

February 28, 2021
Second Sunday of Lent
Worship in the Wilderness¹

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PRELUDE

The Shadow of the Cross (Thompson)

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER & CONFESSION with INTERMITTENT SILENT PRAYER

Pastor: We come to you, Heavenly Father, slowing down, and taking slow, long, deep breaths. (Pause) We thank you that we do not need to earn our way into your presence, but that we can come simply, through Jesus, by your Holy Spirit. We pause to acknowledge your presence with us and trust you will feed us by your Word. (Pause)

Holy One, we come from many places and circumstances; each one with many things resting silent on our hearts and racing in the wilderness of our minds. Like Jesus, might find ourselves impatient and distracted in this time of worship and be tempted to quit early, to give up, or give in and feast on something other than what you have prepared for us this day and so we confess together, saying:

All: O Brother, Jesus, forty days in solitude to wrestle with a wilderness of thoughts: tempting and inviting thoughts, which could so easily have distracted you from your task, your mission, your vision. Yet you emerged, stronger, and more attuned to all that had to be done, despite a time constraint and environment - that to our eye and understanding - would have seemed hopeless. Slow us down this morning and help us to not fear the solitude with only our thoughts. (Pause)

Heavenly Father, we live in stressful times. So many demands are made of our time, and there is little left for the important and lasting things of life. We are so easily distracted in the wilderness of our lives: by every call to go this way or that, to turn stone to bread, to leap from mountains, and do all that would keep us from living your truth. We listen to the voices of this world, and ignore Christ Jesus, who endured all this and so much more, and yet emerged triumphant - that we might not have to suffer so! Forgive us, Lord, when we get distracted from following obediently. Forgive us those times when we try to be all things to all people and in the end, fail to be and offer much of anything substantive to anyone.² (Pause)

Holy One, by the grace of Jesus, you know the tests and trials we face. Walk with us through the wilderness. Come to us with ministries of healing and visit us with messengers of hope, so that we may return to you in faith, believing the good news of the Gospel, through Christ, our Savior. Amen.³

¹ Much of the worship liturgy for this year's Lenten season will be adapted from a hard copy resource called "Worship in the Wilderness" by Sara and Sam Hargreaves/Music and Worship Foundation 2018. This is from Pastor Laura's personal worship material library.

² This prayer is heavily adapted and inspired by "Gospel Reflection: Temptation of Christ," written by John Birch on his *Faith and Worship* website: <http://www.faithandworship.com/>

³ Posted on the Presbyterian Church USA website: <http://www.pcusa.org/>

HYMN

*Step by Step*⁴ (Thompson/Scruggs)

Sing ONE time

♩ = 104

G D C C/D

O God, You are my ___ God, and I will ev - er praise _

4 G D C C/D

You. O God, You are my ___ God, and I will ev - er praise _

8 G Em D C

You. I will seek You in the morn - ing, and I will learn to walk in Your _

12 Am G

ways; _____ And step by step You'll lead _____

14 D C C/D G

___ me, and I will fol - low You all of my ___ days.

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HEBREW READING – Psalm 63:1-8

- ¹ O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- ² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
- ³ Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
- ⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- ⁵ My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
- ⁶ when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
- ⁷ for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
- ⁸ My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

This is the Word of the Lord. Let all the people say, “Thanks be to God.”

HYMN

Step by Step

(Sing ONE time)

O God You are my God, and I will ever praise You.
O God You are my God, and I will ever praise You.
I will seek You in the morning, and I will learn to walk in Your ways.
And step by step You'll lead me and I will follow You all of my days.

GOSPEL READING – Luke 4:1-13 (Common English Bible Version)

Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. ² There he was tempted for forty days by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and afterward Jesus was starving. ³ The devil said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.”

⁴ Jesus replied, “It’s written, *People don’t live by bread alone.*”

⁵ Next the devil led him to a high place and showed him in a single instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ The devil said, “I will give you this whole domain and the glory of all these kingdoms. It’s been entrusted to me and I can give it to anyone I want. ⁷ Therefore, if you will worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It’s written, *You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*”

⁹ The devil brought him into Jerusalem and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it’s written: *He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you* ¹¹ and *they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.*”

¹² Jesus answered, “It’s been said, *Don’t test the Lord your God.*”^[d] ¹³ After finishing every temptation, the devil departed from him until the next opportunity.

This is the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let all the people say, “Praise be to Christ.”

SERMON

Solitude, Simplicity, and Fasting

Rev. Laura Bair

MUSIC MEDITATION

A Lenten Guitar Improvisation

Mr. Neil Werner

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: Lord God - sometimes you call us into the wilderness – into those places where we must rely totally upon you for our survival – at other times your Spirit drives us into those places - and each time we have entered those places we have been tempted and tested - tempted to turn back before the time is right for turning back, tempted to give up before the time you have appointed for our testing and for our growing is past. Help us, Lord, should this be a time in our lives when we feel alone - a time in which we feel oppressed by the evil one - help us to claim the blessings that you have prepared for us in the middle of the wilderness - lead us on our journey - and bring us safe to the other side. Lord, hear our prayer...

All: *and in Your love, answer.*

Pastor: Lord God, there are many among us who face barren times - wilderness times in their lives. Help us to minister your loving presence to them in those times so that they may come through the wilderness and enter the promised land. Help us to bring food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, shelter to the homeless, courage to those who faint, and hope to those who are tempted to despair. Lord, hear our prayer...

All: *and in Your love, answer.*

Pastor: Lord God, in this time of conflict in our nation and between nations - this time when we are being tested to see if we will do justice, as well as love mercy - we pray for guidance - and for your light to lead the way of the rulers of our nation and the nations about us. Lord, hear our prayer...

All: *and in Your love, answer.*

Pastor: Lord God, hear our silent prayers for those among us who are in need – for those whose name and situation we know. (Pause) We pray too, for those who in our nation and around the world, whom we know are in need of care and compassion, but whose name we do not know; but which you know... (Pause) Lord, hear our prayer...

All: *and in your love, answer.*

Pastor: In addition to our bidding prayers, we offer the gifts of our time, talent, and money. Earlier in our worship, we made a commitment to do ONE practical thing this week, which would involve solitude, or simplicity, or fasting. Give us strength to follow through on these commitments - these offerings. We give in a spirit of gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give in hope, knowing you will use what we give to spread your love in the world. Lord, hear our prayer...

All: *and in Your love, answer.*

HYMN

In Fasting We Approach Thee

Last Page of Bulletin

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor: God, as we take our leave from this intentional time of worship, make us a people who are content in all circumstances: in crowds or alone, with much or with little, well-fed or hungry. May your presence, your provision and your bread of life be enough for us us. In Christ's name, we pray. And all God's people say, "Amen."

All: *Amen.*

POSTLUDE

The Cloud of Darkness Surrounds Us (Jamison)

In Fasting We Approach Thee

139

Solemnly ♩ = 84-104

1. In fast - ing we ap - proach thee here And pray thy
 2. Thru this small sac - ri - fice, may we Re - call that
 3. And may our fast fill us with care For all thy
 4. This fast, dear Fa - ther, sanc - ti - fy— Our faith and

Spir - it from a - bove Will cleanse our hearts, cast
 strength and life each day Are sa - cred bless - ings
 chil - dren now in need. May we from our a -
 trust in thee in - crease. As we com - mune and

out our fear, And fill our hun - ger with thy love.
 sent from thee— Fill us with grat - i - tude, we pray.
 bun - dance share, Thy sheep to bless, thy lambs to feed.
 tes - ti - fy, May we be filled with joy and peace.

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Moroni 6:5
 Isaiah 58:6-11