



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 27th Sept 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 – Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said, "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."



A Short Thought

In the parable of the Two Sons, another parable unique to Matthew's Gospel, the father calls one son first to go work in the vineyard. He refuses, but later relents and goes to work. The second son placates the father with a quick agreement to go and work but he never actually goes. This Gospel reading speaks volumes about what it means to be faithful to God. It's one thing to speak about what you intend on doing with your faith, but it's another thing to actually follow God's call, to act. In this parable, Jesus raises a simple yet profound point: Actively following God takes more of an effort than just claiming to follow him.

I practice my faith as a way of becoming closer to both God and the world around me. I communicate with God in the hopes of learning more about myself and how I can help those in need. Although I try to make time everyday to pray, I find that things like work, jobs, commitments, extracurricular activities, and other commitments can sometimes get in the way. I may say to myself, "I'm going to take some time today to be with God," but instead end up stretching myself thin, and end up hardly having a single moment to pray that day. Much like what we hear in the reading, saying to ourselves we will make time to pray is ultimately not the same as actually praying. Today the encouragement in this Gospel is for all of us to take those little moments out of the day to settle and centre ourselves in prayer. Simply take a moment, a breath, and say to God, "Be present to me, Lord. Be with me in these next moments. Make this moment a sacrament. I offer it to you, for us." This can help us all live out what God wants our faith experience to be.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The gospel reminds us of something we often forget: words can be meaningless. Promises are empty when not followed by action. The first son is arrogant but his action shows his goodness. The second son sounds co-operative but fails to keep his promise. Do I make promises to others that quickly go out the window?

2. It is possible to be a dutiful and observant Christian, and yet feel there is something missing. It makes such a difference when your heart is in what you are doing—so much better than just going through the motions. Where do you experience that most in your life?
3. In this parable Jesus speaks to the tax collectors and prostitutes - those most despised and rejected by society, are ahead of the self-righteous ones. They were the ones who were open to the word of God and to change – Am I quick to judge others? Where have I seen the transformation of God's love in my life?
4. The desire of Jesus for us to grow in that kind of committed, enthusiastic involvement in life. What encourages you to grow in this way?
5. To live in the kingdom is to be ready to rub shoulders with all people – those we like and those we don't. God's love is given freely and is accepted by many. Pray for a heart that is open to those who we think may differ from us.

Prayer -

O God, you alone judge rightly and search the depths of the heart. Make us swift to do your will and slow to judge our neighbour, that we may walk with those who follow the way of repentance and faith. Grant 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

