



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

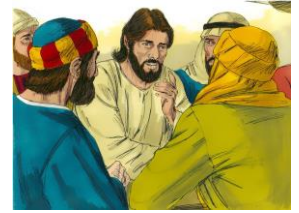
Sunday 26th Sept 2021

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 9:38-43,45, 47-48

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.



'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

A Short Thought

In the Gospel, John is concerned that someone is driving out demons in Jesus' name and Jesus doesn't seem concerned at all. John points out that this man is not a disciple of Christ; he is not in the cool club. But, Jesus just gets annoyed with John, saying, "For whoever is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:41)

Jesus wants everyone to experience the love and mercy of His Father! He knows His mission and wants everyone to join in that mission.

Jealousy can cause separation in our church and ministries if we forget the mission God has placed in our hearts. We have all watched programs and parishioners sink to the bottom of the ministry ocean simply because someone doesn't want another to succeed above them. We have all witnessed the effects of our words speaking gossip and envy on our parish campuses. We have all seen the blindness to the spiritual and physical poverty of our brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of denomination or parish boundaries. We have all stayed safe in our "structures and institutions" failing to reach out our hand or walk to the periphery where the most destitute can be found.

Why do we look for others to fix the errors of our Church, or why do we prevent others from joining in our efforts to spread the Good News? We must start "discerning and employing wisely the manifold gifts which the Spirit pours out upon the Church." He calls us to look at, "*How many young people in our parishes and schools have the same high ideals, generosity of spirit, and love for Christ and the Church! Do we challenge them? Do we make space for them and help them to do their part? To find ways of sharing their enthusiasm and gifts with our communities, above all in works of mercy and concern for others? Do we share our own joy and enthusiasm in serving the Lord?*" (Pope Francis)

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- John objected to a person who was not in their group, casting out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus himself had no problems with this. Jealousy can poison our outlook even when what is done by

another is good. "S/he is invading my patch." Perhaps you have seen, in yourself or in others, the negative effect of jealousy and the contrasting positive effect of being able to rejoice that good is being done, irrespective of who is the person doing it.

- To believe in Jesus is a great gift from God. Anyone that does a good act to another in His name are certainly blessed. Also, if someone gives you just a cup of water because you believe in the Lord, they too will receive a reward. On the other hand, if we should block others from believing in the Lord, Jesus tells us in very descriptive language that there will be a price to pay. How we deal with each other reminds us of our responsibility vis-à-vis the examples, either good or bad, that we portray in our way of living. How does your belief effect your life?
- Recall in your own life those to whom you are deeply indebted for the good advice and example you received from them. They may not even know of their effects on you. Where have you been an inspiration to others?
- Rather dramatically Jesus tells us to cut off a hand, or tear out an eye, rather than harm another. It is not to be taken literally but it does mean that we should not be casual about our efforts to live a
- good life. When have you experienced the benefits of an element of seriousness in your approach to life?

Prayer

Pour out your Spirit, O God, over all the world to inspire every heart with knowledge and love of you. Grant that we who confess Jesus as Lord may shun whatever is contrary to this faith and give witness to your love that has saved us in Christ. I ask this in trust and confidence through Jesus my brother. 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

