

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 9th Jan 2022 – The Baptism of the Lord

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.



A little pointer before you begin –

When taking a gospel story for prayer, it is often helpful to break the story up into its individual sections. Each section represents a movement, an interaction between the characters. There are different individuals and groups in the story. Think of the emotions and feelings in the story. Any one of them could be the focal point for your prayer. The objective is to discover the Good News in the story. The Good News is that the story of grace is deeper than the story of sin, both in the gospels and in our lives. Note the different characters in the story, for each of them could be a character with whom you can identify.

THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL – Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'



A Short Thought

Begin by recalling some special moment between yourself and your parents. Did you ever hear from them the equivalent of "This is my son, my daughter, the beloved: my favour rests on you"? In Jesus' ministry, on several occasions, he felt such a word from his Abba, his Father. His baptism by John was one such moment, as was the Transfiguration later on. Such deep love and affirmation grounded him as a human being and as God's prophet to the people of Israel. Our sense of calling grows out of our relationship with the Father, whose beloved we are, whose favour we too enjoy.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- The baptism of Jesus activates the work of God for the salvation of his people. By allowing himself to be immersed in the waters, Jesus chose to "share in our humanity that we might share in his divinity." How is Jesus close to you in your life, in your experiences?

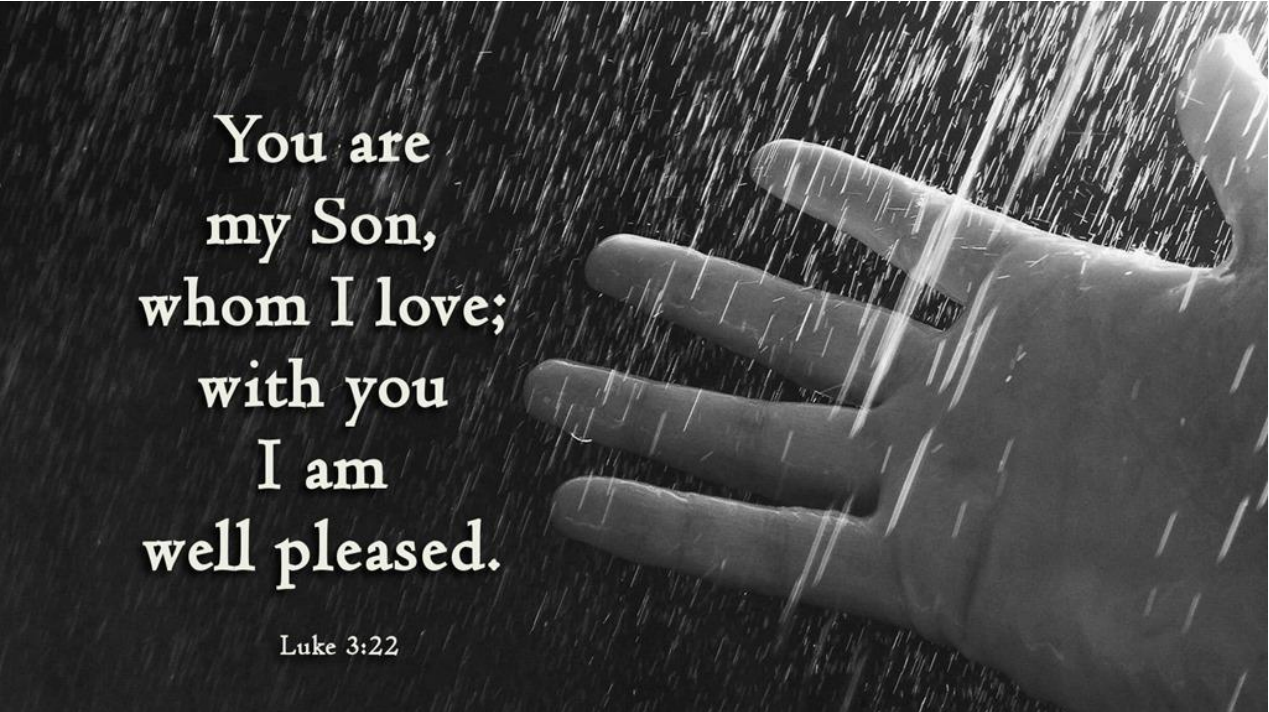
- Have you ever found that when someone identifies with you, it is easier for him/her to help you? Has your ability to identify with others had any impact on your effectiveness in helping others?
- The Baptism of Jesus marks a turning point in his life, and the start of his public ministry. Recall moments when your life changed and you moved into a new phase.
- The experience was one in which Jesus had a new sense of his own identity. What have been the experiences which have helped shaped your sense of who you are?
- Through our baptism we are “Children of God” - Think about how much God loves Jesus. Now think about how much God loves you. Am I living to the full my own baptismal promises?

Prayer

Let us hear again, Abba, Father, your words of favour to each one of us. Direct us on the Way of discipleship, that we may be bearers of the Good News by simply being who we truly are before you, your children. I 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



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Luke 3:22