

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 6th March 2022

Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.

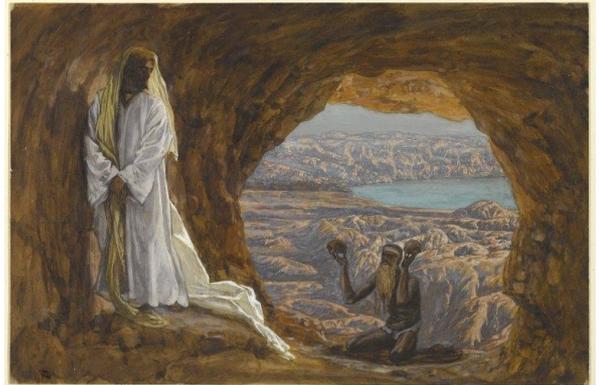
1. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
2. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
3. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could 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.
4. 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.

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THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL – Luke 4:1-13

Jesus tested in the wilderness

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.'



A Short Thought

Jesus was brought out of the ordinary into a place where he was tempted off course. Three temptations...to comfort, power, wealth. Three ways that can take us over. Like us all. Money, power and comfort can lead us astray – wanting wealth, to be no.1 and prioritise comfort in various ways. The words of Jesus are to use all in service of God and the neighbour. He goes back to the word of God to find strength and insight to fight off evil. Words he learned at home, school. A big source of energy for us is the word of God. On Ash Wednesday the invitation was to believe the good news. That is where we may find life and strength.

Our faith depends on Jesus Christ. The word of God remains life-giving and strong. Today's scripture shows that temptations happen which can take us off the path. We can feel let down by church life and scandals. We need to remember that the same Spirit who led Jesus into the desert and who kept him strong there can do the same for us.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- 'Know yourself!' is an ancient piece of Greek wisdom. Do I make time to know myself and my temptations? Am I a perfectionist, or lazy? Do I desire to get noticed and praised? Am I hoarding the gifts and talents God has given me instead of putting them at the service of others? Do I focus

on the best in people, or get myself angry over their flaws? Do I love only those who love me? Can I bring these in trust and honesty to the one who loves me unconditionally?

- How do you deal with temptation or distractions? Do you trust God will help?
- Jesus knows me better than I know myself: he loves me as I am. But he also works, often through others, to help me become aware of the ways I take the wrong path. He wants to make me more compassionate and easier to get along with. I ask God to help me grow in love
- Jesus' experience teaches us that there is nothing wrong with being tempted. It's how we react to the temptation that matters. Think of a time where this was evident for yourself
- 'One does not live by bread alone' – What really sustains our faith, our relationship with God?
- Take a bit of time this week to make time to build your relationship with God.

Prayer

God of mercy your Son faced trials and temptations in the wilderness, strengthen us as we face the temptations and trials of our time and grant compassion to all who can on you in their need. 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