

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021

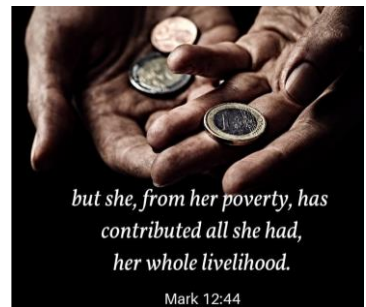
1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself 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 12:38-44

#### *A poor widow came and put in two small coins*

*As he taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'*



*He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'*

### A Short Thought

The gospels are filled with examples of faith; examples to follow and examples to avoid like the plague. And today's Gospel is a good example of this.

Jesus presents the scribes/ lawyers as all about themselves. They want to be seen. They want to be congratulated. They want to be well-thought of. They want people saying good things about them in their faces AND behind their backs. They are, Jesus says, totally self-absorbed. And these are the professionally religious!

And then there is the widow. Could there be a picture of someone more selfless than her? She doesn't give out of her abundance, what's left over, she gives from the very depths of her being. Her giving is sacrificial. Selfless.

This reading can be over thought but it's not rocket science! It's about the kind of faith that we are supposed to have, and the kind of faith that we aren't. The faith of Jesus Christ isn't a self-absorbed faith. It's a faith that digs deep, a faith which is sacrificial, a faith which bears the cross. In short, the faith of Jesus Christ isn't about us. It's not about me. It's not about you. It's about what we give to God. And it's about the amazing riches that God gives in return. It's about a God who isn't self-absorbed, a Christ that isn't self-absorbed, and faithful Christians who aren't self-absorbed. Whether we are professionally religious or not, we are to be the widow. Loving, living, and giving sacrificially.

When we hear giving our first thought usually is money. More challenging yet: Time is money. What if, for us today, it is our time that is analogous to the widow? Helping those in need, doing something constructive with all of our resources, not just our money, might be a better way to embody this text than simply filling out a direct-deposit slip. Just a thought!

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The story of the poor widow is very suitable for contemplation. Let me place myself in the picture. I can be the widow; or one of the disciples looking on, watching the scene unfold. Notice the feelings, emotions and insights that arise. What is it saying to me?

2. Scribes were interpreters of the Old Testament and were a type of lawyer. They were in a good position to defraud widows who confided in them. Do I ever reach out to help vulnerable people?
3. In material terms what the widow had to offer was very little. Recall when you felt yourself called to give and gave even though you apparently had very little. Perhaps you have had the experience of finding that what you thought was little and insignificant meant a great deal to another person. Recall some of those moments
4. The widow 'gave everything she had, all she had to live on'. In doing so she placed herself in a very vulnerable position, trusting that things would work out. Have you ever found that what seemed a generous but reckless giving of yourself proved life-giving for yourself and others?
5. 'Love God!' This seems easy. 'Love your neighbour!' This is harder. 'Love yourself!' This seems alien to the Gospel, but there is a healthy self-love that acknowledges God's creative love in ourselves. God sees all that is made, including me, and says it is very good. Can I accept this gift happily?

## Prayer -

God, our provider you are the orphan's hope and the widow's bread. Strengthen our faith, that with simplicity of heart we may come to trust in you alone and hold back nothing in serving you. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **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*

