



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 20th June 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 4:35-41 *The calming of the storm.*

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"



A Short Thought

Some of the lessons in the story are obvious. Jesus has power over the storms of life, experiences them alongside us, loves us, saves us from them and wants us to trust him more than we do. The not-so-obvious lesson is that Jesus was just as much in control, and the disciples were just as safe in his hands, while he was asleep as while he was awake. Most of the time, life seems like a relentless voyage from one storm to the next. At least it does for me, and I expect it's the same for you. One thing I've learned about myself is that during storms I'm usually a scared rabbit just like Jesus' disciples were. But I'm also learning that I can take heart in knowing that Jesus isn't scared, and he isn't depressed. He might be asleep, or he might not be, but either way, like the song says, "He's got the whole world in his hands."

What it raises is that every person has a "Storm theology." Storm theology is what you believe about God when storms come into your life. When a crisis comes into your life is God a good God or a bad God for allowing it to happen? When you pray during the storm do you see God as caring or uncaring based on how He answers? Storm theology is what you believe about God when things seem to be going horribly wrong. Listen carefully, storms in life have the ability to bring to the surface what's really inside of you. Storms will reveal to you whether you live by fear or by faith? Storms will reveal to you if your heart is full of trust or doubt. The way we react to God during a storm reveals a truth about ourselves, whether we want it to or not.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Take your place in Jesus' boat and allow yourself to be drawn into the whole experience. Let the drama unfold. How do you feel when the waves pour into the boat, threatening to sink her? Do you cry out to Jesus and find him unresponsive because he is asleep? Do you share their awe as they realise that they are in the presence of some extraordinary power? Is your faith challenged as

there's was when storms arise in your life and Jesus seems distant and unconcerned?

2. Does it sometimes seem that God is ignoring you when you need him most?
3. The image of a boat in a stormy sea is a symbol of life in difficult times and can represent inner turmoil, anxiety and high emotions. When you have been in such circumstances, perhaps a "Jesus person" came to your assistance and calmed you down? Recall that person with gratitude
4. The significance of miracles in the Gospels is that they show Jesus as one who brings God's power to bear on human need and suffering. Have there been times when you have been a channel for this healing power of God, holding a crying child in your arms, calming the anxiety of a friend, or being a peacemaker in a group to which you belong?
5. In your prayer talk to Jesus about how he may appear to be asleep but is awake and active in the way you accept, appreciate and care for those people in your day.

Prayer -

O God, Life's storms hit unexpectedly and toss me into a sea of chaos, doubt and anxiety. When the waves threaten to swamp my little boat, make me aware that I have you with me as my precious passenger. Let me hear your voice saying: 'Peace! Be still!' I ask this as always through Christ our lord,
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

