



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 4th July 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 6:1-6 ...many who heard him were astounded

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching.



A Short Thought

That day they left the synagogue a bit enthralled. This local whom they knew as a man and boy for years, seemed very wise. Somehow his words reached them. I wonder how we might name the wisdom of Jesus. Jesus had three big statements in his teaching: God loves each of us with an infinite love; we are all brothers and sisters; and good will overcome evil. The wisdom of Jesus was not just a statement. He lived it. His way of life was sharing this love by healing, consoling, and telling his stories. People found the love of God in him. He called them and also calls us to believe with joy that all of us are brothers and sisters. Jesus treated people with love, and they knew it. And for love they rejected him. Sobering thought!

The last line of the Gospel is fairly stark. 'He was amazed at their lack of faith.' Many would suggest that if Jesus was to come among us again he would be amazed at how Ireland has changed. People living in fear of being attacked in their homes. Violence and murder a daily occurrence. Suicide on the increase. There is a stark challenge to us in this gospel. Can we be people of faith – can we bring and witness to this real hope and love in the midst of our community, family and society. As we come out of this pandemic we need to help our friends not just to recover but to keep their heads on straight while recovering. Today's gospel suggests we need to confront any tendency to judge others, take hurt and offence from them, reject them, and make them scapegoats of our own unrecognised aversions and resentments. It is easier to do nothing than to do something, it is easier to be negative than positive, easier to be destructive than creative. We need to become more aware of how we spread negativity at home, among our friends at work—or wherever—lest we become like Jesus' own people who so readily rejected him. We need to realise how easy it is to confuse reality with our own ingrained prejudices and preferred viewpoints. We need to see that every story has another side, every person has his or her own reasons for what they do and we need to share their journey and our story with them.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. What kind of reception does Jesus expect when he returns to his hometown? Instead of mixing with strangers or newly-found disciples, he will now be surrounded by people who have known him all

his life, who saw him grow from childhood to adulthood, who regard him as one of their own. Does he expect to be feted as a success-story, who has brought honour to his place of origin? Or does he foresee that he will be disowned, treated as an upstart who has risen above his station?

2. Francois Mauriac wrote in his life of Jesus: 'It is baffling to record that, for a period of thirty years, the Son of Man did not appear to be anything other than a man'. Those who lived with him thought they knew him. He fixed their tables and chairs. They ate and drank with his extended family. When he stepped outside the role they had fixed for him, they put him down as just a workman. When have we been so quick to label, judge or limit people because of our own ideas or motions of them?
3. This gospel invites us to be with Jesus in the profound suffering this must have caused Him. How do you let Jesus be with you in the ways you suffer?
4. Put yourself in the story - What impression does Jesus make on me? On his own people? What do you feel for him?
5. Jesus 'was amazed at their unbelief'. Do I sometimes amaze God by my unbelief? Do I bring God down to my own small size, so that I am no longer open to wonder? This week look at the world with wonder and bring those blessing to prayer

Prayer -

Lord, you are the potter, we are the clay, the earthen vessels in which your treasure is carried. We pray that inadequate as we are—cracked betimes—we may offer to all we meet a word of life, a glimpse of the Gospel, a seed of hope. 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

