



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 17th Oct 2021

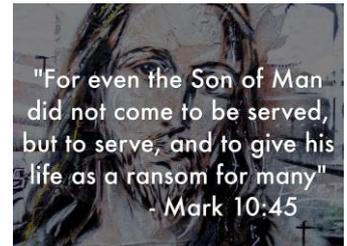
1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself 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 10:35-45

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."



A Short Thought

In today's gospel James and John had tried to claim 'dibs' on the top spots in heaven and Jesus said, "You've got it back-to-front!" They were thinking that God's kingdom worked like the Roman Empire or even normal Jewish society, with its power squabbles and jockeying for position and one-upmanship. Sound familiar? Children squabble over who gets to sit in the front seat of the car, who gets first choice of the sweets, who is top of the leader board on the video games. And it's the same with grown-ups. Some of us are more competitive than others, some more power-hungry but we each have within us the lurking desire to be better than someone else. In its worst excesses we can become obsessed with status, power, authority. Now, it's not a bad thing to want recognition for something done well, in however small a way. It is right to tell people when they have done a good job, and we all like to have our effort and achievement recognised. But when we seek power and recognition for their own sake, the healthy "Well done, Good job." can become an unhealthy obsession. Why do we do it? Often it is insecurity. We try to bolster our fear that we are not good enough by acquiring all kinds of badges that loudly proclaim, "Here is a person who is worthy of approval / admiration / respect / love." We do this because we desperately want those around us to approve / admire / respect / love us. The Good News is that we don't have to do that. We do not have to strive for these things. And that's not because we already have them, nor because we really do deserve them. It's because we really don't deserve them. Yes, you heard that right. We don't deserve them. You fear that you are not good enough? *You've not. Neither am I.* But when we realise that we cannot ever make ourselves acceptable, we can stop striving to be better than those around us, stop striving to save ourselves by our own efforts, stop trying to find our self-worth in status and power and things. We can simply say 'thank you' to the only one who can exchange our worthlessness for his worth. Jesus the carpenter! This week say, 'Thank

you', trust in God and know that you are 'good enough' because He was good enough - We get to take his 'good enough' as our own!!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- The request of the apostles brings to light our natural desires to be approved of and rewarded in worldly terms. Jesus tells us his meaning of real greatness – service and the care of others. Where am I putting this into action?
- Christian leadership is not like human authority nor is it based upon power and lording it over others. Quite the contrary, it is genuine when expressed in service. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. What about me? How am I of service to others?
- This lovely dialogue leads us deep into Jesus' way of teaching. It starts with the sort of untamed desire that lies behind many of our prayers. Jesus leads James and John into the implications of what they are asking. He does not throw suffering at them but invites them to share his cup. Bring your own suffering to prayer and trust in Jesus...
- Possibly the greatest challenge of today's gospel - *To be "a slave of all."* To do this today while maintaining our leadership responsibilities requires re-framing many of our relationships. How do I lead, manage, or instruct others as a slave of others?

Prayer

Loving Servant of all, let us see our worth through your eyes. Set our hearts free, O Lord, that we may desire what you desire and love what you love. May we have the strength to follow you in service and witness to this in our lives. 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



TO SERVE IS TO LEAD

MARK 10:35-45