, period.”

Moody provided many opportunities for Shirley Anne to practice her sign language skills through a student group, Deaf Outreach Chicago. The group meets weekly to learn how to share the gospel and Bible verses in sign language. “The ultimate reason of why we’re here—to learn more so we can follow Christ and be equipped to go out wherever He sends us—that’s what I loved about Moody,” she says.

After graduation, Shirley Anne moved to Paraguay to serve with a mission agency at a rural school. In Paraguay, she will work with children with special needs and help establish a Bible club for girls. She is also pursuing long-term ministry with both deaf and hearing children in South America.

“Thank you so much to all who supported my education these past four years. Because of your prayers and generous support, I was able to graduate debt-free and go directly to the foreign mission field. God’s faithfulness is evident in every step, and your support and encouragement is just one more tangible way I’ve seen His guidance in my life. Thank you!” ■

VOLUME 30 • ISSUE 10

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Bruce Everhart

MANAGING EDITOR

Heather Moffitt

SENIOR EDITOR

Elena Mafter

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jamie Janosz

John Koessler

WRITER

Brad Burton

ART DIRECTOR

Lynn Gabalec

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Larry Bohlin, Rachel Hutcheson

BUSINESS MANAGER

Paul B. Currie

MARKETING MANAGER

Claire Kniewski

MOODY GLOBAL MINISTRIES

PRESIDENT

J. Paul Nyquist

PROVOST

Junias Venugopal

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Steven Mogck

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Greg R. Thornton

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Ken Heullitt

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Samuel Choy

VICE PRESIDENTS

Tim Arens

Larry Davidhizar

Jim Elliott

Bruce Everhart

John A. Jelinek

Collin G. Lambert

Frank W. Leber Jr.

Bryan O'Neal

Paul Santhouse

James Spencer

Janet Stiven

Anthony Turner

Debbie Zelinski

TRUSTEES

Christopher Denison

Orbelina Eguizabal

T. Randall Fairfax (Chairman)

Thomas S. Fortson

Manuel Gutierrez

Jerry B. Jenkins

Paul Johnson (Emeritus)

James Meeks

J. Paul Nyquist

David Schipper

Juliana Slattery

Mark Wagner

Richard E. Warren

Richard Yook

TODAY IN THE WORD™

Salvation and the Senses

Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Renaissance humanist, theologian, and teacher, instructed his students on the art of reading. In *Philosophia Christi* he advised against reading *about* literature, but instead encouraged going *ad fontes*—to the source. To him, the source of knowing Christ was reading the Bible, where “even now [Christ] lives, breathes and speaks to us, more forcefully than when he lived among men.” How should we read it? The same way we love Christ Himself, with our whole being—mind, heart, emotions, and senses: “Immerse ourselves in it, embrace it, practice it night and day, kiss it greedily and die in it after we have been transformed into it.”

This month in *Today in the Word*, we'll see how Scripture uses all the senses to refer to different aspects of our salvation. As we study what the Bible says about the gospel and our senses, we'll learn how to love Christ more deeply; how to see, hear, and touch Him through His Word; and yes, how to kiss His living Word. We'll join the psalmist to “taste and see that the LORD is good” (Ps. 34:8). And we'll rejoice in His salvation!

Thank you for using this devotional guide for your personal study of the Bible. It is our prayer that your love for Jesus will grow stronger as you walk with Him. Thank you for supporting the ministry of *Today in the Word* and helping others know the joy of Christ's salvation. ■

Moody Global Ministries is the sole publisher of *Today in the Word*, copyright © 2017 by Moody Global Ministries. All rights reserved. Please direct all *Today in the Word* inquiries to Donor Resource Management, 820 N. LaSalle Blvd., Chicago, IL 60610. Scripture taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV®, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Printed in the U.S.A. *Today in the Word* is published monthly. Printed on 30% recycled paper.

Taste and see that the LORD is good.

Psalm 34:8

A Multisensory Salvation

Researchers in many fields have shown that people are most likely to remember lessons that engage multiple senses. One frequently cited study concludes that people remember 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 50 percent of what they both hear and see.

Our study this month focuses upon biblical passages that deal with the human senses—sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing—in order to explore the multisensory way in which God reaches out to humanity. Our key verse today uses a striking image to illustrate this: “Taste and see that the LORD is good” (Ps. 34:8). At first blush, “taste” may seem odd in this context, which uses the analogy of God giving refuge from military attack as “the angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him” (v. 7). While we might see aid of this sort, it is not the kind of thing that is readily tasted. But verse 10 suggests

the refuge God provides extends beyond physical safety to include the provision of food. If it is possible for even young lions, some of nature’s most adept hunters, to “grow weak and hungry,” then we should recognize God’s providence whenever we avoid the same fate.

For Christians, the appeal to “taste and see that the Lord is good” takes on a dramatic form. This verse is used in many churches to invite worshipers to participate in the Lord’s Supper, in which we remember: “Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). Tasting the communion elements, we remember the lengths God has gone to save us. Moreover, in every bite and morsel throughout our lives we ought to taste the provision of the God who teaches us through all our senses.

APPLY THE WORD

The concept of divine providence refers in part to the ways God provides for His creatures. Take a moment to savor a fruit you enjoy. Think about its journey back through time—to the store, the field, the seed, the water, and ultimately to God, who has lovingly provided for you. You can “taste and see that the LORD is good.”

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of Education, leads a phenomenal assembly of faculty and students in Christian education, as Moody stays true to God’s Word. We ask God’s wisdom for the leadership and the faculty throughout this school year.

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,
but on what is unseen.*

2 Corinthians 4:18

MONDAY
OCTOBER

2

Fixing Our Eyes

Compared to humans, dogs have remarkably poor visual acuity; what we see clearly from 80 feet away, a dog sees clearly only when it is 20 feet away. So why, when we take our canine friends for a walk, do they so often bolt to the end of the leash attempting to chase some critter that, until that point, we have not seen? A great deal has to do with the simple fact that the dog is looking. While our eyes wander, his are fixed on the bushes and brambles where such creatures hide. As a result, the dog sees things that we do not.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul suggests that a similar dynamic applies in the life of faith. Those who lack focus will see only affliction, perplexity, persecution, and adversity, all hardships that Paul knew only too well. But, he insists, such hardships are not all there is to see.

Those with their eyes properly trained will find far more. Most of all, they will see the power of God evident in the fact that, despite being “hard pressed on every side,” Paul and his fellow Christians are “not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (vv. 8–9).

Yet such realities come into sight only when we “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” (v. 18). For the next ten days, we’ll consider what it means to have such sight, investigating passages that focus on eyes and vision. As we set out on this journey, Paul reminds us that seeing the world rightly is a gift that first of all comes from God, not from us. Right vision begins with God correcting our eyes, and then we keep our focus on Him.

APPLY THE WORD

Think about what you see in your day-to-day life. In what way do you see God with clarity? In what is it difficult to see God working? Paul suggests that even those things in which it might initially be difficult to see God—such as affliction—can reveal God to us. Pray for God to give you the eyes to see Him in such things.

PRAY WITH US

Rachel Monfette and Kathryn Santhouse help Dr. Timothy Arens, VP and dean of Student Life, minister to our students in and out of classrooms. Please pray that God would bless their interaction with students and with each other.

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

3

I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Psalm 16:8

Wandering Eyes

Certain sights can change our lives. Even the briefest glimpse can create an indelible impression. This can be true of good things: the first sight of a newborn child or a future spouse can become a treasured memory. But it can also be true of bad things: the American Psychological Association has found that witnessing an act of violence can cause long-lasting trauma.

In Genesis 3, the first humans saw something that fundamentally changed their lives, and it had enduring and negative consequences. Desiring to become like God, Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and had their eyes opened to good and evil. This led to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden and set in motion a train of calamities (v. 23).

But why would the ability to see good and evil have such a profound impact upon human beings? Most of all, it diverts

us from the concentrated focus on God that we were created to have. Notice how “eyes” and “seeing” in this passage refer to both physical senses and spiritual perception. Eve saw that the fruit was desirable not only for its beauty and flavor but also because it would confer wisdom (v. 6). The act of disobeying God’s command fractured their sole focus on fellowship with God, and now they would experience competing claims on their spiritual attention and loyalty (vv. 7–10).

After the Fall, we cannot un-see the knowledge of good and evil. We must follow the example of David in Psalm 16, acknowledging the presence of evils in the world but nonetheless insisting that these are only seen properly in light of God: “I keep my eyes always on the LORD” (v. 8). Even in a fallen, broken world, God provides a way for us to see His provision and care.

APPLY THE WORD

What things are distracting you from focusing on God? Keep in mind that some of them might appear to be good. The serpent’s temptations in Genesis 3 only succeed because they present human beings with something that appears good—the ability to be like God. Ask the Lord to shape your spiritual eyes to see His true goodness.

