



# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

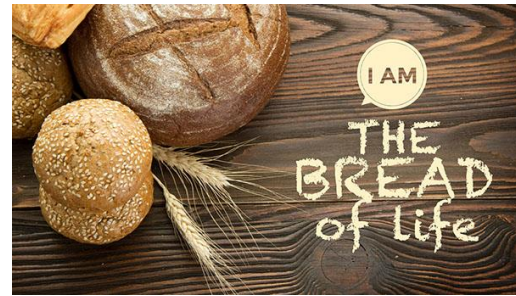
## Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021

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 6:24-35** I am the bread of life...

*So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." 'Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. 'They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*



### **A Short Thought**

*Today's gospel follows on from last week's feeding of the 5,000. We can understand why the crowd chased after Jesus the day after he fed them. The miracle was over. The leftovers were stale. Their empty stomachs were beginning to ache again and Jesus had gone on ahead of them. Some of them probably figured, "We had a free meal once so let's go get another." The rest followed along because they did not have anything better to do.*

*The Bible tells a lot of stories about what God did a long time ago. You can pay the travel agent, visit the spots, and see what God did once upon a time. Or you can take an even more amazing trip without ever leaving home. I'm talking about the journey that begins when you say, "The God who did a lot of things in the past is giving us life in Jesus Christ."*

*You can go down to the Red Sea and remember how God split the waters and brought the people out of slavery. You can remember that. Or you can look around your own community and see where God is bringing people out of slavery and injustice, freeing the oppressed, and lifting up those who were once beaten down.*

*Jesus Christ brings the past activity of God into the present tense. Can you remember all that God did? The promise of the gospel is that Jesus still does it. In the power of his resurrection, he is not bound by history. Rather he is free to come and feed us. For in Christ, the God who gave becomes the God who gives. Everything we need to flourish in life - everything - is given to us.*

*It is one thing to hear the Bible stories of some miraculous, generous action of God but another to spend time with them, let them question and challenge us and to take the risk that they may have a transformative effect on our life*

and actions. Jesus says to them and to us, "This is God's accomplishment - this is God's gift - that you come to believe in the One whom God has sent."

*I think what he means is that we are supposed to go home after each miracle. I think it means that, rather than look around and remember, we simply need to look around. See if we can detect some trace amounts of holiness and generosity. See if we can be that holiness and generosity. Faith in action is love. The bread that Jesus gives is given in love through the lives of those who have faith. The God who gave has become the God who gives. For Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." In that declaration, the ancient promises of God become real here and now. Do we really believe this? And if we do, are we open to the wonderful possibilities it asks of us?*

## **SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER**

1. Physical hunger is unmistakable and urgent. The deeper hungers of the heart are also urgent but can take a while to recognise. Deep down, for what do I really hunger and thirst?
2. If you came today to a startling awareness of the goodness and generosity of God towards the world, how would you share it with others? This was the challenge that Jesus faced from his childhood on, because he had an unique appreciation of what God is like!
3. Jesus is bluntly honest with the people he had fed the previous day. He knows they came looking for him because they had eaten their fill of bread. Why do I look for Jesus? Is it out of love or for what I can get?
4. The work of God is that we believe in the one whom God has sent. In what ways has your faith in Jesus enriched and changed your life? How has Jesus satisfied your hungers or quenched your thirsts? Is it the idea that we are loved by God?
5. As Jesus came down from heaven to give life to the world, so each one of us is here to be a source of life to others. Think of people who have been a source of life to you, and give thanks for them. For whom have you also been a source of life?

## **Prayer -**

You alone can satisfy the hungry heart, Lord God, and may we make ours the words of the Gospel, "Sir, give us this bread always.". We make our prayer 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*

