

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 23rd Jan 2022

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 – Lk1:1-4, 4:14-21

Jesus said, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'



A Short Thought

Today, Jesus invites us to share in his ministry. He has anointed us and sent us to "proclaim liberty to captives, give sight to the blind, free the oppressed and proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." This is our call no matter who we are. Jesus empowers us to heal and to preach His Word. We may not have the ability to "free" every captive. However, if we love one another unconditionally, our love and care may "free" a person of their loneliness or despair. Or perhaps, we may help "lift" someone's oppression of body, mind or spirit. We are not Jesus, but Jesus has commissioned us to be his disciples on this earth. As his disciples, we are called to share the good news and help anyone who is in need. Today be attentive to the individuals you may encounter who may be "bound." Strive to open the minds and hearts of the individuals who yearn to see God. Help lift someone's burden of mind, body and spirit. You and I are called to walk in Jesus' footsteps, and if we do so, we may give a simple but great gift to a person who is in need. There is a massive challenge put to us in this gospel - Can and do we stand up like Jesus in front of others to "read" the Word not necessary out loud but in your actions?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Jesus was filled with the Spirit and sent. He came bursting with a message to communicate. When have you had the experience of being enthused by something in that way? Who have been the people you met who had that kind of enthusiasm?

- Jesus is the servant king. We are called to be the same. In our giving and receiving as one Body, we enable each other to experience enrichment (overcoming poverty), vision (banishing our blindness), and freedom (removing oppression). How am I doing this?
- Jesus tells his hearers that, with his own coming, God is visiting his people right now. And he's visiting every single one of his people, from that day to this. Where do you meet Jesus each day?
- The message Jesus had was one of liberation and he told his listeners that it was being fulfilled even as they listened. When have you had a NOW moment of liberation? When has bible reading been an experience of liberation for you?
- His message was addressed to those who were poor, oppressed, blind, or captives. Who are these today? In what ways have I been, or am I, among these? How has the message of Jesus been good news for you, freed you, given you new sight, or revealed God's favour to you?
- I must take personally what God says here. He says: 'You are the one I choose today to bring good news to the poor and oppressed. The Holy Spirit is upon you. I am sending you!' Jesus saw these statements as giving him his identity. Do they give me mine?

Prayer

Lord, God, whose compassion embraces all peoples, whose law is wisdom, freedom, and joy for the poor, fulfil in our midst your promise of favour, that we may receive the gospel of salvation with faith and, anointed by the Spirit, freely proclaim it. We ask this, as always, through Jesus Christ your son, 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