PRAY WITH US

The Student Programs team works hard to ensure that campus life at Moody is a growing experience for every student. Ask God today to empower the ministry of Joe Gonzales, Cherie Carson, Edward Jones, and Mary Cesar as they serve the student body.

He is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.

Deuteronomy 10:21

Wonders Before Our Eyes

Mention the name Charles Lindbergh and many will remember that he completed the first solo flight across the Atlantic. In addition to his prominent exploits in flight, however, he also made a major contribution to biomedical research. After his sister-in-law developed a severe heart condition, Lindbergh began a period of intensive research during which he collaborated with the French Nobel-prize winner Alexis Carrel to invent the Lindbergh-Carrel perfusion pump. This pump provided the first practical means for stopping the heart during medical procedures and paved the way for the first open-heart surgeries.

As with our memories of Lindbergh's achievements, Christians can at times focus solely on Jesus' work of salvation, overlooking God's long history of delivering His people and failing to consider how that should shape our perspective. In Deuteronomy 10, Moses

reminds the Israelites of the wondrous ways God multiplied the ranks of the Hebrew people, led them out of slavery, guided them through the wilderness, and would soon bring them into the Promised Land. Even wonders so amazing as this can slip into oblivion if we do not call them to mind.

But the larger point of the passage is not just that we should continually remember the wonders that God has worked, but that doing so should transform the way we live. Thus, the Israelites are reminded that God “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you” (v. 18). The blessings that God has showered on their behalf—protection and provision—should cause them to do the same. The wonders God has performed before our eyes should lead us to live in wondrous new ways that manifest a true love of God and of our neighbors.

APPLY THE WORD

Deuteronomy 10 suggests that God's saving hand appears not only in extraordinary events like the parting of the Red Sea but also in occurrences such as the birth and growth of children. Scripture credits God for the everyday wonders of the sun rising and the rain falling. What wonders of God might you be overlooking in your own life?

PRAY WITH US

As Moody Radio's Fall Share Stand Together fundraiser starts today, VP of Moody Radio, Collin Lambert, asks for your prayer and financial support for this effort. May God extend the reach of His Word and worship through the growing ministry of Moody Radio!

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

5

*My ears had heard of you but
now my eyes have seen you.*

Job 42:5

The Wild World of God

When something terrible occurs—a terrorist attack, a horrific accident, a grave diagnosis—our first instinct is often to ask, “Why?” Our response is natural. God has given human beings the gift of reason, and we are eager to use that gift to make sense of the world around us. But it is a mistake to presume that human reason can make sense of all things.

That was the downfall of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, the friends often referred to as “Job’s comforters.” That title, however, has an ironic quality; at best, they offered cold comfort. After disaster befell Job, they arrived full of the presumption that they could discern the reasons behind this catastrophe, which led them repeatedly and insistently to blame Job himself. But Job doggedly—and correctly—maintained his innocence until finally God answered him out of the whirlwind. And after that

encounter, Job, the one whose “ears had heard” of God, could say, “Now my eyes have seen you” (v. 5).

Notably, God’s response never directly answers why such suffering has come upon Job. Instead, it gives him a vision of the world that is far more vast and wild than humans generally appreciate. “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail . . . ? What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed . . . ?” (38:22–24). Creation, God’s response suggests, is full of things we do not know and cannot fathom.

This leads Job to respond in great humility: “Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know” (v. 3). Thankfully, God does not expect us to understand all things. Rather, He asks that we trust His providence and goodness (v. 2).

APPLY THE WORD

God used the natural world to remind Job of the mysteries of the Creator. Both what we do and don’t understand about the world should reinforce our trust in God. When we learn more about science or medicine, we should marvel at our good Creator. And when we consider the mysteries yet unknown, we should trust His love and provision for us.

PRAY WITH US

Pray for the successful Fall Share at WRMB, Moody Radio South Florida. May its staff—Audrey Altman, Brigitte Sylvestre, and Dolores King-St. George—encourage listeners in their walk with Christ and introduce new listeners to salvation.

*The poor and the oppressor have this in common:
The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.*

Proverbs 29:13

The Source of Our Sight

Since at least the thirteenth century, inventors have been captivated by the hope of designing a perpetual motion machine. Once constructed, such a machine could continue functioning indefinitely through its own power and without needing a new source of energy.

Too often, human beings—even we Christians—think of ourselves in similar terms. Yes, we might acknowledge, God created us at the beginning of our lives and at some point they will come to an end. But, we frequently imagine, in between those events we are running solely on our own power, drawing only upon our own native energy and effort. We believe that we are self-sufficient.

Proverbs 29:13 undercuts all such pretensions to self-sufficiency, reminding us that God “gives sight to the eyes of both” the poor and the oppressor—that is, to all people. It is not just that God gave such abilities

in the past but *continues giving* them to us in the present, even at this very moment. Accordingly, even faculties that we might consider to be our own, such as vision, breathing, and hearing, are gifts that are being continually bestowed to us by God. Should God withdraw His hand from us, we would be utterly undone. We are thoroughly and continually reliant upon God.

In Christian theology, this reality is captured in the doctrine of God’s continuing care for creation. Essentially this is the crucial conviction that God does not simply create the universe and then steps back, leaving it to its own devices. He is not the cosmic Watchmaker who wound the dial and then retreated. Instead, God is continually involved in creation, sustaining it and all it contains. Not only that, but God is ultimately directing creation toward the final fulfillment of His gracious will. Thanks be to God!

APPLY THE WORD

Looking back on your life, what accomplishments do you feel most proud of? As you think about them, remember that even—and perhaps especially—these things were not your own doing. God was present in those moments, giving you strength and enabling your efforts. Give thanks to the Lord for such wonderful gifts and ask for His continued blessings.

PRAY WITH US

The rest of Moody Radio South Florida’s staff—Eric Johnson, Jon Garrison, and Becky Borgstrom—appreciate your prayers on their behalf as they lead thousands of listeners in worship and spiritual edification.

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

7

My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations.

Luke 2:30–31

Seeing Salvation in the Unexpected

Given that human beings are visual creatures, illustrations are often effective ways to convey complex concepts. Whether it's flannel graph to accompany a Bible lesson or a PowerPoint presentation in a meeting, a picture, as they say, is worth a thousand words.

When he looked at Jesus and declared, "My eyes have seen your salvation" (v. 30), Simeon was testifying about God's profound knowledge of humanity. God understands that we are most likely to grasp the mystery of salvation by seeing it in our midst. But here salvation takes the form not of a mere picture but as a fully human being.

In his book *On the Incarnation*, the church father Athanasius writes that, in becoming incarnate, God deals with human beings "as a good teacher with his pupils, coming down to their level and using simple means. . . . [The Son] became Himself an object for the

senses so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He did." The invisible and infinite God adapted Himself to the human condition, becoming a human being who we could see, hear, and touch, so that He might teach us the most marvelous of lessons.

Even while adapting to the human condition, however, God also retains the ability to shock us. After all, Simeon declared he saw God's salvation, but not in an emperor or even a military leader, as we might expect. No, he saw it in a fragile baby born to a couple that had just offered birds as a sacrifice because they were too poor to afford a sheep (vv. 22–24; see Lev. 12:7–8). When Simeon lauded Him, even the child's parents "marveled at what was said" (v. 33). God is made visible in Christ, coming to us in ways we may not expect.

APPLY THE WORD

Simeon had spiritual eyes to see that God had come in an unexpected form. Do we have spiritual eyes to see when He's working in an unexpected way? As Simeon did, time spent in worship, prayer, and study of His Word will help prepare us to praise God for His mighty work, even when it happens in the people and places we least expected.

PRAY WITH US

Please lend your prayer support to the ministry of KMBI, our Moody Radio station in Spokane, Wash. Pray for God's provision of energy, strength, and creativity in the lives of its staff: Chris Wright, Dee Marie, Joe Gonzalez, and Scott LaVell.

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!*

Isaiah 43:18–19

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

8

Beholding a New Thing

Following a series of uprisings in Massachusetts, on February 14, 1775, the leader of the British Marine regiment in Boston, Major John Pitcairn, wrote a letter to his superiors minimizing the threat. “[The colonists] will soon be convinced that they are very insignificant when opposed to regular troops.” The history of colonial revolts, most of which were neutralized easily by the first real application of military force, seemed to support his conclusion. Yet focusing on the past led Pitcairn to overlook that a number of factors, most of all the colonists’ increasing organization and resentment, created a new situation that would initiate the American Revolution.

The prophet Isaiah addressed a community that, like Major Pitcairn, was in danger of allowing past realities to blind them to new, revolutionary possibilities. Having been crushed

by the army of Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon as slaves, the exiled Israelites would have found little grounds for hope in recent history. For this reason, Isaiah admonishes them that they must “not dwell on the past” (v. 18). Those who solely focus upon such bygone realities will miss the fact that God is “doing a new thing” (v. 19).

