

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – First Sunday of Advent

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 21:25-28, 34-36

***There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth***

*There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth  
distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.*

*People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the  
world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see*

*'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to  
take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." "Be on  
guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries  
of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on  
the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape  
all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man*



### A Short Thought

If you were to wish people a happy new year today, they would in all probability find it awkward. Nevertheless, we do start a new Christian year with the season of Advent. The different seasons reminds of important aspects of being Christian, one of which is the conviction that we may always begin again and start new. So today's Gospel tells us to be alert and focus' on waiting. We're not very good at that anymore. Maybe we never were. We get frustrated if we have to wait for any length of time. Waiting feels like time wasted and who can afford to waste time these days? But maybe a little waiting is a good thing. Here are five things we can get from waiting that are worth reflecting on.

1. Waiting reminds us that we are not the centre of the universe. Waiting gives us the opportunity to remember that other people have plans and priorities as well. We are not the focal point of the universe. That doesn't make our plans unimportant, but it does put them in perspective.
2. Waiting reminds us that God is in control. At the very least, waiting forces us to realize that we are not in control. And that can be a valuable opportunity to reflect on who is.
3. Waiting reminds us that life is a gift. Forced to sit at a stop light for several precious minutes, I have a choice. I can choose to grumble and gripe about the loss of my precious time, or I can remember that those very minutes were a gift God gave me. Sure, this wasn't how I'd planned to use them. But that doesn't change the gift.
4. Waiting reminds us that the present matters. Sometimes we can be too future-oriented, always focused on what comes next. But what about now? Next is in God's hands. Now is what we have.
5. Waiting reminds us that the future is bigger than we think. We have a finite amount of time, why waste any of it waiting for things to happen? Waiting can remind us that this life is part of something much larger and teach us to value the time, relationships that we have. Waiting can teach us to be involved and not a spectator in life!!

How can we chose to make our Advent one of waiting in joyful hope?

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. What are my hopes for the coming Christian year? How am I now? How would I like to be, as a believer, this time next year? What steps will I take to make that a reality?

2. Today, Do I have a sense of God holding me and all humanity in the palm of his hand and so 'all will be well'? How different my life would be if I had that sort of faith.
3. We do not know when the end of time will take place. What is certain is that our own lives will one day come to an end. If I were to be called from this life today, to stand before the Son of Man, would he be able to say to me, "well done, good and faithful servant"?
4. Jesus himself is the model in this gospel story as he taught his disciples the spirituality of "waiting in joyful hope." What difference has watchfulness (in the sense of being watchful in prayer) made to you in facing difficult situations?
5. Advent is a time that calls us to be alert to the signs of the hidden presence of God in our world. What reminds you of this presence of God? Have there been occasions when something woke you up in an unexpected way to the presence of God in the world, for example, through love, beauty, nature and so forth?

## Prayer -

God, our saviour, you utter a word of promise and hope and hasten the day of justice and freedom, yet we live in a world forgetful of your word, our watchfulness dulled by the cares of life. Keep us alert. Make us attentive to your word, ready to look on your Son when he comes with power and great glory. Make us holy and blameless, ready to stand secure when the day of his coming shakes the world with terror. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever 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*

