

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 13th Feb 2022

Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.

1. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
2. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
3. 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.
4. 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 6:17,20-26

The Beatitudes - Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

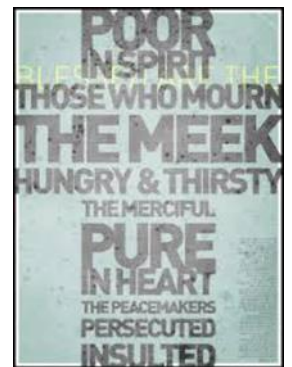
Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.'



A Short Thought

We all know from experience that happiness can be confused with all sorts of things — enjoyment, getting my own way, pleasure etc. We also all know— in our heart of hearts—that true happiness is not something that I have for myself but something that I am with others. Rather than something I possess, it is something that I am, with my values and vision. The paradox of human life is that we attain happiness not by aiming at it for ourselves but only making other people the focus of our lives and loves.

As we listen to this Gospel, the Beatitudes jar our sensibilities. Those who are poor, hungry, weeping, or persecuted are called blessed. This is, indeed, a Gospel of reversals. Those often thought to have been forgotten by God are called blessed. In the list of “woes,” those whom we might ordinarily describe as blessed by God are warned about their peril. Riches, possessions, laughter, reputation . . . these are not things that we can depend upon as sources of eternal happiness. They not only fail to deliver on their promise; our misplaced trust in them will lead to our demise. The ultimate peril is in misidentifying the source of our eternal happiness.

The Beatitudes are often described as a framework for Christian living. Our vocation as Christians is not to be first in this world, but rather to be first in the eyes of God. As you read the passage are there people, organisations, etc. that come to mind? Why? And do you find any traces of yourself in the Beatitudes?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- We are told that Jesus “fixed his eyes on the disciples” before speaking. It suggests that he was about to say something that he really wanted them to take in. Surprisingly he then tells them it is no bad thing for us to be poor or hungry. But perhaps you have recognised the truth in what St.

Augustine said “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

- What the world sees as tragic or empty, Jesus sees as blessed – What are the blessings in your life?
- The Beatitudes offer a future promise but also a present reality. At first reading some Beatitudes may seem to describe circumstances that you would like to avoid at all costs. Read them slowly. Read them a few times. Stay with each one for a while. Let yourself get a sense of the paradox involved in each one. Perhaps you have had an experience of a deeper and more authentic life, a blessing, when...
 - You were poor - you knew your need of God
 - You mourned – could feel for others
 - You were meek – not emotionally out of control
 - You hungered and thirsted for some cause
 - You were merciful rather than vengeful
 - You were pure in heart – a person of integrity, whose actions and intentions correspond
 - You were a peacemaker
 - You were persecuted because you stood for something
- Picture yourself there, listening to what Jesus was saying – he turns to you and looks at you and says, “I want you to be like my Father in the way you love, in your place and your time. Love the neediest! “How does the conversation proceed?

Prayer

God, who alone can satisfy our deepest hungers, protect us from the lure of wealth and power; move our hearts to seek first your kingdom, that ours may be the security and joy of those who place their trust in you. We ask this, as always, through Jesus Christ your son, Amen



THIS IS JESUS:

Thought
Provoking
Preacher

Luke 6:17-26

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