

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 18th Sept 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.

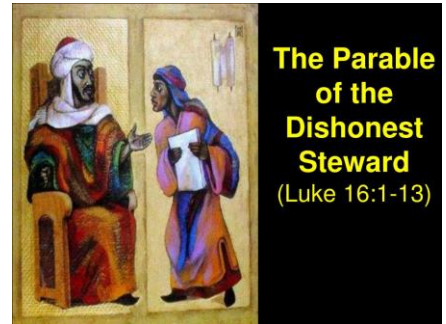


THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL - Luke 16:1-13 *You cannot be the slave of both God and money*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There was a rich man and he had a steward denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty." "The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.

'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity. The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own? 'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.



A Short Thought

All of Jesus' parables are challenging, but this is surely one of the most challenging. In this parable, the dishonest manager is about to be dismissed from his job but is wise enough to use his last-minute opportunity to prepare for the future. He does so by doing favours for his master's debtors (at his master's expense), knowing that those debtors will incur an obligation to welcome him into their homes after he has been dismissed from his employment. The lesson of the parable is not that we should be dishonest, but that we should use every means at our disposal to prepare for our eternal home. So we should serve the Lord with even more energy and ingenuity than wheelers & Dealers employ in their business dealings; and secondly that we should use our resources to help the poor. 'The only things we take with us from our life on earth are those which we have given away.'

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- As often with the parables of Jesus, this one is intended to shock in order to make us think. Jesus is not praising the injustice of the servant, but his purposefulness in preparing for the future. In your experience what difference does it make when you are purposeful and energetic instead of lethargic?
- Every human situation was, for Jesus, an opportunity to grow in wisdom. Where do I see God at work even in the most difficult of situations? Where do I see love?
- It was his master's call to account that galvanised the servant into action. What have been the experiences, or people, that have galvanised you into action when you had been somewhat half-hearted in your efforts?
- In terms of this parable the false value is "property" and the true value is making friends. What are the things I value most in life? Are power, popularity and influence important to me?
- Who have been the people whose energy, drive and astuteness have been an inspiration to you in how to handle difficult situations?

Prayer

*Lord thank you for the free spirited people you sent into my life helping me to know that it is always people who must come first, not power and influence. Forgive me for the times when I allowed myself to let my life be taken over by valuables and possessions letting them be my main pre-occupation. Help me to be a person of trust because when we are trusted in little things we will be trusted in great things. **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

