

## Details, Please!

**[God said to Noah,] “Make yourself an ark of cypress wood. . . . This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high” (Genesis 6:14–15).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:11–22

**Song:** “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

A woman was preparing a fruit salad and handed me a whole pineapple and a large knife. “Here,” she said. “Would you cut this up, please?” My husband and I laughed because we knew I didn’t know how to cut up a pineapple, let alone discern whether she wanted chunks, tidbits, or rings. I was happy to help, but I needed detailed instructions because the wrong cut would mess up her salad.

When God determined to send a flood upon the earth, He spoke to Noah and told him exactly how to build an ark to save himself and his family. Noah didn’t have to guess what to do or create blueprints for the design. God gave him the assignment along with specific directives.

Although God calls us to participate in building His kingdom, it’s important that we remember that He is the One who knows the work He wants us to do and will show us how to do it. Our role is simply to follow His instructions.

**Father,** thank You for giving me Your Word so I can follow Your instructions closely. In Jesus’ name, amen.

June 2–8. **Rebecca Stuhlmiller** helps people take practical steps to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus and wider in loving service to people. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Federal Way, Washington.

## Certain Identity

**Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself (John 6:15).**

**Scripture:** John 6:15–20

**Song:** “I Am His, and He Is Mine”

Although I married a farmer, I never mastered the art of farm-style cooking. When an acquaintance came to help my husband with the harvest, I served spaghetti and a green salad at supper-time. He was used to having things like roast beef, potatoes, fluffy biscuits, and homemade fruit pie. My unusual fare surprised him, and my husband—always gracious and supportive—explained that his wife isn’t a chef but a writer and speaker.

Some people had expectations about Jesus, but He understood His identity. Jesus wasn’t sent to be a political leader or a regional king. He is a heavenly king who rules in the hearts and lives of those who trust in Him. His time to rule over everything remains in the future. So in today’s passage, when Jesus recognized the agenda people had for Him and that they were going to try to force Him into a role, He removed Himself from the situation.

When we read the Bible, we learn the true identity of Jesus, and we also learn about our identity in Him. Through His example, we can see that it’s okay to walk away from expectations others may have of us that don’t align with the purposes He has for our lives.

**Father**, thank You for opening my eyes to who You are, and thank You for giving me the identity of belonging to You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## We're Never Abandoned

**[Jesus said,] “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you”** (John 14:18).

**Scripture:** John 14:18–27

**Song:** “There Is a Redeemer”

One day in New York, a Christian man spotted a dishevelled boy sitting on a street corner. After striking up a conversation, the man learned that three days earlier the 12-year-old had been left by his mother and was still waiting for her to return. She never showed up. The man offered the hungry boy a meal and then paid to send him to Sunday school camp. There, Bill Wilson heard the gospel for the first time and received Jesus into his heart. For more than 50 years now, Wilson—known as Pastor Bill—has dedicated his life to reaching at-risk children with the gospel message of Christ’s love and redemption.

In today’s passage, Jesus tells His disciples that He will be going away, but He won’t be abandoning them. He will be leaving, but not leaving them alone to fend for themselves. His Father will give them the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and empower them.

Throughout the Bible, God speaks of His compassion and care for orphans. Deuteronomy 10:18 says, “He defends the cause of the fatherless . . . , giving them food and clothing.” And Psalm 146:9 says, “The LORD . . . sustains the fatherless.” Even though we may, at times, feel abandoned by others in this world, the Lord will remain with us always.

**Father,** thank You for caring for me and for sending Your Holy Spirit to be with me every moment and in every circumstance. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Be Ready!

**On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark** (Genesis 7:13).

**Scripture:** Genesis 7:11–24

**Song:** “There Will Be a Day”

I used to feel frazzled when I looked at my calendar, so I developed a color-coded system. Blue entries denote places where I simply show up, such as ball games and appointments. Events in red remind me of commitments I’ve made, those for which I need to prepare because a deadline is coming. A hot-pink *X* at the beginning of a week means, “This week is full,” and I prayerfully consider whether to add anything. A color-coded calendar helps me run my life instead of allowing it to run me.