In the case of the exiled Israelites, this new thing involved God “making a way in the wilderness” (v. 19) in order to restore the Israelites to their homeland, a restoration so historically unprecedented that it could only be imagined by those who know God as the one “who fashioned and made the earth” (Isaiah 45:18). Only a God of such extraordinary power could produce a feat so wondrous. As their faith in this God sustained the Israelites in their darkest hours, so it can sustain us in ours.

APPLY THE WORD

Isaiah 43 proclaims God’s ability to create amazing, revolutionary possibilities. By no means was that power exhausted in Israel’s ancient history. It continues today. Reflect on your life, your family, and your community. Where might God be doing a new thing? How might you help others perceive it or cultivate it so that it can spring forth?

PRAY WITH US

Steven Mogck, executive VP and chief operating officer, welcomes your prayer encouragement for his staff who provide the logistical, technical, and human support for our many ministries and spread the gospel through their service and their lives.

MONDAY
OCTOBER

9

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

Matthew 6:22

Having Good Eyes

In recent decades, neuroscientists have discovered what are called “mirror neurons.” Such neurons fire not only when one performs a certain action but also when one observes someone else performing that action. It is thought that, among other things, mirror neurons predispose us to act in ways we see modeled by others; when we see their acts, neural patterns are forming in our own brains that incline us to act similarly.

The existence of mirror neurons might further illuminate the profound wisdom of Jesus’ observation in Matthew 6:22: “If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” That wisdom is perhaps even more evident in the original Greek of this verse, where the word translated as “healthy” also means “single,” implying that our eyes are to be particularly focused. Verses that follow give examples of things that

should not distract our gaze: wealth (v. 24), food and drink (vv. 25–31), and other worries (v. 33). Instead, we are to set our sights on the kingdom of God.

Training our eyes on the kingdom of God—most of all on the love and peace that define that kingdom—is a fundamental way we can cultivate love and peace in our own lives. As they come to the center of our vision, we become capable of mirroring such qualities. Eyes that remain so focused on the kingdom of God thus give light to our bodies and to all our acts.

Philippians 4:8–9 makes a similar point when it encourages us to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy—adding that the goal is not merely for us to think but to “put it into practice.” May we have healthy eyes focused on the Lord!

APPLY THE WORD

Compose two lists, one of distractions away from the kingdom of God and another of things that help you focus on God’s priorities. Perhaps worry about health or finances blinds you from trusting the Lord; pray that He will help you rely on His strength. Maybe listening to Christian music helps to keep your heart sensitive to God; thank Him for that blessing.

PRAY WITH US

Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, asks for your prayers, as we decide what avenues of ministry will fit into each year’s budget. Join us in asking God to show Ken the best routes to pursue and to open up new sources of support.

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1–2

A Pioneering Spirit

On May 14, 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out from Camp Dubois, Illinois, with a band of volunteers to explore the land the United States had recently acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. With the help of Sacagawea and others, the party ultimately reached the Pacific Ocean, in the process becoming the first Americans to cross the Continental Divide, and produced 140 maps. Not only did Lewis and Clark open the door to exploring the American West, but with their maps they also showed others the way.

Christians readily and rightly identify Jesus as our Savior, the one who has opened the door to salvation. And Christ has also shown us how to live into that salvation now. As “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (v. 2), Jesus, like Lewis and Clark, shows us the ways we are to go, the “race marked out for us” (v. 1).

Even more than the paths Lewis and Clark traveled, the way of Jesus is a challenging and costly road. Yes, it ultimately leads to the throne of God, but before that it brings shame (v. 2) and opposition (v. 3). Seeking to follow the trail Jesus blazed, we should expect hardship (v. 7), pain (v. 11), and perhaps even to join Jesus in shedding blood (v. 4). As Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” This can be a daunting prospect.

But we can still be encouraged, recognizing that like any good leader Jesus does not ask us to do something He would not and has not already done. By keeping Him in sight, we are in fellowship both with Him and with “a great cloud of witnesses” (v. 1), and we can look forward to a “harvest of righteousness and peace” (v. 11).

APPLY THE WORD

Hebrews 12:1 encourages us to “throw off everything that hinders” in order to walk the path of Jesus. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any hindrances that are holding you back. How can you make such changes and more closely follow the pioneer and perfecter of our faith? You might ask an accountability partner to pray about this with you.

PRAY WITH US

Moody president, Dr. Paul Nyquist, opens Missions Conference in Chicago today. Pray with him that God would work through the words of all the speakers and that the lessons learned at this event will find deep roots in the lives of attending students.

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

11

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death” or mourning or crying or pain.

Revelation 21:4

The End of Tears in Our Eyes

The eyes are the organs that allow us to enjoy the sense of sight. But they are, of course, much more than that. The old proverb describes the eyes as the “windows to the soul.” This is an apt description, for our eyes express some of our most deeply felt emotions. When we are excited, they grow wide; when we are angry, they narrow; and when we are in pain, they shed tears.

In this life we have a great many occasions for tears of pain to wet our eyes. We part ways with old friends. We find ourselves in unrelenting physical suffering. We lose loved ones to death. Some Christians have characterized this world as a “vale of tears.” For instance, the much-beloved hymn “Be Still My Soul” describes times “when dearest friends depart, and all is darkened in the vale of tears.” In such moments, it can feel as if God is far off and unmoved by our pain.

Chapter 21 of the book of Revelation assures us that God cares about our pain, a truth expressed by the poignant image of God tenderly wiping the tears from our eyes. In addition to offering such affectionate consolation, God’s care extends further: He will utterly remake the world in such a way that mourning, crying, and pain all become relics of the past. They will be part of the “old order” that “has passed away” (v. 4).

This doesn’t mean we should not grieve the real losses we experience in this life. The pain of sorrow and loss is real, and God does not call us to be stoics who deny emotions. But it does mean that we should not grieve as those who have no hope (see 1 Thess. 4:13). And we have faith that God will keep this promise to us: “Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Ps. 30:5).

APPLY THE WORD

Western culture discourages us from expressing our deepest pains. But Psalms 22 and 88, among others, encourage us to share such pains with God, even when all we can articulate is profound anger. If you are in pain, honestly express that to God, knowing that He already knows and cares and is a refuge in times of trouble.

PRAY WITH US

Please pray today for Moody’s student body as they participate in our annual Missions Conference. We thank God for the willingness of our students to surrender their lives to the call to missions. This will be a pivotal week in many of their lives.

*He rained down manna for the people to eat. . . .
Human beings ate the bread of angels.*

Psalm 78:24–25

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

12

Detestable Tastes

With repetition, even the most remarkable experiences can become routine—and then even repellent. Children flying on an airplane for the first time gaze wide-eyed about the cabin and stare intently out the window as the houses, cars, and people on the ground shrink to the size of insects. Adults flying for the one hundred and first time often trudge to their seats as if bearing a heavy burden and commonly complain about the aggravation of air travel. No longer perceiving the marvel of flight, it becomes for them an object of contempt.

In much the same way, the book of Numbers records the Israelites' growing contempt for God's miraculous provision of manna. They began to murmur against God and against Moses, complaining that they "never see anything but this manna" (v. 6). Despite its heavenly origins, described by the psalmist as "the bread of angels,"

manna lost its appeal for the Israelites, and soon they proclaimed that they "detest" it (see Num. 21:5).

Not only do they despise God's gift, but their spite also warps their perception to the point that they wrongly describe the Egyptian food that they would prefer as having been given to them "at no cost" (v. 5). In fact, such food was given to them only because they were slaves and thus came at the cost of their freedom. Slavery, it would seem, had become more appealing to them than another meal of manna.

In the form of manna, God's power of salvation became something that human beings could taste. Numbers even offers a rather vivid description of manna's flavor, likening it to coriander (v. 7) and cakes baked with oil (v. 8). And yet the Israelites lost their taste for the gifts God had given.

APPLY THE WORD

Numbers 11 is an example of familiarity breeding contempt. Often those blessings that are most consistently given to us are those we take for granted and even despise. Take a moment to reflect on the blessings that you encounter every day—the friends, the family, the food, the shelter—that you too often take for granted.

PRAY WITH US

Today and tomorrow, please pray for our Facilities Maintenance team, a valuable part of Moody's ministry family. We ask God's blessing on their handiwork as well as His divine craftsmanship in the lives of Carl Bjerga, John Addison, and Joshua Burkhardt.

FRIDAY
OCTOBER

13

Here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.

John 6:50

Tasting the Bread of Life

In many cultures, bread has been long regarded as the ultimate staple food. This includes the Jewish culture Jesus lived in when He taught his followers to ask for God's provision by praying for "our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). And in ancient China, a proverb advised, "When you have two pennies left in the world, buy a loaf of bread with one and a lily with the other." Even in the contemporary United States we still refer to someone who provides the resources to support a family as a "breadwinner."

