

Home Improvement

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5).

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-7

Song: “All Things New”

I was thankful for our “new” parsonage apartment; yet as soon as I stepped inside, my excitement waned. The carpet was badly stained, and kitchen cupboard doors hung crooked on broken hinges. The dingy walls begged for fresh paint, and the bent blinds needed to be replaced. This abode was in serious need of some home improvement if we were to live and thrive there long-term.

It reminded me that our faithful Lord is at work on what we might view as His own home-improvement project—one that goes well beyond anything we face as we work on our homes. Our King, John writes, is faithfully, thoughtfully, and powerfully preparing “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1), and one day we will live with Him there! He is taking what we’ve messed up and making it all right again.

We’re promised that the old order of things (death, mourning, and pain) will pass away and He will make all things new. This means things won’t just be improved, but perfected. This is our inheritance as we remain steadfast in our faith while living on this “old” earth. We have a future glorious home with Christ. Guaranteed.

Father, help me to live faithful to You each and every day. Thank You that I have a new home with You in my future. In Jesus’ name, amen.

February 1–7. **Cathy McIlvoy** lives in a small coastal town just south of San Francisco, California. She serves alongside her husband, who pastors a church in their community.

Trustworthy Source

“He [the Father] who sent me [Jesus] is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world” (John 8:26).

Scripture: John 8:21-30

Song: “Until the Whole World Hears”

Frustrated after receiving yet another group email that included inaccurate information regarding a certain company, Jake felt compelled to set the record straight. So he responded with an email of his own, thoughtfully and carefully addressing each lie that was included in the page-long forwarded text. Where the original email often repeated maligning myths, mislabeling them as “facts,” Jake wisely backed up his claims by citing pertinent trustworthy sources.

We can apply this same wisdom when it comes to passing along information regarding the Lord. We must be careful to refer to Scripture, in context, and pass on God’s message accurately—not polluting it with popular thought or our own flawed human agenda. When telling others about the Lord, we are wise to stick to our most trustworthy source: God’s Word. In this way, we will not misrepresent Him. There is power in His Word, after all. It is living and active truth. As people hear it and see it at work in our lives, it does its work to reveal Christ and change the lives of those who believe.

Jesus affirmed that He passed on what His Father told Him. That’s our example! God is trustworthy. This means His Word is our ultimate trustworthy source. It’s what the world needs to hear from us.

Father, thank You for Your precious Word. Help me to understand it, live by it, and pass it on to others clearly and accurately. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Follow the Leader

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God (Romans 8:14).

Scripture: Romans 8:12-17

Song: “I Will Follow You”

While on a river cruise through several countries in Europe, my husband and I toured the areas where we docked each day. With fellow cruisers we followed our guide as we were led to different sites and given information about them. Onlookers could easily identify us as traveling with the cruise line; we followed our guide closely, wearing headphones and transmitters with the ship company’s name and logo.

As true believers, to whom we belong is revealed—not because we wear a Christian symbol or logo, but because our words and actions reflect the fact that we are Christ followers. As we are led by the Spirit of God and willingly follow His lead, our identity is affirmed and we show ourselves to be children of God. As we obey the leading of the Spirit, we experience the fruit of the Spirit and our lives are a testimony that we belong to God our Father.

The Spirit of God doesn’t force people to follow. Rather, He leads and His children wholeheartedly follow. It’s a loving picture of follow-the-leader. Our leader is faithful, wise, holy, righteous, and so much more. As we allow ourselves to be led, we live out the grace and privilege we’ve been given—to be called the children of God.

Heavenly Father, I’m grateful for Your leading. Help me to follow You faithfully, trusting where Your Spirit leads, for I belong to You. I’m proud to be Your beloved child. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Let Me Introduce You

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon. . . . And he brought him to Jesus (John 1:41-42).

Scripture: John 1:37-42

Song: “Come to Jesus”

Emptiness caused Meg to admit the brokenness in her life. One night at the bottom of despair, Meg got a phone call from her aunt, who said she felt compelled to talk with Meg about Jesus. Proceeding in faith, Meg’s aunt simply brought her to Jesus. Though normally very skeptical, Meg listened and opened her heart. She believed, confessed her sin, and repented. Meg came to Jesus and her life changed.

