



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 10th Oct 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 10:17-30

Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; come, follow me

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." ' He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

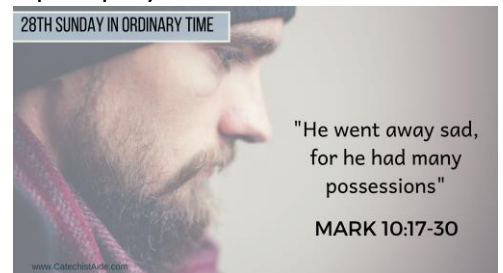
Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age-houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions-and in the age to come eternal life.'

A Short Thought

The Gospel story regarding the rich man and Jesus is an increasingly relevant tale on which to reflect. Its anti-materialistic message contrasts quite starkly with the consumer-driven society we live in today. Jesus elaborates that following the Ten Commandments is not enough to truly be one with God and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather, only by giving up our material possessions will the holy gates be opened for us. This request can seem impossible to achieve, but as with many of Jesus' teachings, it challenges us to look deep inside ourselves and uncover what is most important in our lives.

Pope Francis often speaks of wealth: 'Wealth ensures nothing. Indeed, once we think we are rich, we can become so self-satisfied that we leave no room for God's word, for the love of our brothers and sisters, or for the enjoyment of the most important things in life' (Gaudete Et Exsultate, 2018, par 68). The rich man knew something like this, because he went away 'sad'.

Ultimately we all have the same problem as the rich young man of earning our way into salvation. It can't be done. What, then, is the answer? Gazing at his disciples, just as he gazed at the rich man, and loving them just as much, Jesus says, "With humans it is impossible but not with God, for everything is possible with God." (v. 27) This is not a cheap grace



solution that allows us to carry on with business as usual. Something still has to change for God's impossible possibility to be realized.

Jesus calls us to be fully alive and the call to be fully alive entails some kind of conversion, some kind of letting go. Commonly, something triggers this growth and we become aware of hitherto unrecognised blocks. We may even have the help of someone like Jesus to put his/her finger on the hidden hesitations. What do you have to let go of? Is there anything holding you back?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Today we are reminded of the difficulty that comes from being too attached to things and forgetting that true fulfilment comes from the love of God and the love of others. It is a great blessing to be free enough to use things for the purpose of loving. Take some time to think of the things that make you 'unfree' – bring these to prayer
- The man's riches are not the problem as such, but his attitude towards them. It is as if he is possessed by his own possessions, and not in charge of them. Wealth and material things can subtly control us. Do material things or worldly considerations get in the way of my relations with God and with others? Am I missing out on the real treasures in life – health, faith, friendship, love...?
- Discerning of the heart is a tricky business and we often delude ourselves. What the role of God's word in my own discernment of heart?
- It is very significant that Jesus still looked at this man and 'loved him', even though his 'many possessions' prevented him from actually following Jesus. It highlights the fact that God in his Son understands our weaknesses and limitations, and still loves us – Where do you feel Jesus' love in your life? How do you bring it into the lives of others?

Prayer

Loving God, anoint me with your Holy Spirit. And as I read your word, let me hear your voice speaking to me from within. Give me wisdom to understand your message to me. May I not shy from the challenge it puts before me. Let your word be the joy of my heart and a lamp for my steps. May I feel the freedom it offers me. Give me strength to build my life on your word. May I rejoice in the blessedness of hearing your word and keeping it. 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

