



## Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

### Sunday 24th 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 10:46-52**

#### ***Bartimaeus regained his sight and followed him on the way***

*They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.*



### **A Short Thought**

Sometimes in life, we feel stuck, incapable of making a decision, confused. Generally it's because we feel as though we don't see ourselves clearly; we don't see the situation clearly or which way to go to get out of it. Perhaps that's because things just aren't clear, to begin with but many times it is we who pull the wool over our own eyes: we prefer not to see. Many times we blind ourselves, like Oedipus. We refuse to look at the consequences of our own choices. Sometimes it's the weight of our past that holds us back because we feel as if we cannot change. We can feel utterly lost, like a bottle of oil shattered on the pavement, like the pitiless time that slips through our hands without hope of ever being recovered.

Bartimaeus is a little like this. And maybe it's not by chance that the encounter described in this Gospel passage happens in Jericho – the city built below sea level, the city that represents the abyss of humanity, our miseries, the places into which we feel sunken, depressed and especially alone. But we are shown that we are never alone. A relationship with Jesus allows us to have the courage to believe in times of need and in times of fulfilment. Bartimaeus is a blind man seeking to be able to see again. He confides in Jesus to make that happen. He shows his faith by stepping up and calling for Jesus to heal him. He shows courage in being able to approach and ask for something so grand. He shows that he believes in a higher power and he trusts that he will be taken care of.

In this passage, we learn about the importance of having the courage to ask for help. Asking for help in a time of need takes courage and risk. In this passage, Bartimaeus could have stayed quiet and could have just let the presence of Jesus escape him; he could have let his opportunity to ask for help pass. Jesus, at the end of the passage, lets him know that his faith saved him. It's important to believe in your faith and believe in receiving help or asking for it. Doing so does not make you weak and does not make you seem selfish. It allows you to be open to your faith and believe in something. Where do you need the courage to ask for help? Do you really know that you are never alone, that the darkness is never too dark that Jesus can not penetrate it with his love and hope – if we but ask? This week as God to increase your faith that you may hear those who ask for help.

## SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Ask yourself - Where do I fit into this story? Am I happy to fall in with the crowd with its different moods and reactions? Or can I see myself showing the courage and persistence of Bartimaeus?
- “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” - It was a prayer Jesus could not let go unheeded. He called the blind man to him and cured him. Can I make this short prayer my own, asking Jesus to have mercy on me in all my needs?
- Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ - Bartimaeus knew exactly what he wanted of Jesus. Do I have a clear answer to this question? Perhaps I believe I do not need anything, or I need so many things I would find it difficult to give a clear answer. Hear Jesus ask the same question of you.
- Recovery of sight in the Bible is often a metaphor for coming to faith. Perhaps during your life, you have had moments of insight, of deeper understanding, of appreciating who Jesus is for you. What was it that helped you to see more clearly? Give thanks ...
- To get to Jesus, Bartimaeus threw aside his cloak so that he would not be impeded. What have you had to discard in order to be able to see more clearly (e.g., an assumption, a prejudice, a rigid opinion)? Ask God for the courage...
- Theologian Michel de Verteuil has a wonderful prayer in connection with this story: “Lord, there are many people sitting at the side of the road, shouting to us to have pity on them, but they often shout in strange ways: by behaving badly in the classroom; by taking drugs and alcohol; by sulking, remaining silent or locked up in their rooms; sometimes by insisting that they are happy to be at the side of the road while others pass by. Lord, like Jesus, we need to stop all that we are doing so that we can hear them express their deep longing to have their sight restored to them.” This week take a moment to stop and listen....

## Prayer

Have pity on us, God our saviour. Grant us grace and courage to cast off our sins and turn to you for healing. Grant us the grace to hear our need and the courage to ask for help knowing in full certainty and trust that you walk with us always. Show us in Christ the sure path of salvation and strengthen us to follow gladly in the Way of the Gospel. We ask this in trust and confidence through Jesus my lord. 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*

