

Oswald Chambers, Scotland, Author

November 16. Oswald Chambers. Under the preaching of Charles Spurgeon, Chambers became a Christian. He ministered in the United Kingdom, in the United States, and in Japan. For six years, he was principal of a Bible school in London, and during World War I, he served as chaplain to the military in Egypt. He had a passion for shepherding his people.

While he was still in college, Chambers shepherded four-footed, wool-bearing sheep. He said, “I did not like it at the time, but I am thankful now I had to do shepherding in the Highlands of Scotland. When you have to carry across your shoulders a dirty old [ram] and bring it down the mountainside, you will soon know whether it is not the most taxing, the most exhausting, and the most exasperating work; and Jesus uses this as an illustration of a passion for souls.”

Chambers loved his people, and they loved him.

On this date in 1917, 100 soldiers escorted Chambers’s body to the military cemetery in Cairo.

Christianity is not about the work we do, but the relationships we make.

Chambers wrote that the most important part of being Christians is “... the relationships we maintain and the surrounding influence and qualities produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to give our attention to, and it is the one thing that is continually under attack.”

It was November 1917, and World War I had dragged on into the fourth long year. The ugly war left death everywhere it touched.

On Cairo’s crowded streets, funeral processions had become commonplace. But this was not a regular funeral. Vegetable carts and tinkers on bicycles stopped in the dusty road to watch them pass. An escort of 100 soldiers followed behind a gun carriage drawn by four black horses. Atop it lay a coffin draped with a British flag and crowned with white chrysanthemums. Six officers marched beside.

Every element indicated the death of a high-ranking military or government official. But the death that reverberated through the streets of old Cairo and brought corporals to tears on the front lines at Beersheba was not that of an officer.

Chambers, the 43-year-old Scotsman, who had died the day before of complications following an appendectomy, had been the chaplain at the nearby YMCA.

To this day *My Utmost for His Highest* has never been out of print. It has been translated into thirty-nine languages with millions of copies sold. But at the time of Chambers's death, it had not even been written. It would later be compiled by his wife from sermons he had given during his lifetime.

Chambers was one man among hundreds of thousands who died in the war. In no worldly way was his life exceptional for that of a traveling preacher. But he was given a general's escort into glory because of the way he had lived the ordinary moments of his life, the sincerity with which he had preached, and the way he had loved his fellow man.

"We are not made for the mountains," he said, "for sunrises, or for the other beautiful attractions in life—those are simply intended to be moments of inspiration. We are made for the valley and the ordinary things of life, and that is where we have to prove our mettle."

The Reverend David Lambert, speaking at the memorial service in London, called the life of Chambers "the finest commentary on the Sermon on the Mount I know.... The most precious thing that has come to many of us through the message of God's beloved servant, Oswald Chambers, is that for the lowliest, least promising, and most insignificant person the Great Life is possible."

"Make certain you do not perform your religious duties in public so that people will see what you do. If you do these things publicly, you will not have any reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show of it, as the hypocrites do in the houses of worship and on the streets. They do it so that people will praise them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it. Then it will be a private matter. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you" (Matthew 6:1–4 GNT).

What little thing do you need to be faithful in today? Christianity is not about the work we do, but the relationships we make.

McCasland, David. *Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1993.

Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost for His Highest*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1963.

Ule, Michelle. *Mrs. Oswald Chambers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017.

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Do You Want to Learn More About this Man?

Chambers wrote: “I was in Dunoon College as tutor of Philosophy when Dr. F. B. Meyer came and spoke about the Holy Spirit. I determined to have all that was going and went to my room and asked God simply and definitely for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whatever that meant. From that day on for four years nothing but the overruling grace of God and the kindness of friends kept me out of an asylum.” After a long internal struggle, Chambers lit on the verse: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).

Muckley, Paul. *Oswald Chambers: A Life in Pictures*. Grand Rapids: Our Daily Bread Publishing, 2017.