

Blessed are they which
do hunger and thirst
after righteousness: for
they shall be filled.

—Matthew 5:6



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Life

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from the **Golden Text**

Psalms 118:17

My life is safe, and I will live to tell what the Lord has done.

—Contemporary English Version

Saphar, the Hebrew word translated here as *tell*, conveys not merely a casual conversation but the careful and comprehensive recounting or celebrating of a fact or event. The King James Version has, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”

Martin Luther called Psalm 118 “my own beloved psalm.” He singled out verse 17 as “a masterpiece,” and concluded, “All the saints have sung this verse and will continue to sing it to the end.”

from the **Responsive Reading**

Revelation 22:1

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Considered an allusion to Ezekiel’s vision of Israel as a verdant land (see Ezekiel 47:6–14), this verse promises divine fulfillment of the centuries-old hope for abundant supply in wilderness experiences.

A Hebrew poet had prophesied that the righteous would be “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season” (Psalms 1:3). And Zechariah foretold that in “the day of the Lord ... living waters shall go out from Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:1, 8). Now the Revelator records his

expansive vision of spiritual refreshment and healing, adding, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (v. 17).

from **Section 1**

3 | I Kings 19:1, 2

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

King Ahab ruled northern Israel for 22 years. In a political alliance with neighboring Phoenicia, he married the king’s daughter, Jezebel—and fully embraced her country’s worship of the pagan god Baal. Ahab and Jezebel undertook a thorough program of introducing this religion in Israel, setting up shrines and temples and killing Yahweh’s prophets (see 16:31–33 and 18:4).

Ironically, when Ahab first meets Elijah, he asks, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” Elijah strongly refutes this accusation, condemning Ahab for his worship of Baal (see 18:17, 18).

The account in First Kings 19 follows Elijah’s remarkable proof of God’s power in calling down fire to burn a sacrifice—including the altar, the dust, and the water—after which Elijah had the 450 prophets of Baal killed. Although Jezebel had caused many worshipers of Yahweh to be slaughtered, her reaction to the slaying of her pagan priests was swift and determined, prompting Elijah to flee.

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“...a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

4 | Psalms 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God.

Many sources interpret this statement as a quiet call for trust in God, but others see a strong appeal as well. One commentary paraphrases, “Refrain from all lack of confidence in me, from all enmity against me, recognize who I am!”

from **Section 2**

6 | II Kings 3:11

Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

A servant speaks these words to Judean king Jehoshaphat. The description “poured water on the hands of Elijah” signifies that Elisha had been the older prophet’s attendant—a report that elicited the king’s recognition that “the word of the Lord is with him” (v. 12). Centuries later, Christ Jesus washes his disciples’ feet to portray his servant status (see John 13:5).

from **Section 4**

14 | John 4:7, 9

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. ... Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jacob’s well—not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) but believed by some to have been dug by him—is the setting for this striking interchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The unattended meeting of a man and woman was prohib-

ited, and free conversation between a Jew and a Samaritan was equally unacceptable. But scholars point out that as Jacob was an ancestor of both Jews and Samaritans, his well was a site of shared reverence—perhaps a natural place for longstanding walls to be broken down.

About the prophet Elisha

(Citation 7, II Kings 4:38–41)

Considered a major biblical prophet, Elisha was active in the northern kingdom of Israel circa 850–800 BC. Though he was commissioned by Elijah rather than receiving a direct divine call—and though his ministry was built on the foundational work of Elijah—his lifework turned out to be fuller and of much longer duration than that of his predecessor.

Elisha is sometimes viewed as more mild and social than his fierce and solitary mentor, yet he demonstrated stern resolve during the reign of several kings, counseling and admonishing them in the name of God. Of Elisha’s many miracles, two resembled those of his mentor: the multiplication of oil for a widow and the raising of a child from death. Others included purifying noxious waters and deadly pottage, healing Naaman of leprosy, floating an axe head, and delivering Israel from the Syrian army (see II Kings, chaps. 2–6).

Jesus later cites Elisha’s healing of Naaman as a justification for his ministry to Gentiles (see Luke 4:27).

Resources quoted in this issue

GT: Contemporary English Version Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society, Used by Permission; Keck, Leander E., et al., eds.; *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 3, *Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, Job, Psalms, Introduction to Wisdom Literature, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

Cit. 4: Eiselen, Frederick Carl., Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey, eds. *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1929.

Your life is worth living

Written for the *Sentinel*

From the August 24, 1992, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Have you ever thought that you wanted to end your life? I used to feel that way. Yet each time this occurred, something stopped me from acting on my feelings. I realize now that “something” was Christ, the divine message of healing and salvation, lifting my thought into a clearer understanding of my unity with God. You can come to feel this closeness to God, too, no matter what is going on in your life.

Before I go any further, let me say that if you aren’t feeling God’s love right at this moment, don’t be discouraged. And don’t hesitate to ask a trusted friend or a responsible adult for help, if that’s what your prayers lead you to do. Whether or not you decide to confide in someone, though, remember that God, divine Love, is always at hand to give you the comfort and support you need. The Bible promises, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalms 46:1).

The first time I thought I wanted to end my life, I was about eleven years old. I was terribly unhappy at home, and there wasn’t anyone with whom I felt comfortable sharing my problems. However, my mom was taking me to the Christian Science Sunday School. Each week I learned more about God as infinite Love and about my relationship to Him as His child.

One day I decided I couldn’t stand my life one minute longer, and I began seriously to consider a way that I could end it. But as I was contemplating this, the thought came to me: “Hold on. You can make it.” I knew that this was a Christly message from God and that I was worthwhile and important to Him.

This assurance immediately calmed me and lifted me out of the depression I had been feeling.

God is All, and His infinite love is embracing you—and everyone—right now. No matter how sad or desperate you may feel, you can never really be separated from God. The only change you have to make—and prayer can help with this—is in your own thought. As you begin to grasp the nature of God as *infinite* Love, as you really live with this idea and make it your own, as you open your heart to God, you *can* feel His love. Not only that, you’ll find *proof* of His love right where you are.

Divine Love always gives us the inspiration and support we need to work out our problems. Even if you are depressed because you think you have done something really bad, the fact is that God’s love is unconditional. His view of us will never change, because He always sees us as His perfect child. Of course, we do have a responsibility to live up to our true, Godlike nature. If we are doing something we know is wrong, we won’t be truly happy until we quit doing it and turn to God for guidance.

As I was growing up, there were other times when I seriously thought about suicide. Gradually, however, I became aware that taking my life would accomplish nothing. Also, I began to understand that my life belonged to God and couldn’t really be taken away by anything.

God’s love and comfort are there for you too. God has given every one of His offspring a life filled with spiritual purpose. You are important to Him and to the world. Nothing can ever come between you and God, and no person or problem can stop you from feeling His love right now.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/your-life-is-worth-living.