



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 27th Oct 2019

1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL - Luke 18:9-14 *two contrasting approaches to God*

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple pray, one a Pharisee and other tax collector. Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that am not like people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even this fast twice week; give tenth of all my income.' But collector, far off, would look heaven, beating his breast saying, be merciful me, sinner! I tell you, this man down home justified rather than other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'

A THOUGHT

Humility, humiliation, low self-esteem: these things get all mixed up in our minds and in our feelings. In the past, humility was encouraged by humiliation—really an abuse, which must have caused much harm. Low self-esteem -the root of many problems and addictions—used to be confused with humility. A robust humility is really an exercise in truth-telling about ourselves. If we are to be grounded in the humus (earth) of our human existences, then we do need to be honest in our appraisal, affirming the good and recognising courageously our faults. Humility goes with being human.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Looking into the mirror of this parable, am I like the Pharisee or like the tax collector?
- The Pharisee is not actually condemned by Jesus. In fact, many of the things he does are good. However, his prayer is less acceptable to God because unfortunately he regarded himself as better than others. What difference does it make when you pray to God, acknowledging your faults and limitations? Have you ever found that when you are humble in this way in prayer, God lifts you up?
- There can be an element of defensiveness in our relationships with others. We are reluctant to let another see us as we see ourselves. Occasionally we meet someone with whom we can be totally open and know we will be accepted. With whom have you had that kind of a relationship? What was it like for you to have that freedom?
- The parable is also a cautionary tale against judging others negatively on the basis of externals. Perhaps God, who looks into the heart, sees another picture. When have you discovered there was more to another person than the negative picture you got from first impressions?

Prayer

*Loving God, you know me through & through. Let me come before you in all honesty. As we affirm your gifts and rejoice in them, help us to honest and know the full story, warts and all, that we come before you in need of your grace. I make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen***