

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

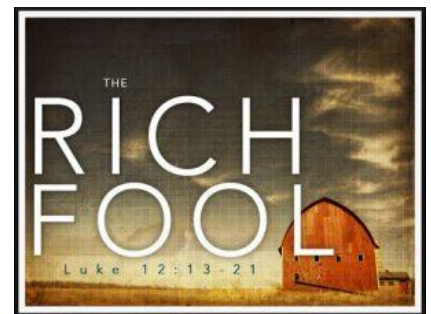
Sunday 31st July 2022

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 12:13-21

So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."



A Short Thought

God's words are actually the food of our soul. The gospel tells and teaches us a lot. It points at how we can get caught up in what we own and what people have. It's all about how possessions can dominate and take us over. If we would only remember, wealth, honour and pride are the three obstacles to our faith. We are all equal in the eyes of God, and what we have is a gift, given to us for the benefit of the world, the community and neighbourhood; not only for the good of ourselves. Wealth is just a temporary thing that will perish. We should always remember that it is not bad to be rich in this world, but we should also be rich in faith, love and hope as these things can help us to nourish our faith and may lead us always closer to God. So when we detach from things, God comes to fill or possess us by God's Spirit. And suddenly the world is full of life once more." Our lives and possessions are not our own. They belong to God and should be shared among all of the creation, not just those who enjoy the privilege of wealth. We are merely stewards of them for the time God has given us on this earth. We rebel against this truth because we want to be in charge of our lives and our stuff.

Yet this truth is actually good news. Because all that we are and all that we have belongs to God, our future is secure beyond all measure. So Jesus tells us, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (12:32). What is your real treasure in life? What are we, in fact, living for? The demands of our way of life can make it difficult to put first things first. It is only in our relationship to Jesus, that we can discover who we truly are, and the person of value he sees us to be.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. "One's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions", said Jesus. What have you found by experience to be more important in life than possessions? What brought this home to you?

2. In our society, we are driven to acquire more wealth, more possessions, more status. Today, Jesus reminds us that, when we leave all this behind, we will be asked what spiritual riches we have accumulated. Our good deeds are the only thing that will outlive us. What treasure will I accumulate that I can carry with me?
3. One could argue that the rich man is not foolish because he makes provision for the future. But his own future is his only concern, not that of others. He does not think to use his abundance to help others. Lord, make me a grateful person, aware that all that is good in my life comes from you, and is held I trust, for others.
4. The message of the parable could be summed up in saying, "If you want to give God a laugh, tell him/her your plans". Life takes many twists and turns we do not anticipate. When have you found that have had to change your plans because of unexpected circumstances? What has helped you to be flexible and resourceful at such times?
5. The parable is told as a warning against greed, but Luke is offering a deeper theological meaning. What are the ways in which I am 'rich towards God'?

Prayer -

O God, the giver of every gift that endures, only by your grace can we rightly understand the wonder of life and why it is given. By the word of your Son challenge our foolishness, confront our greed, and shape our lives to the wisdom of the Gospel. Let us be true and faithful stewards of all the blessing we have be given. We ask this through your Son who lives and reigns with you 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

