

Give Up Ten

Week 3 - John's Story

Prayer and Kindness



Readings - The Book of Ruth, Matthew 6 and Matthew 25

You might like to read the whole book of Ruth like John did.

Matthew 6

⁵ And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷ 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ 'Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 25

³¹ 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." ⁴¹

Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

Reflection

For John prayer and kindness are at the heart of Christianity and his choice of Bible readings reflects that.

John chose the book of Ruth from the Old Testament - a book he has come across recently as his church are reading through the Old Testament. He read it straight through in 20 minutes. He said: “I was really drawn to this book. I liked the way Ruth looked after her mother-in-law, Naomi. If someone hadn’t helped me I wouldn’t be here today. This is a story about kindness, compassion and empathy. Naomi wasn’t the easiest but Ruth was determined to look after her. That kindness is what we need today. People say these stories from thousands of years ago are not relevant, but they are.”

“The people listening to Jesus in Matthew 25 didn’t know when they had fed or clothed Jesus, Jesus had to tell them, it was when you care for people in need. If Jesus was about now, I think he would be serving in a food bank, maybe washing someone’s feet in a corner. It all goes back to compassion.

“I also really like that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. I don’t think we say the Lord’s Prayer enough. After our food bank we have a time of prayer giving thanks and praying for the people we have met. Some of the older people often suggest that we pray the Lord’s Prayer and I think it’s a really good thing. I learnt it at school but I have rediscovered it. It says it all - give us our food for the day, forgive us and keep us safe - that’s it. That’s what we need right now - food, safety and forgiveness. And it doesn’t go on too long - that’s good!

“God has always been here for me. I used to turn to God in the bad times. I always had a sense of the presence of God but I only used to ask for help in times of trouble. I pray more often now and its conversational. Sometimes I still have to pray ‘God help me...God help me to love this annoying person!’ But now prayer is a proper conversation, often I am just saying to God how great it is to be somewhere.”

Questions

Think about a time when you were shown kindness and how it impacted you?

How could you take that experience of kindness and share kindness with others?

How has prayer changed for you over time?

Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
But close to us in our life day by day, hearing our prayers and answering with kindness.

hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Help us to make earth more like heaven by being kind to one another, helping each other out and showing compassion whenever we can.

Give us today our daily bread.

Please make sure we all have enough to eat today and when we have more than enough, help us to share with those around us.

Forgive us our sins

We all do things wrong, please forgive us when we make mistakes

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Help us to keep caring for people around us even when they are difficult, because we know you love us even when we are difficult.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Guarantee our Essentials campaign

This week, the Bishops of Manchester and Salford visited Salford Foodbank where they publicly gave their support to our new campaign, *Guarantee our Essentials*. This campaign calls for a guarantee that the core rate of Universal Credit at least covers people's essentials, such as food, utility bills and basic household goods, and guarantees that deductions, such as debt repayments to the government, can never pull support below that level. This change would mean that fewer people would need to be referred to food banks.

[Find out more about the Essentials Guarantee, and how you can get involved.](#)