In our reading today, Jesus uses the image of bread, the ultimate staple, to describe Himself as the "bread that came down from heaven" (v. 41). This heavenly bread differs from earthly bread in many respects. Perhaps most of all, earthly bread alone is insufficient to sustain life. As Deuteronomy 8:3

reminds us, "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." In Jesus, however, we find spiritual bread made from the one who is the Word of God (see John 1:1). The spiritually life-giving power of this bread thus knows no bounds: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever" (v. 51).

But how are we to eat this bread? Much like earthly bread, which we must welcome into our bodies so it might become part of us, so too we must welcome Jesus, the bread of life, into our lives so He can strengthen and transform us. This means above all believing that Jesus was who He said He was: the Son of God (see John 19:7; 20:31). Despite the spiritual provision Jesus represents, many responded by "grumbling" (v. 43). If that describes us, it's time to stop grumbling and start receiving.

APPLY THE WORD

If you have never welcomed Jesus into your life, you can do so today by confessing your trust in Him and believing that on the last day He will raise up those who come to Him (v. 45). If you are a believer, are there areas of your life that He does not yet fully rule? Welcome Him into those areas, believing that He brings life-giving power.

PRAY WITH US

Your prayer support means a great deal to Moody's Facilities Maintenance staff, Matthew Morris, Paul Heggeland, Thomas Addison, and Vincent Camera as they serve Moody ministries behind the scenes on our campus in Chicago.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matthew 5:6

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

14

Hungering to Taste God's Justice

In his famous children's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, C. S. Lewis tells a story of human hunger leading to near disaster. Edmund, one of novel's main characters, finds himself in the magical land of Narnia where he encounters the White Witch, who presents herself as the Queen of Narnia. Seeking to manipulate Edmund, she offers him whatever he would like best to eat. When he asks for Turkish Delight, a jelly-like candy filled with chopped fruits and nuts, she produces several pounds that he greedily eats. But the candy carries an enchantment, and it creates such a ravenous hunger for more that Edmund betrays his brother and sisters in the quest to taste it again.

Often our hungers are similarly disastrous, shaped by what Paul calls the "desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16–17). To satisfy such desires, we too would betray our brothers and sisters.

But Jesus speaks of a form of hunger that leads not to harm but to holiness. He proclaims that among the blessed are those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (v. 6). Righteousness involves being in right relationship both with God and with our brothers and sisters. Those who truly hunger and thirst for it will go to great lengths to satisfy their desires, showing mercy to others (v. 7), making peace (v. 9), and enduring persecution (vv. 10–12).

Despite such trials, Jesus promises us that those who hunger for righteousness will find fulfillment and satisfaction. This is a craving shared by God, who also "loves righteousness and justice" (Ps. 33:5), and ultimately God's will is to be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). He will satisfy our hunger for His righteousness—a promise so sweet, you can almost taste it.

APPLY THE WORD

Ancient Christian practice includes refraining from eating for a period of time as a spiritual discipline, using hunger pangs to focus on the desire for God's righteousness and love. Although you may not be able to practice fasting, when you experience hunger pangs today, let them first turn your mind to hunger for God.

PRAY WITH US

Please include in your prayers Moody's VP and dean of faculty, Dr. Larry Davidhizar. Ask for God's guidance in the ministry of helping our professors grow professionally and spiritually, as well as good communication between faculty and administration.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Dr. Rosalie de Rosset, Professor of English, Literature, and Homiletics

Q I often hear Christians use the phrase “It’s not about you.” I think I understand what they mean: the world does not revolve around you. But I think this phrase flies in the face of the metaphors Christ used to explain His relationship with us, such as husband/wife, sheep/shepherd, hen/chicks, vine/branches. I see those examples as being *about* both characters in the relationship. Marriage counselors don’t say to the bride-to-be, “Now, this marriage is only about your husband, not about you”? No shepherd takes an apprentice into the field and says, “The thing you have to remember about this job is that it is NOT about the sheep.” How would the original hearers understand stories about husband/wife, sheep/shepherd, hen/chicks, and vine/branches? Would they automatically see them all as being about the husband, shepherd, hen, and vine and not about the wife, sheep, chicks, and branches?

A Your question highlights the difference between cliché and genuine metaphor. “It’s not about you” is not a metaphor; it’s a recent and increasingly tediously used aphorism standing in sharp contrast to the way Christ used language and approached people. Christ’s metaphors were rich word-pictures of ordinary life that people would understand sooner or later the more they thought about

them. As one commentator says, He used them “to clarify, entertain, and stimulate.” Jesus knew that people tend to think in terms of comparisons of objects, people, and concepts that are familiar and dear to them. Comparisons and contrasts suggest to the hearer that both elements in the comparison or contrast need to be considered.

Phrases such as “It’s not about you” have an unfriendly tone, almost as though they’re thrown at the hearer. Christ never threw truth at people. While certainly at times Christ showed righteous anger, His great desire overall in His use of metaphorical language was to engage listeners, helping them to understand their need and to point to an answer colorfully and invitingly, leading the way to comprehension. In that way they could make a choice about themselves in relationship to Him and His commands.

All of us must consider the quality and depth and persuasiveness of the way we reach out to others. The truth must be handled carefully, for it is the truth, understood and believed, that makes us free (John 8:31–32).

Q Toward the end of the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4:31–34, the disciples say to Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.” He answers them, “I have food to eat that

It is incumbent upon all of us to consider the quality and depth and persuasiveness of the way we reach out to others.

you know nothing about.” The disciples seem puzzled, wondering if He has already eaten. Jesus replies, “My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” Why would Jesus answer this way, since He was human and must have been hungry?

A Some commentators say that this passage is like the conversation that took place earlier between Nicodemus and Jesus (see John 3). Jesus says something that is misunderstood because the hearers interpret the meaning of His words with an uncomprehending literalism. Then Jesus unfolds the meaning until it is grasped spiritually.

In this passage, the disciples return with food and are worried when Jesus doesn't want to eat. This appears to be one of those occasions when the great outreach and spiritual response Christ saw in front of Him lifted Him above and beyond bodily needs, showing His ever-present divine readiness and sensitivity (see John 4:38–42). The disciples were focused only on physical sustenance, ignoring the spiritual fulfillment that comes from doing God's work.

Q Every time I read the story of the Fall in Genesis 3, I wonder why God didn't explain more clearly to Adam and Eve why He was asking them not to eat of the one

tree. It seems as though God was setting them up or asking something unreasonable of them. If they were perfectly created, why wouldn't they have done the right thing?

A Many theologians have written varied and lengthy explanations, and this question was the subject of literary masterpieces such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a majestic epic poem exploring the drama of the Fall and its consequences, meant to, as Milton put it, “justify the ways of God to man.” I find pastor and author Tim Keller's explanation of this passage insightful: “The lack of an explanation was a call to obey out of love and trust in God for who he was in himself.”

In other words, God wasn't being manipulative when asking for Adam and Eve's obedience; instead, He was interested in the relationship between Himself and them. He wanted Adam and Eve to choose what was best, not to be robotically controlled. So, as Keller comments wisely, “The relationship was what the serpent attacked.” Or, in the words of theologian Sinclair Ferguson, the serpent's lie was “an assault on both God's generosity and integrity,” an assault finally on His love and good intentions for us, an assault that every Christian must be highly attuned to. Our choices can constitute the difference between spiritual life and death.

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

15

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?

Matthew 5:13

Seasoned with Salt

For thousands of years people have prized salt for many reasons, including as a seasoning. The right amount of salt in a dish not only gives it a salty taste but also enhances other flavors. Salt suppresses bitterness while amplifying sweetness and sourness. Salt overcomes what is least pleasing while drawing out what is most pleasing.

Salt's preservative qualities have often been alluded to in discussions about our text today, but the metaphor that Jesus uses when describing His followers as "salt of the earth" includes the sense of taste and flavor. Followers of Christ should enhance the overall "flavor" of the world. Like salt, we should suppress bitterness and enhance sweetness.

How might we do so? Jesus called His disciples to meekness (v. 5), mercy (v. 7), and making peace (v. 9). Later in Matthew's Gospel, He highlighted the

importance of loving all people, even our enemies (5:44), forgiving those who trespass against us (6:14), and caring for those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, or strangers in our land (25:35–40). In a world embittered by sin and selfishness, Jesus says that through such acts we will draw out what is best in the earth. "Salty" Christians not only show God's love to the world but also lead others to praise God when they see our good deeds and "glorify your Father in heaven" (5:16).

Jesus' description of His disciples as salt also comes as a warning. Salt is valuable for what it does, for enhancing taste or preserving food. Accordingly, when it loses its saltiness, it "is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot" (v. 13). Our call and purpose is to follow Jesus, sharing His love with others and ensuring that the earth is seasoned with salt.