When Noah completed the ark, the day came when time was up, and the first raindrops fell. Because Noah had diligently obeyed God in preparation for this imminent day, he wasn’t left scrambling. Noah and his family, along with the animals, had a safe and secure place to ride out the storm.

An imminent day we’re preparing for is the return of Christ. We don’t know the day or hour (Matthew 24:36). Will He come during our lifetime? Or will He continue to patiently wait? Peter wrote, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). In any case, let’s be ready!

**Father,** I know that obeying You today is the best preparation for Your imminent return. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Two Truths and a Lie

**[False teachers] will secretly introduce destructive heresies. . . . In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories** (2 Peter 2:1, 3).

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 2:1–9

**Song:** “Open My Eyes That I May See”

Have you ever played the game two truths and a lie? The object is to stump other players by sharing three statements about yourself—two that are true and one that is not. For example, I might tell other players: my childhood hero is Yorkshire veterinarian James Herriott; my favorite color is burnt orange; and I have never been to Spain. In this example, only the first statement is untrue, but a person who didn't know me could easily be fooled.

In today's passage, Peter warns readers to be on the lookout for self-serving deceivers who would sneak in among them and cleverly spin the truth about God. Their false messages might even *sound* credible. God's people needed know the truth so they could avoid being manipulated and exploited by these false teachers, whose selfish agenda would be hidden behind an attractive façade.

Thankfully, God has given us ways to know the truth about Him, and we don't have to become victims of bamboozlers who prey on ignorance. Through prayer, diligent study of God's Word, and guidance by the Holy Spirit, we can discern what is false and avoid being lured away from the solid ground of truth.

**Father**, thank You for giving me ways to know You. As I remain prayerfully in Your Word, I trust You to guide me by Your Spirit into all truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Emergency Calls

**I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.  
When I was in distress, I sought the Lord** (Psalm 77:1–2).

**Scripture:** Psalm 77:1–2, 7–19

**Song:** “I Go to the Rock”

If a fire broke out in my home, would I immediately call an interior designer to ask what style of carpeting I should buy once my living room is restored? Of course not! If I broke my leg, would I coolly contact an accountant and make sure I could afford a trip to the emergency room? That would be silly! In both cases, I would dial 9-1-1 and blurt out my problem so that a dispatcher could send the help I need.

In a time of desperation, the writer of Psalm 77 turned to the only one who could effectively help him in his time of need. In a raw, honest manner, uttering distraught words and acknowledging his complete dependence on God for help, the psalmist poured out his prayer. As the writer recalls God’s track record of mighty works, miracles, and leading, he knows he can trust God’s faithful love and mercy.

When we face a crisis, we might first turn to trusted friends, family members, or a minister for direction and advice. However, God is the one we can (and need to) call on first. He is ready to hear our unfiltered words and to direct us with unfailing love, providing the help we need.

**Father,** help me remember that I can call on You without hesitation, knowing that You welcome my prayers and have what I need. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Along for the Ride

**God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you” (Genesis 8:15–17).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 8:13–22; 9:11–13

**Song:** “In His Time”

Eight hundred and twenty-seven days. That’s how long it took between applying to go to the mission field and actually touching down in a new country. Eight hundred and twenty-seven days! My husband and I were middle-aged, self-supported, and had a resume of ministry experience. We thought the process would take . . . *maybe* six months, tops. This extended timeline was not what we had anticipated, and it felt like God’s timing had taken way too long.

When God called Noah to build the ark, God didn’t give Noah a timeline. Nor did Noah say to God, “I want you to make it rain cats and dogs for 40 days, then 100 days of light sprinkles, and I think sunshine is in order for 74 days after that.” Only God knew how and when His plan would be completed.

Proverbs 20:24 tells us, “A person’s steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand their own way?” When we remember that God has His own timeline for our lives, we can more peacefully wait for His plan to unfold as we follow His direction.

**Father,** thank You for including me in the work of Your kingdom. You are the one who knows how and when You’ll carry out the plans You have for me. Give me faith-filled patience as I wait for You. In Jesus’ name, amen.