Andrew believed Jesus was the Messiah through John’s witness and, in turn, brought his brother Simon to Jesus so he too could know Jesus. From there, Jesus engaged with Simon and changed his name to Peter, meaning “rock.” The Lord had an amazing plan for Peter’s life, and it began to unfold the moment he met the Savior!

There’s no need to make it complicated. We can bring others to Jesus simply by introducing them to Jesus. We do this when we let others know what Christ has done in our own lives. When we live out His love for us, we also demonstrate God’s love. In this way, we participate in the privilege of helping someone know the Savior. Jesus will take it from there—He’s in the business of working out His perfect plan in each person’s life.

Father, I want each person in my life to know Your Son, Jesus. Use me to introduce them to Him so they can believe and be saved. In Jesus’ name, amen.

He Sees, He Knows

Jesus answered, “I saw you [Nathanael] while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you” (John 1:48).

Scripture: John 1:43-51

Song: “He Knows My Name”

My son and his wife have a special camera aimed at the crib in their son’s room so they can watch him on their phones from another room. In this way they can check on him without disturbing him. They’re able to make sure he’s safe and can determine whether his crying is because there’s a problem or he’s only fussing and will resume slumber.

In today’s Scripture, John tells us that Jesus not only saw Nathanael as he sat under a fig tree, but He also knew Nathanael’s heart, calling him a man of complete integrity (John 1:47). Our Lord sees us as well, and without any technological help! Our God knows everything about us and wants us to know that He knows. He is the God who sees, the God who hears. And as with Nathanael, He wants to show us himself so we experience His greatness.

How amazing and encouraging that the Son of God who is omnipresent and all-knowing wants a relationship with us. He desires that we know Him, so He reveals himself to us and initiates intimacy. We can rest in His tender care with assurance that His eyes are ever upon us and that He knows and loves us completely.

Father, I can rest in You and live with an expectant, grateful heart—knowing that You know everything about me and You love me fully. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Ask and Believe

“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.” The [royal official] took Jesus at his word and departed (John 4:50).

Scripture: John 4:43-54

Song: “Every Promise of Your Word”

Before following Jesus, Lee had a major problem with lying. Telling “white lies” and spouting blatant whoppers was her daily habit as she sought others’ approval and strived to work things to her advantage. But when Christ entered her life, Lee repented and He helped her to change her ways. As a result, over time Lee became known as a woman of her word. People knew they could trust what came out of her mouth and that what she said she’d do, she’d do.

If we’re able to attribute trustworthiness to mere humans who are imperfect with a bent toward sin, how much more can we fully trust the Lord, who is perfect in all His ways? In today’s passage, a man with a need (to have his son healed) came to Jesus with his request. The Lord responded, and this royal official took Jesus at His word. Before the man even made it home, he learned his son was alive and well.

What a wise choice this man made: to ask. He demonstrated belief by heading home to receive what Jesus had promised. It’s not enough to pour out our request before the Lord; we must be willing to then trust Him with it. Remember the promises He has given and take Him at His word.

Father, please help me to come to You and then trust Your timing and Your ways, knowing that You are good and the ultimate truth teller. In Jesus’ name, amen.

He Sends

“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor” (John 4:38).

Scripture: John 4:25-42

Song: “Faithful Men”

In middle school, a friend invited Roman to a Christian camp where he heard the gospel, but he wasn't interested in Christ. Later, when a classmate in high school told Roman about her relationship with Jesus, he became more curious. But it wasn't until college, when he saw Jesus lived out in his Christian roommate's life, that Roman believed.

God, in all His wisdom and sovereignty, prompts and equips His people to share Christ with others. John 4:38 begins with: “I sent you.” God is the sender. We may be the laborers who plant the seed of the gospel in someone. Or we may be sent to journey with nonbelievers for a long time, yet not see them come to Christ. Or like Roman's roommate, we may have the joy of being present for the harvest. It's up to the Lord, not us.

If you're a child of God, you can be sure that He can use you in someone's life to help point that person in the right direction. What a privilege, no matter our role in the process! We are simply to be faithful to do “the hard work” and entrust the person to Christ.

Father, thank You for the privilege of being sent. Help me to be faithful to do the work of sharing the gospel of Your Son with others, knowing that You are in control. In Jesus' name, amen.