



## Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 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 19:1-10** *Jesus dines with Zacchaeus, searching for what was lost*  
*Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."*

### A THOUGHT

Frequently, during his public ministry, Jesus could be seen in the company of people of dubious reputation. It was so normal for him to be in bad company that his disciples became uneasy. They were perplexed by his behaviour. It gave his opponents good reason for harsh criticism. They could not understand how a good man could live with such criminals. It was embarrassing enough that Jesus let himself be accompanied by persons of ill repute, but what was even worse was that he actively sought out their company. Today's Gospel reminds us of this shocking behaviour of Jesus. As he was entering an important city, he chose as his host a well-known sinner. It would be a mistake to regard this incident as just a historical anecdote, as if it was only a chance meeting between Jesus and a chief tax collector. In fact, for those of us searching for Jesus, the story serves as a warning and speaks to us, at the same time of a great opportunity, and how to make the best of it.

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- What was Zacchaeus' fascination with Jesus? One so strong that it made him climb a tree, that made him respond so quickly to Jesus when He spoke to him? What is this saying to you?
- Where in your experience have 'non-religious' people shown more 'christ-like' behaviour than others? What does this ask of you?
- Zacchaeus is a person of dubious reputation – where do we see Christ at work and in need in our community?
- It didn't take much for Zacchaeus to readily agree to live his life over again; to change course; and to make a clean break with his past and to begin again. It was the obvious choice, especially when confronted with so much love – What change is Jesus asking of you?

### 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*