

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 22nd May 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 – John 14:23-29

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you...”

Jesus answered him, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, “I am going away, and I am coming to you.” If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.



A Short Thought

When Jesus departs from his disciples, there will be significant changes and this text makes a promise that despite this fact the disciples will not be left alone. This is a promise that surely made a huge difference to those for whom Jesus' departure is both immanent and potentially confusing. Part of that preparation included making sure all knew what was expected his followers. Jesus states that loving him means being faithful to his teachings (verse 23). As a result of this, “My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (verse 23). What an astonishing promise of presence!!

However, we live in a world where people are more technologically connected than ever before, but many seem to still be lonely. They are isolated physically and perhaps connected in trans-dimensional modes of connection. But many are not pulled out of the isolation by electronic means. Feeling alone can be a profoundly difficult thing to experience. And this is what the disciples are likely to fear most: isolation from their teacher and friend. All that they have done has been about being part of Jesus' life and journey. But Jesus' promises mean that they will not be alone.

One of the profound moments in this passage comes in verse 27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Peace is a commodity we sorely need in our world and is absent for far too many. But into this discourse about absence, Jesus reassures the disciples, who were rightly feeling fear about his departure, that they will not be left alone and bestows peace on them. However, he does more than gently wish them peaceful lives — he gives them peace (verse 27). This is not a wish. This is a gift and gift for each of us to be ‘unwrapped and

shared'. This is not a passive peace. It is an active working toward peace in multiple situations. It is this Spirit and peace that propel the disciples and later the church into active discipleship and mission. So where do you find/experience peace? What does it 'propel' you to do? Place all your fears and anxieties into the hands of the one who gifts you peace.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus seeks to reassure his followers in the face of his imminent death. Although he will be leaving them, he promises them the gift of the Spirit. How have you been aware of the gift of the Spirit of God in your life?
2. Jesus is inviting his followers not to cling to his physical presence, but to be open to a deeper way of being in relationship with Him. Often we find it hard to let go, and to embrace the new. Think of a time you had experience of this or offer up something that you find difficult to 'let go' of.
3. Spend a few moments and let these words of Jesus speak to the deepest part of your heart, your life, your fears - "do not let your heart be troubled" - "peace I leave you".
4. To his followers Jesus, promises 'we will come and make our home with them'. Our God is not a distant God but one who lives in us. What has helped you to be aware of the closeness of God to you?
5. "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid". When you have been anxious, who have been the Jesus people for you who were able to calm your anxiety. How did they do this? For whom have you been one who calmed anxiety?

Prayer -


Loving Father, your will for us in Jesus is the peace the world cannot give; your abiding gift is the advocate he promised. Calm all troubled hearts, dispel every fear. Keep us steadfast in love and faithful to your word, that we may always be your dwelling place. We ask this through Jesus, who died and rose for love of us and who lives and reigns 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

We pray for Ukraine. For all of humanity distorted by war. For all the lives lost, homes seized, and peace broken. May the Spirit of comfort and compassion envelop all who dwell in fear. May peace prevail and justice reign. May love always be the guide and measure of our actions and responses. Amen





**God is all that is good,
and God made all that is made,
and God loves every part of it.
If you love all people
because of God's love,
then you love
each created thing,
because you love the creator.
For God is in every person,
and every person is in God.
If you love in this way, you love all.**

Julian of Norwich (1342-1416)