

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 28th August 2022

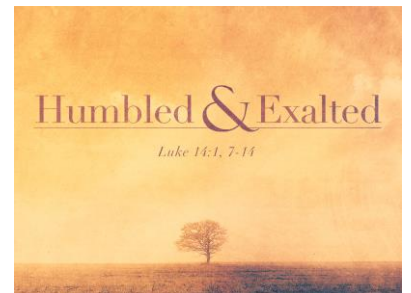
1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself 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 14:1, 7-14

When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour?...

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'



A Short Thought

The world's hospitality is always conditional. The guests are already known, vetted, and welcome. Their names are on our invitation list. Other names are not. We take the initiative. We extend the invitation. And we decide in advance the terms and conditions of the invitation. That's not, however, hospitality in the kingdom. Jesus calls for inclusion of those who cannot return the invitation: "the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind" (14:13). For Luke, Jesus subverts expectations that social payment and repayment should govern life in God's kingdom community. Hospitality does not begin with opening the door of our house. It begins with opening the door of our heart. Hospitality challenges me to face the ways I've closed and locked the door of my heart. When we shut the door of our heart and exclude the stranger, we also imprison ourselves. Strangers have a way of showing us ourselves and the doors we have closed. That's what happened a couple of weeks ago. That uninvited visitor, that stranger, revealed my estrangement from myself, the person I want to be, the values I claim to hold, the life I want to live, the faith I profess, and the Lord I follow. Hospitality isn't so much about who the other is or isn't but who I am and how I want to be. Instead of making a guest list of who is welcome maybe we should take an inventory and make a list of our own fears, prejudices, judgments, skepticisms, cynicisms, and profiling of others. Those are the locks on our heart's door.

What does hospitality look like in your life today? To whom is your heart open and to whom is it closed? What locks are on your inventory? Who are the strangers in your life? In what ways have you become a stranger to yourself?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. As I read Jesus' parable does it ring any bells with me? Do I remember either the elation of being considered more special than I thought I was, or the deflation of being thought more ordinary than seemed right to me? What do these memories tell me about my sense of the world and my place in it?
2. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Humility is a word that many times the world forgets. How do I practice humility before God? before other people? in the work that I do?
3. There is always someone more distinguished than me! Can I rely on the voice of God to assure me of my dignity and worth?
4. It may appear that Jesus is talking about a false sort of humility that awaits promotion in the sight of others for its vindication - then I remember who he is talking to. How does he speak to me?
5. "When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." Who are these people to whom I can reach out and give without expecting anything in return? What are the thankless tasks that I do in life? Do I complain about them?
6. Which are the reasons which today limit the participation of persons in society, in our community and in the Church? And which are the reasons that some give to exclude themselves from the community? Are they just reasons?

Prayer -

Heavenly Father, teach us how to follow in Jesus' footsteps, how to be compassionate, more understanding, more generous in our thinking and in our actions. 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

