

Week 5: Following, Immediately

Weekly Prayer:

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Weekly Questions:

One of the most powerful words in the Gospel of Mark is the word “immediately.” The word, in Biblical Greek, implies an action taken without hesitation, with clear-eyed intent and with purpose. What, in your life, prompts you to take immediate action? What blocks exist in and around you that might hinder your willingness and/or ability to follow Jesus “immediately?”

Daily Challenge:

- Take 20 minutes a day of your day to sit quietly, allowing your mind, body and soul to relax while inviting Christ to come alongside you as you make your way through the coming day. Read the Daily Scripture and take at least 5 minutes with each day's question
- Review your personal prayer list. Add any names that have come up in the past week that come to mind. If you decide to remove any names (and that is ok!), then pause and commend them to God's care as you refocus your intercessions on others
- Include in your prayers a sincere request of God to open your eyes to how you might follow immediately the will and purpose of God in your life today
- Set aside time early in the week to review your calendar and then make time available so that you can participate in your church's Holy Week observances
- When you have the time, at the opening of your day and as you are able, pray Evening Prayer (with others as you are able)

Daily Scripture

- Sunday's Scripture:
 - Hebrews 5: 5-10
 - Your Question: According to our tradition, the Church is the Body of Christ in the world. Are you willing to accept God's love and attention in obedience to that grace?
- Monday's (Feast of St. Joseph) Scripture:
 - Romans 4:13-18
 - Your Question: God's promise to Abraham came after his command to “get up, and go.” Are you ready to hear God's summons to “get up, go” in your own life?
- Tuesday's Scripture:
 - Numbers 21: 4-9

- Your Question: Immediacy can lead to impatience. When has your own impatience hindered your relationship with God? When has it hindered your relationships with others?
- Wednesday's Scripture:
 - II Corinthians 2: 14-3:6
 - Your Question: Under the pressure of the immediate, we often succumb to the impulse of embracing certainty. Are you willing to let go of your certainties and allow God's grace to flow through you without impediment or resistance?
- Thursday's Scripture:
 - Mark 10: 17-31
 - Your Question: You are a good person, and you follow the rule of law. Is that enough for your calling to immediately follow Jesus? What are you holding onto that is holding you back?
- Friday's Scripture:
 - Mark 10: 32-45
 - Your Question: What is it that you want Jesus to do for you? Are you ready and open for his answer when you ask that of him?
- Saturday's Scripture:
 - Psalm 42
 - Your Question: What do you long for? As we enter Holy Week, how has your Lenten preparation helped you to open up to God's longing for you?

The Weekly Gathering:

Collect for V Lent:

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel:

John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this

world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

- Open your gathering with the appropriate Daily Office for the hour of the day
- Hold silent prayer for 3-5 minutes
- One person reads the Collect for the Week, and then all pause to reflect on the prayer (2-3 minutes)
- Another person reads the lesson for the evening
- After a short period of quiet meditation (3-5 minutes), all recite the Lord’s Prayer and then discuss:
 - The word for this session is “immediate.” It is a powerful word in our culture that usually fosters a sense of urgency, or impatience. In the Gospel of Mark, it gives a sense of energy and vitality to the story. How have you found your life challenged by the immediate demands of the world? Are you ready to “immediately” follow Jesus?
- Close your time together with the next Daily Office liturgy