



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 15th 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 understanding. *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 – John 4:5-42

‘The Women at the Well’

So He (Jesus) came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered Him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." Just then His disciples came. They marvelled that He was talking with a woman, but none said, "What do you wish?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the city and were coming to Him.

Meanwhile the disciples besought Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Has any one brought Him food?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

A Short Thought

Today's Gospel is a beautiful story of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. It is full of metaphor and you can approach it from many positions: the woman having an encounter, a spiritual experience, direction from God. Or Jesus, a spiritual guide, a teacher, a comforter, challenging. Notice how patient he is with her but he also challenges her to grow to what she is capable of. This woman experiences conversion and growth at this well, not just physical quenching of thirst, but a spiritual one.

The story of this 'nameless' woman at the well gently screams to us that God loves us in spite of our tainted values or outlook. God values us enough to actively seek us, to welcome us to intimacy, and to rejoice in our company and worship. As a result of Jesus' conversation, only a person like the Samaritan woman, an outcast from her own people, could understand what this means. To be wanted, to be cared for when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her. Do you truly know yourself as loved? Do we truly see others as loved, even wanted at times?

The woman returns to her village bubbling over with joy. What gifts from your prayer do you bring back to your life? Where are the places in your life, (*relationships, activities, practices, environments*) where your joy naturally wells up like a spring of living water? How can you visit this spring more often? How might you share the gift of life-giving water with others?



SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- "There came a woman of Samaria ..." When have we been changed by a 'chance' encounter with someone?
- This is a very personal encounter with Jesus. Jesus meets her where she is at. Not where she would like to be, not with expectations. He shouldn't even have acknowledged her as she is clearly an outcast; a Samaritan woman with a reputation. Where are you really at? Can you let Jesus touch your story?
- Jesus' innocent request for water sparks a conversation that is soon going in several directions at once: Jesus leads the woman on a wonderful journey. When have you or someone you know, made a similar journey in your relationship with God, with others, with your own self?
- "If you knew the gift of God ..." Who has opened our eyes to the gift of God? Who has said something life-giving to you?
- "Give me this water ... that I may not thirst ...!" Where do people turn to address their deepest longings and desires? What do you truly thirst for?

Prayer

In the midst of the ordinary things, loving God, you call us to the deeper realities: your thirst for us and our thirst for you. Never let us be satisfied, until we come to the springs of living water, welling up for eternal life. Amen.