APPLY THE WORD

Even a few grains of salt can make a big difference! How might you act as salt by loving your enemies, making peace, and caring for those in need? How can you draw out more sweetness to counter bitterness? Pray that God would give you the strength to enhance the world around you with the flavor of His love.

PRAY WITH US

Pray today for God's continuous direction in the work of our Communications department faculty: Brian Kammerzelt, David Fetzer, Janay Garrick, and Jill White. May they look to God with open hearts for His guidance for their lives and ministries.

I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Matthew 26:29

MONDAY
OCTOBER

16

Eating and Drinking in the Kingdom

Ron Popeil became an American institution as the star of late-night television infomercials for products including the Chop-O-Matic and the Showtime Rotisserie Oven. His infomercials are punctuated by vivid demonstrations—such as when he hits the door of the rotisserie with a hammer to show its strength—and by his flourish to reveal unanticipated features with the catchphrase “But wait, there’s more!”

The Gospel of Matthew doesn’t employ cheesy showmanship, but it does offer a vivid demonstration of the character of salvation and highlights remarkable features one might not have expected. By the time we reach our reading for today in the text, Jesus has already promised His disciples that they will have “treasure in heaven” (Matt. 19:21; also 6:20). But wait—there’s more!

Jesus tells His disciples that He “will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now

on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (v. 29), which reveals one of the features of the salvation He promises: we will have bodies capable of drinking and eating. In other words, salvation ultimately includes resurrection. He promises not only a heavenly home for our souls but also a resurrected life in which our souls and bodies will be reunited.

The promise of resurrection reminds us that God cares for us profoundly both in soul and in body. Jesus demonstrates this care in the most vivid fashion. In this passage He shares simple gifts, bread and the cup, with His disciples. These represent His body and blood, even greater gifts He would soon offer for His followers. For gifts so incredible and costly, we should praise Jesus, the great lover and redeemer of our souls and our bodies.

APPLY THE WORD

The promise of resurrection underscores God’s care for people’s bodies. Christians have expressed that care through acts of mercy such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting those in prison. Where in your church or community are there opportunities to participate in acts of care that reflect God’s love and promise of His resurrection?

PRAY WITH US

Please add the rest of Communications professors to your prayer list: Karyn Hecht, Kelli Worrall, Matthew Moore, Robert Gustafson, and Rosalie de Rosset. Pray their teaching would be full of God’s grace and love.

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

17

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you.

Jeremiah 1:8

Sustained by God's Touch

The sense of touch has tremendous power. Studies have consistently found that compassionate forms of touch—such as holding hands, massages, petting dogs, and hugs—have multiple benefits, including reducing the levels of stress hormones in the body, lowering blood pressure, improving mood, and even enhancing brain function.

If the power of human touch is so tremendous, one can only imagine the power of God's touch. Our reading today gives us one example in Jeremiah.

While all of the biblical prophets had difficult jobs, Jeremiah's was especially so. He was called to proclaim that, as punishment for the sins of Judah, God was determined to destroy it, to "make Jerusalem a heap of ruins" and "lay waste the towns of Judah" (Jer. 9:11). Proclaiming the impending annihilation of one's homeland is not, to put it mildly, a good way to make friends

and influence people. And Jeremiah predictably incurred the wrath of many.

Even in the face of the most violent opposition, however, he persisted. His persistence was not merely human determination but the power of God's touch. After all, at the start of his ministry Jeremiah was commissioned by a divine laying on of hands: "The LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'I have put my words in your mouth' " (v. 9). It was God who upheld Jeremiah in the face of such difficulties.

In the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, we witness God's determination to reach out and touch not only His chosen prophets but all of humanity. The Lord extends His hand to us. When we receive that touch, we can rest assured that God will be with us, even in the face of the most daunting challenges. He has the power to deliver us.

APPLY THE WORD

Scripture assures us that the hand of God is stronger than all forces that would oppose it; when God holds us in His hand, no one can snatch us out of it (see John 10:29). Give thanks today that God's hand holds you securely, and as you serve Him, rest in the knowledge that it is by His power, not your own, that you can be a witness for Him.

PRAY WITH US

Join Dr. Bryan O'Neal, VP and dean of Distance Learning, praising God for the fruitful ministry of Moody's online and Independent Studies courses, some of which were awarded Association of Christian Distance Education's Course of the Year.

*Your faith has healed you.
Go in peace.*

Luke 8:48

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER

18

Healing Touch

If you were to fill a jar with hydrogen and oxygen, little would happen. But introduce a spark and the two gases will combine to make water very quickly and explosively—don't try this at home! The energy provided by the spark is a catalyst that allows this reaction to take place under conditions in which it otherwise would not.

In today's reading, faith serves a similar function. As Jesus made His way to the home of Jairus, innumerable people touched Him as "the crowds almost crushed him" (v. 42). Yet little happened. But then a miraculous reaction instantly occurred when an unnamed woman touched the fringe of His robe. Despite having suffered for twelve years from hemorrhages "no one could heal," she was healed at once (v. 43–44).

This woman was not the only one who touched Jesus, but her faith made the difference. She did not touch Jesus

accidentally in the jostle of the crowd but with purpose, reaching out in faith that He held the power to make her well. This faith produced a remarkably different reaction: power went out from Him (v. 46) and bestowed a healing others in the crowd did not receive.

As Jesus continued His journey, faith catalyzed an even more extraordinary miracle. After Jairus received word his daughter has died, Jesus told him not to fear but to have faith "and she will be healed" (v. 50). Again, through the healing power of His touch, Jesus took the girl "by the hand" (v. 54) and restored her life.

Because God remains sovereign, such miracles are not subject to our demands, nor are they magical incantations. But the Gospels assure us that we have faith in a God whose miracles can leave us, like the girl's parents, "astonished" (v. 56).

APPLY THE WORD

The woman has suffered from her disorder for a long time. When suffering lasts so long, we are tempted to lose sight of God's power and love. If there are disorders in your life—whether they are physical ills, struggles with sins, prayers for lost loved ones—keep your focus and faith on Jesus, who has the power to heal, restore, and redeem us.

PRAY WITH US

Patrick Friedline leads the Career Development ministry on Moody's Chicago campus, helping students and alumni on the road of employment, weather full-time or part-time. Would you pray for him today?

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

19

*Lord, if you are willing,
you can make me clean.*

Matthew 8:2

Reaching Out to Touch

Since at least medieval times, meetings with kings and queens have been governed by elaborate protocols that emphasize the monarchs' grandeur. One historian has summed up the proper etiquette that applies even today when meeting the king or queen of the United Kingdom: "You don't kiss them, you don't touch them, you bow—over and over again."

In light of such customs and the distance they mark between rulers and their subjects, perhaps the last thing one might expect is for the one who is "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15) to willingly touch someone even most commoners would shun. And yet that is precisely what happened in our passage today, as Jesus "reached out his hand and touched" a man stricken with leprosy (v. 3).

This act is rendered more remarkable by what followed. A centurion approached

Jesus and asked him to heal a paralyzed slave. But when the centurion proclaimed that Jesus need not come to his house to do so, Jesus said, "'Let it be done just as you believed it would.' And his servant was healed at that moment" (v. 13). In other words, Jesus had the power to cure even from a distance.

His decision to touch the leper was not because physical touch was necessary for that man to be healed. Rather, Jesus' touch was a sign of mercy and compassion.

Jesus' treatment of this leper and many others throughout the Gospels reminds us that His kingship is not characterized by the pomp and circumstance sought by rulers of this world. Rather, as Philippians 2:6–7 puts it, despite "being in very nature God," Jesus "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant," reaching out to the lowliest among us.

APPLY THE WORD

Philippians 2 exhorts us to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus," who took on the nature of a servant. In what ways might you cultivate this mindset in your life? What opportunities for sacrificial service might you identify? How can you emulate Jesus in extending mercy and compassion to those whom society often shuns?

PRAY WITH US

Samuel Choy, chief marketing officer, leads several teams in digital, radio, and print marketing who form a vital link between the ministries of Moody and the people who make them possible. May the Lord bless their work!

*Jesus answered, “No more of this!”
And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.*

Luke 22:51

FRIDAY
OCTOBER

20

Touching Our Enemies

On April 27, 1983, a priest visited a convicted killer in Rome’s Rebibbia prison. With the priest often holding the other man’s hands gently in his, the two conversed for twenty minutes before parting with a handshake. Such a visit may have received little notice—except that the priest was Pope John Paul II and the other man, Mehmet Ali Agca, had attempted to assassinate him less than two years before.

High-profile acts of forgiveness often gather media attention, especially when the crimes have taken or threatened life itself. When Christians forgive those who have sought to harm them, they offer a mercy reminiscent of what Christ Himself showed when confronted by a crowd intent upon killing Him.

