



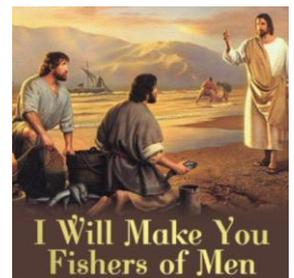
## Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home Sunday 24th Jan 2021

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 – Mark 1:14-20

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*



### A Short Thought

Once again we don't know what there was about Jesus that led Simon, Andrew, James, John, and others to leave their homes and families to follow Jesus. Did they know him already? Or was this their first contact with him? In any case there was something remarkably compelling about Jesus to cause these and others to follow him into an uncertain future. The astonishing feature of the story is that they followed Jesus with no idea of where it would lead.

We know very little of the background of any of the disciples whom Jesus calls. The four in today's story were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector (Matthew 9:9). What had the other seven done before Jesus came into their lives? We don't know.

As far as we can tell, the twelve persons Jesus called to be his companions were ordinary men. As far as we can tell, Jesus didn't do background checks to determine IQ levels, financial acumen, professional skills, or temple education. He picked people probably much like you and me. Furthermore, his disciples were anything but perfect. Many times they misunderstood him. They often hesitated to follow him. Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him. But these would be the persons who would continue Jesus' work on earth after he left — ordinary people, like you and me. They were called. God's call is always into an uncertain future. When we enter into our callings we have no idea how it will all end up. We choose our careers and jobs hoping that we can use the gifts and talents God has given us, but there are no guarantees. Most of us would say we consider ourselves to be followers of Jesus Christ. How are we following, I wonder? Are we just "tagging along," listening to the voice in the backseat on this crazy journey through life? That's good. That's helpful. However we choose to follow, it means journeying into radically uncharted territory, having the courage and commitment to move outside our walls and our comfortable familiar ways as we live out our faith. And, as Schweitzer says, "He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings" and we will be changed by the experience as we learn more fully who He is.

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- "The time is fulfilled" – this is a decisive moment in the life of Jesus. His public ministry is about to begin. Recall turning points in your own life when something new happened and with hindsight you

can say the time was ripe for it to happen, “the time was fulfilled.” John pointed the disciples towards Jesus as the one they should follow. Remember the people in your life who have pointed you in a new and life-giving direction? Perhaps in some cases this may have involved directing you away from your association with them—e.g., leaving home, changing jobs, etc

- Jesus moves along the lakeshore, meets dozens of fishermen, and finally picks Simon, Andrew, James and John. He calls them to a global mission. They have no relevant experience and no training for the job. They are ordinary workers, good men. Their CV would be telegraphic: ‘I grew up here. I fish.’ Jesus calls you in your norm, from where you are. Not because you are perfect, because you are ...
- Jesus called people, he recognised their skills and spoke to them in their own language. Where do you hear Jesus calling you and how do you bring or be that call for others?
- “Repent and believe the good news”. Jesus called for a change of heart, as a response to the good news of the gospel message. A new level of faith in yourself leads to a new way of seeing yourself. A new way of understanding God leads to a conversion in how we relate to God, a change of heart. A growth in awareness of who we are can lead us to a new level of self-confidence, another change of heart. Can you recall times when “good news” led you to a change of heart?
- The Spirit of God, who was at work in Jesus calling the disciples, continues to work in our day and in our lives. That is why the gospel message is one of good news. In the everyday events of our own lives we can see the grace of God at work. When have you had what you would consider a “call experience” that led you to a different style of life? Who was the “Jesus person” through whom the call came to you? To whom have you been a “Jesus person” in this way?

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are life itself, pointing to what I can become and calling out all my power of service and devotion. Help me to leave the frailty that is in me open to your touch. May I commit the joy and the brokenness of our life to you. I ask this in trust and confidence through Jesus my brother. 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*



