



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home Sunday 9th May 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 – John 15:9-17 - The Greatest Commandment

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

A Short Thought

Somehow, the love that Jesus speaks about in scripture, was completely omitted from the dictionary's list of possible meanings. I think that love is a commitment to consistently put another person's wellbeing and happiness before your own. It's the love a spouse has for another when he/she puts the other spouse's needs or desires before one's own. It's the love that overlooks another's faults and focuses on his/her endearing qualities. It's the love parents have for their children when they play with a child even though they are really too tired to move. It's the willingness to lay down one's life for another to protect that person from pain. True love is hard. It is demanding. It requires virtue and brings out the best in all involved in the love relationship.

The best answer I've heard to the question, "what do people need to survive?", was "Food, clothing, shelter...and love," – We all need to experience and know the loving touch.

Sometimes, it is difficult to love – When our kids are whiny, or our spouses are annoying. With acquaintances and strangers, it can be even more difficult. We know that all people are God's children. Unfortunately, it is often hard to see God in them – especially when they are rude, or don't think the way that we do.

Sunday's gospel is beautiful. I especially love the part when Jesus said, "It is not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain." He picked me! He picked me! He picked you! How do we bear fruit that will remain? We chose to love, to be love, to show love - God chose us to love – quench our thirst for Him and take time to come to this the well to drink – to fill up. And be a joyfilled witness to that love for others – even at the most difficult of times.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The core of the Christian message is love, God loves me! How is it to sit with this reality? If we could grasp God's unconditional love for us, life would be radically a journey of joy. To accept that God loves me is also to accept the reality that God loves all others in the same way. I am called to love myself and others, and it is clear from the Gospel that I am called to love the poor, the excluded, and the marginalised in a special way. I am also called to care for the earth, described by Pope Francis as "our common home"; which God has entrusted us. Take a moment to sit knowing that you are loved.
2. A commandment of love is something of a contradiction in terms. Love is a free choice. That is what gives the thrill to the experience of being loved. Recall times when you received gestures of love from another—a spontaneous embrace from a husband or wife; a wave from a friend; words of comfort and affirmation—not because the other person felt obliged to reach out to you but because they wanted to let you know that you were loved. What effect did that have on you? Did it bring you joy? Perhaps you have had a glimpse of the truth of what Jesus said, that it is in loving that our joy is complete.
3. Love for others must not be conditioned by how they respond. Jesus loves me totally, whether I am good or bad or indifferent. My love must have that quality too. This is costly love – Think of times when love asked something of you.
4. "I chose you". Have you had the experience of being 'chosen' by someone? What was it like for you to be chosen? What is it like for you to consider yourself as one chosen by Jesus?
5. God is reveal to us where we find love – Where have you experienced God in the selfless love of another?

Prayer -

God of love and compassion, in the gift of your Son you have embraced the world with a love that takes away our sin and bestows perfect joy. Grant to all who have been reborn in baptism faithfulness in serving you and generosity in loving one another. May we be a witness to you love in our world. We ask this through Jesus, who died and rose for love of us and who lives and reigns 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