Notice in our reading that Jesus not only refused to strike out in anger, He also rebuked a disciple who did react violently, supposedly to protect Him.

In fact, Jesus reached out in mercy to touch the servant whose ear His disciple had cut off, healing a man who had come seeking His life (Luke 22:51).

From our limited human perspective, it is impossible to predict the earthly results of such mercy. At times it yields astounding positive changes—relationships are restored and communities are healed. Yet in other instances, as in the case of Jesus Himself, offering mercy to one’s enemies may result in earthly tribulation. Ultimately, the reason Christ’s followers are to extend mercy is not that it will invariably secure positive earthly results but because it testifies to the character of our God in heaven. As Jesus says in Luke 6:35, those who follow Him are to “love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High.”

APPLY THE WORD

Forgiving someone who has wronged us is difficult. And yet, Jesus asks, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?” (Luke 6:32). We can forgive those who have hurt or mistreated us only through the power of the Holy Spirit. If you have resisted offering forgiveness to someone, ask the Lord to strengthen you and free you to forgive.

PRAY WITH US

As you pray today, bring before the Lord our Media division under the leadership of Greg Thornton, senior VP of Media. Praise God for enabling Moody to venture successfully into the various media fields and ask Him to continue to guide us in the future.

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

21

*Look at my hands and my feet.
It is I myself! Touch me and see.*

Luke 24:39

A Touching Demonstration

While we refer to human beings' five senses, this description can be deceiving—many of our senses are not so separate as it might suggest. Special parts of our cerebral cortex known as “association areas” integrate senses like sight, hearing, and touch, creating a single perception of the world. The function of these association areas means that our richest and most reliable perceptions result when we receive information from multiple senses.

In the Gospel of Luke, when Jesus appeared to His disciples following His resurrection they at first doubted their perceptions. Seeing His form and hearing His voice, they concluded that this must be a ghost.

To counter their doubts, Jesus appealed to another sense, inviting them to “touch me and see.” This offered the disciples a more reliable perception of this miracle. Significantly, the fact that

Jesus had a body capable of being touched established that He was neither phantasm nor their imaginations but Himself in a resurrected body.

The demonstration of Jesus' bodily resurrection continued with a detail that might be overlooked. As the disciples remained incredulous with the joy of seeing their Master alive again, He changed the subject, asking if they had anything to eat and proceeding to consume a piece of broiled fish in their presence (v. 41–43). Once more this showed that this Jesus who had appeared was not a mere specter but a human being with flesh and bones—as well as the desire and ability to eat food.

Jesus' resurrection not only demonstrated God's complete power over death but also provides the hope that one day we too might share in this triumph as we are united with Jesus “in a resurrection like his” (Rom. 6:5).

APPLY THE WORD

Luke's Gospel uses the words *astonished*, *awed*, and *amazed* to describe the disciples' reaction when they encountered the resurrected Jesus (v. 41). Our busy lives leave little time for astonishment, awe, or amazement. Take time to reflect on God's awesome work in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and be amazed by God's love for you.

PRAY WITH US

Moody Radio has ministered to listeners in their walk with Christ for more than 90 years. Its Program Production team contributes to this ministry with their creativity, passion, and skills. Please pray for Chris Segard, Amy Rios, Joel Swan, and Joe Carlson.

*Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?”
Our God is in heaven.*

Psalm 115:2–3

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

22

A God Who Is Not Senseless

Our senses provide the basis for engaging the world around us. It might be easy to recognize the contributions made by some of the senses. Sight allows us to avoid danger and find food; we use hearing to communicate with others or perceive important sounds such as a baby crying. The sense of smell seems comparatively insignificant. But not only can the sense of smell alert us to potential dangers (such as the smell of smoke) but it also enriches our perceptions, including by enhancing our sense of taste.

The Old Testament often uses the language of sensation when speaking of God, emphasizing just how engaged with creation He is. God’s perception of creation is so rich that it involves seeing and hearing (both mentioned, for instance, in Exodus 3:7) and also smelling. The Old Testament mentions aromas pleasing to God at least forty times, beginning in Genesis 8:21 when

God smells the “pleasing aroma” produced by the sacrifice Noah offered following the Flood.

As highlighted in today’s psalm, the God of Israel is profoundly and richly engaged with creation. He stands in marked contrast with the idols so many worshiped in the ancient Middle East. Idols “have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell” (vv. 5–6). In other words, they are sense-less, and worshiping them is senseless—those who trust them will become lifeless and senseless like them (v. 8).

Only the God of Israel, who became human in Jesus Christ, is capable of being a true “help and shield” (v. 11). The psalm calls us to place our trust in this God who is so richly engaged with creation and who so deeply loves us.

APPLY THE WORD

Psalm 115 condemns worshiping idols crafted of “silver and gold” (v. 4). But idols are not only creations of precious metals—they are anything other than God to whom we assign the highest worth or in whom we place our deepest trust. What things do you value or trust? Which of them might displace God as the focus of your life?

PRAY WITH US

As we continue to uphold in prayer Moody Radio producers, add Ryan McConnaughay, Steven Tabor, and William Davis to your prayer list. Ask the Holy Spirit to use each program they work on for the edification of their listeners, for God’s glory.

MONDAY
OCTOBER

23

May my prayer be set before you like incense.

Psalm 141:2

The Sweet Scent of Prayer

For thousands of years, people have fashioned various oils and herbs into incense for a variety of purposes. Incense can cover unpleasant odors, and some forms of incense made from frankincense and myrrh, for instance, have been shown to reduce inflammation and relieve pain. Incense typically produces a pleasant, sweet scent when burned.

Incense is used in many expressions of both Jewish and Christian worship. A crucial basis for this association is the Altar of Incense, a fixture in both the wilderness tabernacle and in Solomon’s temple and on which incense was burned regularly (see Ex. 30:1–10 and 1 Kings 7:48).

But as we see in our text today, the use of incense in worship also serves as a sensory metaphor for our prayers, which have properties similar to

incense (v. 2). As the smoke of incense rises toward the heavens and creates a fragrant experience, so too our prayers should rise to God with a sweet, pleasing quality.

Psalm 141 offers a sense of what such a pleasing prayer might look like. While the author cries out for his own sake, asking God not to give him “over to death” (v. 8) and to keep him safe (v. 9), his most fundamental wish is not for his own vindication. Rather, he desires to attain the righteousness that glorifies God. Out of this desire he prays to God to “set a guard over my mouth” (v. 3) and “not let my heart be drawn to what is evil” (v. 4), and he even vows to accept blows from a righteous man who would correct him (v. 5). Such a prayer, centered around the desire that our eyes remain “fixed on you, Sovereign LORD” (v. 8), surely rises to God with a sweet scent.

APPLY THE WORD

We might assume that we will recognize and reject evil. Today’s psalm corrects our arrogance. Evil will often be alluring, drawing our hearts and appearing to be as tempting as “delicacies” (v. 4). What temptations might be seeking to draw you from the path of righteousness? Pray that God would help you see them and guard your heart against them.

PRAY WITH US

Bruce Everhart, VP of Donor Development and Channel Strategy, is grateful for the gifts and prayers of the donors he and his teams interact with. Thank God with us for the diligent work of this dedicated team, as they reach out to Moody’s friends.

*Did I not tell you that if you believe,
you will see the glory of God?*

John 11:40

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

24

Overcoming the Odor of Death

Scientific studies have reported that smell is the sense most linked to memory. This link happens deep in the brain where regions responsible for processing smells are linked to those involved in memory, especially the amygdala and hippocampus, in ways other senses are not. At times this link is a blessing. The smell of baking cookies or a crisp autumn day can recall cherished memories. It can also be a curse. Even decades later, soldiers who liberated German concentration camps were haunted by the stench of death.

This stench stalked the people gathered with Jesus outside the tomb of Lazarus. When Jesus ordered that the stone enclosing the tomb be removed, Lazarus's sister Martha understandably protested: "By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days" (v. 39). The objectionable odor she had every right to anticipate would only

increase her misery, providing an intense olfactory reminder of the destructive power of death and the loss of her beloved brother.

What she failed to account for, however, was that she was in the presence of the One who would overcome the odor of death, the Word of God who drives out the thief "who comes only to steal and kill and destroy" and instead ensures that His followers may "have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Jesus assured her that even the physical process of decay with its stink and rot was subject to His divine imperative.

Martha, Mary, and those gathered on that day in Bethany saw "the glory of God" manifested (v. 40). And Jesus' power reaches out across the ages to overcome the odor of death and give life to all who believe so that we may "take off the grave clothes" and be free (v. 44).

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus brings new life! Prayerfully reflect on His resurrection power. The Lord understands your grief when loved ones die, and He has promised to resurrect all who believe in Him (see 1 Cor. 15). And He has the power to give you life and vitality now, restoring broken relationships and your spiritual zeal. Pray for His blessing of spiritual life to the full.

