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LENT 1B

18th February 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Hymn:

Use this song to help you bring yourself to this time of worship: to tune into what God might be saying to you during this time.

20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord – [YouTube](#)

Opening Prayers

During Lent, All We Can are inviting you to ask the question ‘What is Mine to Do?’ Recognising that discerning where our voice and actions are most needed is a key part of justice-seeking. Each week, they are focussing on one word which represents one possible answer to that question. In Week 1 of Lent, that word is Pray. Find out more at allwecan.org.uk/lent

Lord, teach us to pray.

As we enter Lent – a time of discernment and reflection, help me to listen to you in prayer. May I know that though I can discern your will through scripture and reason, there is no replacement for the simplicity of speaking and listening.

Teach me, O Lord,

What is mine to do

Thank you, Lord that you are always readily available to me, requiring no test of ability nor intellect for the privilege of coming to you in prayer. I rejoice in your ever-open arms.

I also acknowledge that despite your openness to me, I do not always come to you in prayer when the situation invites or requires it. For that, I am sorry.

Teach me, O Lord,

What is mine to do

When I am confronted with injustices around the world and in my own community, teach me to pray not as those who would rather rely on divine intervention than use my own influence, nor as those who don't create space for you to move powerfully.

Instead, I seek to pray as those who understand that I am your hands and feet in the world, and yet recognise I can do nothing in my own strength.

Teach me, O Lord,

What is mine to do

I acknowledge that I am not able to pray for all of the people, places, and situations I would like. Guide me, Lord in my discernment of which areas I have a particular responsibility and calling to pray for.

Teach me, O Lord,

What is mine to do

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Responding to the reading

Today's gospel reading takes us into the wilderness... In Mark 1:9-15, we encounter Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist and his subsequent time in the wilderness. This passage invites us to reflect on the profound significance of wilderness experiences in our own faith journeys.

What follows are a series of six questions for you to consider this week. If you have time now, spend some time with each of them. Or you might like to find someone else who makes use of The Vine at Home resources, or who might have been in church this week and also have some thoughts about this reading and how it speaks to our lives today.

1. **The wilderness:**
The wilderness represents a period of testing and spiritual growth. Have you experienced times of spiritual "wilderness" in your life? What challenges did you face, and how did you grow through those experiences?
2. **Temptation:**
Like Jesus, we may face temptations during our wilderness moments. What are some common temptations you encounter in your faith journey, and how do you overcome them?
3. **Repentance and belief:**
Jesus proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." What does it mean to repent and believe in the gospel in your daily life? Is that a phrase you are comfortable with? What does 'repent' mean to you? How can you actively respond to this call?
4. **The Kingdom of God:**
Jesus' message centered on the arrival of the kingdom of God. What does the kingdom of God mean to you, and how can you contribute to its realization in your community and beyond?
5. **The urgency of the Gospel:**
Mark emphasizes the urgency of Jesus' mission. How can we, as modern-day disciples, convey the urgency of the gospel message to others? What practical steps can we take?
6. **Prayer and solitude:**
Following his time in the wilderness, Jesus often retreated to solitary places to pray. How can you cultivate a deeper prayer life and solitude in your own spiritual journey, and in your church community?

This week, as you contemplate Mark 1:9-15, consider how the lessons from Jesus' baptism, wilderness experience, and ministry can inform your own faith walk.

This Lent, can you take any of the reflections from your conversation with you into the next 40 days? How will you be changed and shaped by the intentional practice of discipleship?

Hymn:

404 STF – God’s Spirit is in my heart – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

God of grace, Spirit of hope, Christ who transforms each and every one of us – send me out with your courage, your love, your peace, to bring into a community and a world in need.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week Ahead

Monday 19th February

- God of all grace,
Thank you for the ways the Jesus story continues to speak to me today, and the way my life continues to be inspired by the Gospel message.
- In the midst of my own wildernesses, and here in Lent 2024, help me to discern how I can best follow you. Show me what is mine to do.
- Open my eyes to see you here, and with me this week, by your Spirit, O God. Amen.

Tuesday 20th February

- Look for the early signs of spring - perhaps some sunshine, a bud forming on a branch or bush near you, even an early daffodil or tulip blooming nearby.
- As you notice them, pray about the new starts in your life: where are new opportunities for growth presenting themselves? Pray for God to show you how to follow these new invitations.

Wednesday 21st February

- God of all grace, today my prayers are for those living with physical pain - those in hospital or at home, those receiving care and those waiting for it. Come, God of healing and comfort, by your grace. Amen.

Thursday 22nd February

- God of the waters and the mountains
God of the fires and the forests
God of the skies and the earth
God who loves all of your creation, I come to you this day,
Show me how to walk in your light. Amen.

Friday 23rd February

- God of love,
Today I pray for refugees and exiles all around the world,
Those who are living in fear and have fled the place they call home.
Show me how to show love to those in need,
To be a place of sanctuary to all who encounter me,
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Saturday 24th February

- Do you have a favourite poem or song?
- It doesn't have to be explicitly Christian. Consider the ways the good news of God is communicated through the words.
- If it helps, use these words as a prayer today, perhaps humming or repeating them over and over again during the day.