

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June 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 –

**Luke 9:51-62** 'I will follow you wherever you go.'

*When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem.*

*When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.*

*As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'*



### A Short Thought

*Philip Scharper, editor of Orbis Books, describes the Christian life as pilgrims, but even more accurately as nomads: "A popular church metaphor is that of the people of God on pilgrimage. But a more apt metaphor should be that of the people of God as nomads. Pilgrims know where their journey is headed ... Nomads are called to go by uncertain paths to a place that shall be made holy at some indefinite time by something God shall say or do. And there is no guide, no guide except a pillar of fire by night and a wind-driven cloud by day – sounds and symbols of the Holy Spirit."*

*Little did the disciples know that day that they would soon become nomads on this earth, travelling all over, with no fixed home, living in often frightening and hostile circumstances, as followers of their Lord. But they – and we – were also pilgrims, because pilgrims do have a final destination, namely in eternity with God.*

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Today's Gospel contains some very harsh statements. Jesus' response to the first would-be follower is that – before deciding to follow Jesus – he should first count the cost. The closing sentence is even harder, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.' This is a Jesus who leaves no room for compromise. Jesus does not want 'luke-warm' followers – How does this challenge me?

2. What are the problems which you have to face in your life because of the decision which you have made to follow Jesus? What has been the 'cost of discipleship' for me? What has been the richness and gift of discipleship for me?
3. Jesus did not exclude anyone. What might this mean for me in my life? Might there be anything or anyone which is holding me back from letting God be first and in charge of my life?
4. The temptation to use violence motivated by religion was present even within the small circle of the apostles. Jesus rebukes them, and insists that the struggle must take place rather within our hearts: am I really ready to follow him whatever the cost? What can we learn from the discussion of Jesus with His disciples who wanted to take revenge on the Samaritans?
5. Are there people in your life, like the Samaritans, who just don't like you? Do they cause you anger like James and John? Would you be able to respond in the same way as Jesus does?
6. Do you feel worthy to "go and proclaim the kingdom of God"? Why or why not? Where do you need God's grace to help you proclaim the good news of salvation?
7. Imagine you are in a field pushing a wooden plough. It's hard work. You have to plough in a straight line, which means you can't look back. You have to look forward. At the end of the line before you is the Kingdom of God. What do you see in the distance? What are the obstacles standing in your way? What do you feel you want to look back to? Who are you leaving behind?

## Prayer -

Lord Jesus, we thank for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to but also practise the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever 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*



There's a reason your windshield is bigger than your rearview mirror... Where you're headed is much more important than what you've left behind