PRAY WITH US

Please include in your prayers the Food Service team who work in the Student Dining Room on Moody's Chicago campus. Carlos Perez, Gonzalo Garcia, Gregory Dickson, and Hoa Lam appreciate your prayer support as they serve our students.

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER
25

Wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told.

Matthew 26:13

Preparing with Perfume

Every hospital drama on television includes this scene: an alarm sounds, doctors and nurses take off at a sprint, and someone ducks into a room and says something like, “We’ve got a Code Red!” Medical personnel converge at the side of a patient in a state of danger so great that for the moment all other priorities must be reordered.

No alarm cut through the air in Bethany as Jesus reclined at the table of Simon the Leper. And far from a gaggle of caregivers, just one woman came to His side. Unlike others, she recognized that Jesus was in a state so dangerous that it required other priorities, for the moment, to be reordered. Thus she took a “jar of very expensive perfume” (v. 7), generously anointing Him and filling the house with its rich fragrance.

Such extravagance seems inconsistent with the priorities Jesus had taught. Shouldn’t the money from this perfume

be given to the poor? How could you reorder such priorities?

What the disciples making these objections failed to appreciate was the urgency of that moment. With Jesus’ death nearing, time was of the essence. The disciples would have plenty of time to focus on fulfilling their obligations to care for the poor (see Matt. 5:3; 25:34–40; Phil. 4:10–19). At this time, they were allowing their concern for the good to obscure their vision for what was better and more important.

Unlike the disciples, this woman interpreted “the signs of the times” (Matt. 16:3). She showed her love of Jesus in the most powerful and potent way through her lavish generosity in anointing Him with perfume. We should remember her “wherever this gospel is preached” (v. 13). And we should imitate her spiritual sensitivity, devoted worship, and generous sacrifice.

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus suggests that some times call for an extraordinary response. Are there times or troubles in your life or the world right now that require a special outpouring of your love? Pray that God would give you the ability to discern such times and the resolve to devote the love, generosity, prayer, service, or worship needed.

PRAY WITH US

Again, please pray for those who work in the Student Dining Room, cooking and serving nutritious meals to students: Jeffery Williams, Jonathan True, Martyn Rios, Rachel Campbell, and Rebecca Williamson.

But thanks be to God, who . . . uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

2 Corinthians 2:14

THURSDAY
OCTOBER

26

The Aroma of Christ

Smell may be the most mysterious of the senses. As recently as 2006, researchers in Seattle found an entire class of previously undiscovered smell receptors. They are still unclear about how exactly these receptors work.

In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul uses this mysterious sense of smell to illustrate an even greater mystery. God, the perfect and all-powerful Creator of the universe, uses fallible humans to make Himself known! God can reveal Himself in the most astounding ways, such as by communicating His nature through the very fabric of creation (see Rom. 1:20). And yet, God chooses us—stinky, smelly, and unpleasant as we are—to spread “the pleasing aroma of Christ” (v. 15).

Reflecting on our limitations and the extraordinary calling God has given us, we may well ask, “Who is equal to such a task?” (v. 16). Not just anyone. Those who would carry forth God’s

sweet-smelling mission must renounce the stinky, smelly, and unpleasant tendencies that commonly characterize human behavior. Among these is the tendency to turn every chance into a money-making opportunity, which leads “so many” to “peddle the word of God for profit” (v. 17). As Jesus said, we cannot serve both God and money (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13).

To spread the aroma of Christ, we must give ourselves completely to Him. As Paul puts it, we must become “captives in Christ’s triumphal procession” (v. 14). This is not our parade but Christ’s. Our only hope to participate is as captives, those whose bondage to sin has been overcome by captivity to Christ. Along the route of Christ’s triumphal procession we may feel we are being consumed, burned up. Even still, we have faith that in the process we will produce a pleasing aroma that “brings life” (v. 16).

APPLY THE WORD

Later in 2 Corinthians, Paul returns to theme of captivity, again emphasizing how completely we are to give ourselves to Christ. We are to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (10:5). Examine your thoughts, especially those that occur frequently. Are they serving Christ? If not, what would need to change to make them so?

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion of our prayer time for the Food Service staff, please ask for God’s strength, grace, and powerful witness to the student body for Steven Frausto, Thomas Thorpe, Tyler Ringer, and Vinh Hoang.

Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.

1 Samuel 3:9

God's Gentle Whisper

Human beings are very distractible. Even low levels of background noise have been shown to reduce workers' productivity significantly. Turning up the volume or adding other forms of stimulation such as flashing lights results in even greater declines. Confronted by such distractions, people have trouble concentrating on the things they should.

Among Elijah's most striking characteristics was his ability to remain focused in the face of potentially overwhelming distractions. After being told that "the LORD is about to pass by" (v. 11), Elijah could have been distracted by the boulder-breaking wind, the ground-rattling earthquake, or the roaring fire. Nevertheless, he retained the focus to discern that, despite their awesomeness, God was in none of these.

Rather than such attention-grabbing spectacles, God came to Elijah softly and discreetly in a "gentle whisper"

(v. 12) that might have been easily missed. Concentrating upon the Lord, however, Elijah perceived that in this least obtrusive of forms he was encountering God. Hearing it, "he pulled his cloak over his face and went out" to meet God (v. 13).

Even if we rarely experience literal winds, earthquakes, and fires, our world is filled with an endless array of sirens. Sensationalized news, glitzy advertising, astonishing inventions, alluring products, and other spectacles loudly call for our attention, promising to offer us what we have been waiting for. It's easy to become distracted.

For those who wish to encounter God, the focus exhibited by Elijah is essential. Even more, though, such focus will allow us to find the deeper meaning carried by the soft, gentle whispers of God's presence that such blaring distractions try to drown out.

APPLY THE WORD

What spectacles are most likely to distract you? Commit to devoting at least a limited amount of time away from them today. Instead, seek to create silence in which you might listen for God's gentle whispers. As you do so, you might wish to pray using the words Eli gave to Samuel: "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:9).

PRAY WITH US

Frank Leber, VP of Information Technology Services, oversees a staff that handles everything from purchasing new hardware to computer maintenance to installing software. May he and his team always take full advantage of every opportunity for ministry.

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented.

Jonah 3:10

SATURDAY
OCTOBER

28

Hearing the Hard Word

On January 27, 1986, Robert Ebling called his boss to lodge a protest. He and four fellow engineers concluded that their project contained a weakness that could prove fatal, particularly in below-freezing temperatures. Because the project had already suffered costly delays, his superiors dismissed them. The next day they forged ahead with the launch of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*. Only 73 seconds into its flight, the shuttle exploded due to a failure of the O-rings, and all seven astronauts aboard were killed.

The pages of history, especially the history recorded in the Bible, are filled with those who disregarded warnings and incurred calamitous consequences. Pride, arrogance, and greed have deafened people to the hard words spoken by the prophets in their midst. Rather than repenting, they remained “stiff-necked”—a favorite biblical description (see Acts 7:51; 2 Chron. 30:8;

Jer. 7:26)—even when it meant forging headlong into disaster.

This tendency to discount warnings that require costly change makes Nineveh’s response to Jonah even more extraordinary. A foreigner arrived proclaiming the impending judgment of a God that, in all likelihood, the Ninevites hardly knew. And yet, they not only heard his warning but also heeded it. Donning sackcloth and proclaiming a fast, the king ordered the people to “give up their evil ways and their violence” (v. 8).

The king and people of Nineveh were willing to put their trust in God’s character of forgiveness and compassion (vv. 9–10). We know even more about God—we live after the Incarnation of Jesus and we have the witness of Scripture. Will we heed the warning to reject evil and violence and accept the compassion of the Lord?

APPLY THE WORD

Evil and violence have a way of becoming intricately woven into the fabric of our lives, so much so that we can easily regard them as just “the way things are.” Closely examining your day or week, are there forms of evil with which you have grown comfortable? How might you turn from them and begin to live more in accord with God’s will?

PRAY WITH US

Thank God today for the work of Client Technology Services, whose expertise in computer support and maintenance serves all employees. Will you include Rich McNeill, Steve Takushi, Tim Gauger, and Tim Canfield in your prayers?

SUNDAY
OCTOBER

29

*What does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and
to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6:8

The Creation Called to Hear

Employing the name of the long-running television drama, lawyers commonly refer to it as a “Perry Mason moment”: Just as a legal case appears to conclude, a lawyer turns and dramatically calls a surprise witness, drawing gasps from the courtroom. Once on the stand, the witness’s testimony then reverses the expected outcome.

In Micah 6, the prophet presents an ancient version of the Perry Mason moment—but with a twist. Much of the book has focused on laying out God’s complaint against Israel, which has grown to “hate good and love evil” (3:1–2).

