



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 1st March 2020



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 Matthew 4: 1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

A Short Thought

G. K. Chesterton, a master of the pithy saying, once wrote: *"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried."* Indeed, to truly follow Christ in any age has never been easy; it requires sacrifice and struggle, truths we'd rather not embrace. While most of us will never become desert saints, nor will we go toe-to-toe with the devil, we do have our own places of struggle. These are real places involving real people in real lives. But our struggles are also about confronting the enemy within, a more intangible foe we attempt to hush in our pursuit of the superlatives. What is needed is what is always been available, the desert—a place of quiet where we are stripped down to only the essentials, laid bare before God, and challenged to the core of our being to remain faithful. Solitude or quiet can be sought even in the midst of activity; what's important is not how one gets there but that one does go. So for those willing, and as the Spirit leads, bring on the desert!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Sit with the text and pick a word or phrase that stands out to you. Repeat that word or phrase in your mind several times. Then, in silence, let it sink into your heart. Why is that word or phrase relevant to you at this moment?
- There are many times in our lives that we can feel 'In the wilderness' – Why? What caused this for you?
- There are many people driven into the wilderness because of fear, exclusion, difference or neglect – can you bring these people to mind?
- God never left Jesus alone, is always there comforting, caring, loving and protecting. Even when we do not realise. Look back & thank God for the moments in your life when God was there for you, even when you did not realise it!

Prayer

Loving God, you never leave us alone to walk our journey or carry our pains. Help us to find some quiet time to hear, listen to and respond to You that we may go forward with hope. We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who walks with us always. Amen