



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 21st June 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 6:51-58

So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows!!

'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.'

'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.'

A Short Thought

Jesus' continued instruction to the apostles is important to their mission in serving him. But this mission of service is ours, too. Being a Christian in this world, therefore, means being not only a disciple (a learner) but an apostle (one sent forth), too. Jesus' words for the twelve are also words for us. We are called to not fear but to proclaim the love of Christ with our lives. We are called to witness our Christian faith to all people by our acts of love, compassion, justice, forgiveness, and self-giving. We are called to acknowledge Jesus before others, witnessing the joy his love has brought to our lives and Jesus' desire to give mercy and love to all. But this may not be easy - our walk with Christ can easily be stifled by our fears of what others' think. Will people see me as irrelevant, as weird? Will people no longer take me seriously because Christ is at the centre of my life? These fears are unimportant, and yes, some people will persecute and judge us for our faith but the message of love is never irrelevant and needed more so now more than ever.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. "Even the hairs on your head are counted" - A lovely illustration of God's love for me personally. Let me respond to the love expressed here. Spend a few moments contemplating this image
2. Will I get a chance to acknowledge Jesus in others today? Perhaps I can do this through a kind act if I cannot find the words.
3. Jesus reminds me that I do not have to have all the answers or convince everyone. In God's time, not mine, all will be made clear. Where in my life do I need to have more trust in God?
4. 'Do not fear' is the unifying theme in this passage which is set in the context of a mission sermon by Jesus, preparing his disciples for what lay ahead. He urges them to have courage in speaking his

message and living his message, drawing strength from their trust in the Father whose care for us exceeds his care for hundreds of sparrows. How has trust in God been a source of strength in life for you?

5. There is no such thing as secret discipleship. It is in declaring their allegiance to Jesus that his followers will find life. They will be the losers if they hide their discipleship. Does this resonate with your experience?

Prayer -

True and faithful God, you give courage to the fearful and endurance to martyrs. Sustain us as followers of your Son Jesus that with boldness and conviction we may acknowledge him before the world. We ask this 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**

Prayer in these uncertain times

We pray for all those in our country and throughout the world suffering from the Corona Virus. May its victims and their families be strengthened by the support of our community of faith and restored soon to full health. We also pray for our leaders and medical personnel who deal with the virus. May we keep calm and may we join together in solidarity with care and compassion to tackle this emergency. This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen

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