But then Micah calls—gasp!—the mountains, the hills, and the “everlasting foundations of the earth” not as witnesses but as judges to hear the Lord’s “case against his people” (vv. 1–2). In the presence of the earth, which Israel has repeatedly pillaged

and profaned, the people of God are deprived of the fig leaf of deniability. Their sin is laid bare. As with Cain, the ground itself calls sin to account (see Gen. 4:8–12).

To speak of the earth in such terms could be dismissed as simply prophetic whimsy or a figurative flourish. And yet it expresses a significant theological truth. Even as human beings stand at the center of God’s care, that care also includes the rest of creation (see Gen. 1:28; Lev. 25:1–7; Rom. 8:19–22).

Human beings have a right to use the goods of creation within reason. But as we do so, we must exhibit justice, mercy, and humility (v. 8), remembering that God loves His creation. Therefore, we never have a right to abuse, pillage, or profane them. If we fail to recognize this, we should fear that the rocks themselves will cry out in our own Perry Mason moment.

APPLY THE WORD

How can you steward God’s creation as an act of spiritual obedience? Ideas include cultivating a vegetable or herb garden, perhaps with a harvest to share with neighbors; participating in recycling efforts; and endeavoring not to waste resources such as food or water. Remember that you are worshipping the Creator by acts of justice and mercy.

PRAY WITH US

Debbie Zelinski, VP of Human Resources, appreciates your prayers today for the key component in our ministry—the people! We thank God for leading so many fine people to serve at Moody, as well as for every person around the world who supports Moody.

This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!

Matthew 17:5

MONDAY
OCTOBER

30

Listening to the Lord

Hearing differs from listening in key ways. To hear is to perceive sound. Unless someone has a hearing impairment, it happens automatically when vibrations in the air resonate through the membranes, bones, and fluids within our ears, ultimately traveling to our brains through a series of nerves. Yet simply because we hear a meaningful sound does not mean we have listened. Listening begins with hearing but extends beyond it. Listening involves seeking to understand the meaning of what we hear and to respond to it.

In light of this distinction, it is clear we are called not merely to *hear* Jesus, to allow the words that He speaks to vibrate in our ears, but to *listen* to Him, to understand His meaning and respond to it. This is a particular emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew, which includes five sections, often referred to as the “Five Discourses”

(chapters 5–7; 10; 13; 18; and 23–25), that record Jesus’ teachings. At the conclusion of Matthew, Jesus charged His disciples to carry His message to “all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (28:20). Jesus spoke, then, not so that we might merely hear but that we might listen and respond in obedience.

But Jesus’ disciples are often more eager to speak rather than to listen. Peter represented this tendency when he awkwardly suggested building shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah (v. 4). But “while he was still speaking” (v. 5), Peter was interrupted by the voice of God the Father that reminds us of the disciple’s first duty: “Listen to him!”

Only by listening attentively to Jesus will we come to understand—and live by—the words He speaks, which are “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus’ fourth discourse is found in Matthew 18. A large portion of this teaching concerns forgiveness. Read Matthew 18:21–35, being particularly mindful of listening to Jesus’ words. What meaning do they have for your life? What response is He calling you to? How do His words about forgiveness give life?

PRAY WITH US

Please uphold in prayer today Moody’s hospitality ministry and Natoshia Portis who serves as Catering and Special Events coordinator. Pray that her service speaks of God’s goodness and generosity to all Moody friends.

TUESDAY
OCTOBER

31

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard” . . . the things God has prepared for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:9

A Glory Beyond Our Senses

As part of his appointment as Curator of Experiments for the Royal Society in 1662, Robert Hooke inherited a commission from King Charles II to carry out microscopic research. In 1665, Hooke published his revolutionary findings: when he examined a slice of cork, he discovered it was composed of millions of tiny structures he called “cells.” Despite the fact that such cells constantly surrounded people, and even composed their very bodies, they had been previously imperceptible.

This month we have focused on verses that deal with the human senses and what we can perceive about God and His work with the senses He has given us. But we must confess that our senses are insufficient to perceive the fullness of God and His love for us. Even as we “live and move and have our being” in God (Acts 17:28), our attempt to fully understand God will be as futile as that

of people trying to identify cells without a microscope.

God exceeds far beyond the reach of our physical senses. Indeed, Paul writes that “no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (v. 11) and proclaims that what God has prepared for those who love Him is something “no eye has seen . . . no ear has heard, and . . . no human mind has conceived” (v. 9).

Yet that does not mean these things must forever remain unknown to us, for God chooses to reveal them “to us by his Spirit” (v. 10). Because God’s glory and love so surpass our capacities, we can never seize them through our own powers; we can receive them only through God’s grace (v. 12). May we continually welcome the Spirit into our lives so that we may grow in knowledge of God’s glory and His love for us.

APPLY THE WORD

God’s salvation engages our senses but also extends beyond them. Pray that He would help you appreciate the sights, tastes, feelings, scents, and sounds of salvation. Pray that you will serve Him through your use of your physical senses. And pray also for the Spirit to fill you so that you might know the reality of God’s love that exceeds our senses.

PRAY WITH US

As we conclude our study of Salvation and the Senses this month, let’s thank God for His love for us and creating us in a way that we can know and experience this divine love with all our senses. Thank you for studying the Scripture with us!

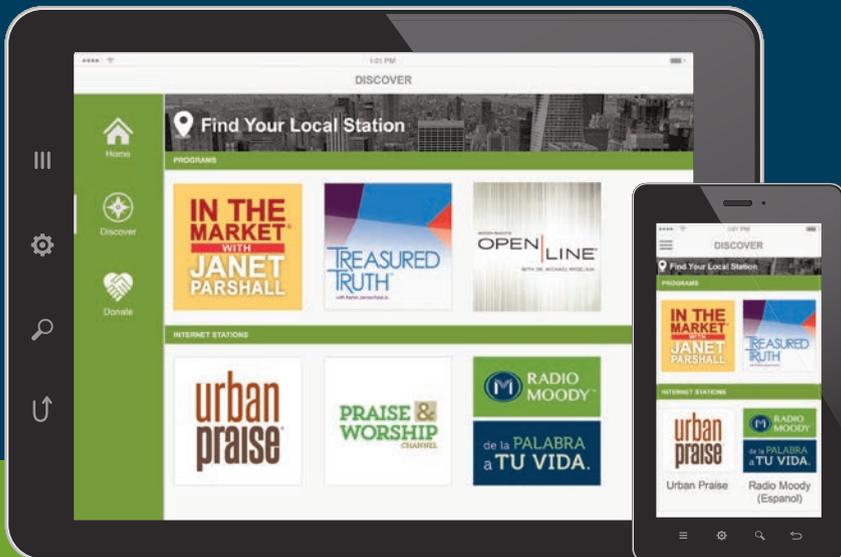


MOODY
RADIO®

from the
WORD to LIFE.®

DOWNLOAD THE APP TODAY!

TAKE MOODY RADIO WITH YOU ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE OR TABLET



- Listen to your local Moody Radio station.
- Stream programs live and on demand.
- Hear programming in English and Spanish.
- Enjoy a variety of Christian music.

▶ *For more information, visit*
MOODYRADIO.ORG / MOBILE



“NO OTHER BOOK

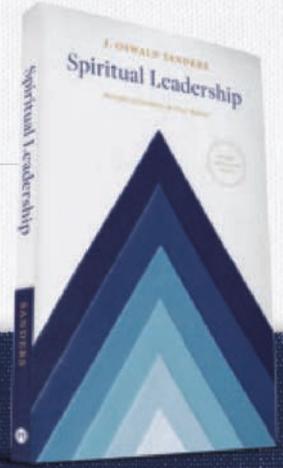
INFLUENCED MY LIFE LIKE THIS ONE HAS.”

JOHN C. MAXWELL, Author and Speaker

“... best book on Christian leadership I've read.”

CHARLES COLSON, Former Chairman, Prison Fellowship

With over 1 million copies sold, *Spiritual Leadership* is a certified classic. It presents key principles from Scripture about what makes a good leader, in ministry or any realm. Those who want to lead with God's blessing cannot ignore this book.



MOODY
Publishers

From the Word to Life

Find it at your local or online bookstore or buy directly from Moody Publishers by calling (800) 678-8812 or at moodypublishers.com.

Visit us online to request resources and view past issues.

TodayInTheWord.com



Today in the Word



@TodayintheWord



TodayInTheWordDevotional



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES®

Moody helps equip you with the truth of God's Word as you impact your community and the world for Christ. We believe that understanding and sharing God's Word is a lifelong journey. Let us help you take the next step in your relationship with Christ.

Learn more at MOODYGLOBAL.ORG or call (800) DL MOODY today.

MOODY
Bible Institute™

moody.edu

MOODY
Theological
Seminary™

MOODY
Bible Institute™
DISTANCE LEARNING

MOODY
Publishers®

moodypublishers.com

MOODY
Radio®

moodyradio.org