

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> 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 14:25 - 33

#### The cost of being a disciple

*Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.*



### A Short Thought

*Jesus is on the move again. He has left the hospitality of the Pharisee's table and is headed once again toward Jerusalem. The crowds are gathering. Can you imagine what it must have been like to work out in the field and see this cloud of dust rising from the road off in the distance, to see the swarm of people moving along that road, and to hear the distant buzz of their conversation? It wouldn't take much to compel you to run in that direction, just to see what all the commotion was about, would it? The question is, once you got close enough to see and hear Jesus, to realize who this must be, and to listen to his teaching, would you mosey back to work, or leave it all behind to join the crowds that flocked after him? In this passage, Luke's Jesus calls people to a kind of discipleship that is not cheap, not easy, and not to be entered into without deep consideration of the consequences and costs. This passage speaks to the importance of loyalty and allegiance to Jesus over all other competing loyalties, including family, self-interest, and possessions. It almost sounds as if Jesus is trying to get people to stop following him, doesn't it? Have we ever heard Jesus be so negative? It almost sounds as if Jesus is trying to get people to stop following him, doesn't it? Have we ever heard Jesus be so negative? But Jesus is not trying to get rid of followers. He just wants them – and us – to know what is involved in being a true disciple. The cost is high, and we need to know what we're getting into when we say we want to follow Jesus.*

*True disciples do what Jesus did, and care about the things Jesus cares about. Are you willing to commit to a life of following Jesus? Can you leave behind the things that matter most to you, and make the things that matter most to God your highest priority? The cost is great, but the cost of non-discipleship is even greater. The choice is yours. What's it worth to you, to follow Jesus?*

## SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The passage is a call to both radical and practical discipleship. When have you found that in order to achieve a certain objective you had to make it a priority, and then take the practical steps necessary to reach your goal? What were the benefits to you when you did this?
2. To listen to Jesus can be uplifting, peaceful, enriching, hopeful but also very challenging. Jesus is honest about what it means to follow him. He doesn't try to hide anything from his future followers. What does this say about his leadership? His words are strong. How do I react to what he is saying? A person who carried his cross knew what the end was going to be - crucifixion. To follow him means to die to self but dying brings life. How do I feel about that statement?
3. Is there anything that you are holding on tightly too that might be hindering you from following Jesus? Ask him to show you what that might be. Ask him to give you the grace that you need to be able to let go.
4. Jesus uses parables here to tell us that in important human affairs we do not settle for vague aspirations. When have you found that some element of practical planning has been necessary to make progress with a project? What has this taught you about making the most of your life and of your time?

### Prayer -

God of all creation, we stand before your handiwork in awe and gratitude. God of salvation, nothing can ever separate us from your love. God of our inner life, sustain our surprise!. 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*

