



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 5th September 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 7:31-37

Jesus said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened

Then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."



A Short Thought

In a time of uncertainty, health scares and political & cultural volatility it can be easy to become overwhelmed. I can easy to lose hope and to give in to despair. Thankfully, as Christians we can return to the Scriptures for perspective. We can look to the Word of God and be reminded that for those who know Christ we have the promise and faith that in Him - all will be well.

In this Gospel we have the account of a deaf and mute man who is healed by Jesus. It's a great reminder of the power and compassion of Jesus. But there's more to be gleaned from this passage than seeing Jesus as a kind miracle worker. The response of the crowd and Mark's subtle allusion to Isaiah 35 serve as reminders that Jesus came as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and to set in motion the fulfilment of the promise that all will be well.

The Gospel really puts things into perspective. With just the touch of his hand, Jesus cures a man of his deafness and speech impediment and gives him a whole new life. Although Jesus may not be physically laying his hands on me to heal me of my limitations (*which are nothing in comparison to a disability such as deafness*), the story reminds us of how much of an impact Christ can have on our lives. We may not even realize the tiny blessings that he sends us each day or the little miracles that he works in our lives. Maybe it's as simple as a sweet note from a friend, an unexpected A on a quiz, or a sunny day in the middle of a wet spell: just little things that he sends us to get through hardships. Reflecting on the passage helped me to remember to keep on trusting God with the faith that he will answer my prayers and never burden me with a weakness or limitation that I cannot handle. And, no matter how hard things may get or how frustrated and tired we might feel – All will be well!! Try to realise, notice and thank God for the blessings that you receive every day – as someone once said to me, "I begin each day by opening and giving thanks for two small miracles – my eyes!!"

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The healing of the deaf mute provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of communication in our lives. The healing touch of Jesus brought the man from isolation into community. Who have been the people who touched you when you felt isolated and alone and helped you to come out of painful aloneness? For whom have you done this?

2. Deafness is symbolic of being unable to hear what is being said to us. What a difference when our ears are opened! Perhaps you can recall a time when your ears were opened and you heard in a new way that you were loved — by God or by another person.
3. The initiative for this healing miracle did not come from the deaf man himself. It was others who brought Jesus to him. It was these people of good will who “begged him to lay his hand on him”. Take time to remember that many of the good things that happen to us come from the good will and prayers of others on our behalf and say thanks.
4. Words are not the only form of communication. Actions can speak louder than words. Recall times when this was brought home to you
5. Are there possibilities in your own life for some good deeds that could be done for someone you know? If responded to, this is a special gift of God to you. We all have a role in the ‘caring’ respect of each other.
6. ‘He has done everything well.’ This recalls the Genesis creation story, where God ‘does all things well’. Place all your worries and fears in God’s hands and trust in his promised that “all will be well”

Prayer -

Healing Father, I also can sometimes be deaf – deaf to the blessing I have received and the love you show to me. I can be cut off from the life that really matters – life in you. I can hear your word but not put it into practice; I can receive the Eucharist but not be nourished by it. So I take this time with you and ask you to touch the ears of my heart and loosen my tongue so that I may hear your life-giving words and speak clearly about how you are working in my life. 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

