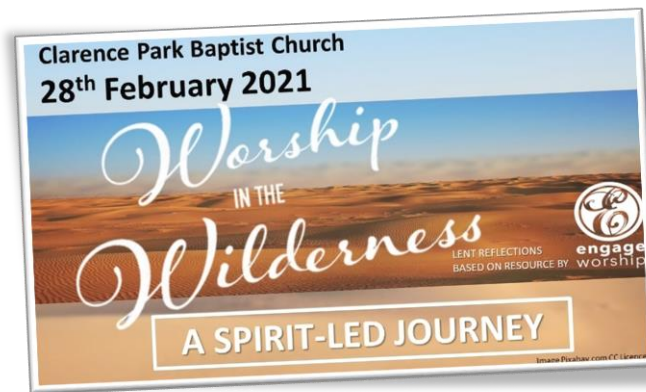


Clarence Park Baptist Church

Question for Week following service 28th Feb 2021



Big Idea of the Series

Everyone one of us will experience times of wilderness in our lives. These are the times of loss and hardship perhaps caused by bereavement, a loss of employment, broken relationships, illness or loneliness and isolation. What does God want to teach us through these situations?

And how can they help us to grow not just closer to God but deeper in our worship to him?

(this series is based on resources by engageworship.com)

Week 1 – A Spirit-Led Journey

Exodus 15:22-16:15, Mark 1:9-13, Exodus 7:14-16

Preparation

1. Watch the sermon from the church YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/s1B5zJGuiwY>
2. Read the passages on the next page and reflect on the questions before meeting with the rest of the group to explore your journeys together

Group Study

- Begin with a time of prayer – asking God to help you learn something new

Exodus 15:22-16:15 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

The waters of Marah and Elim

²² Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they travelled in the desert without finding water. ²³ When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.^[a]) ²⁴ So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, 'What are we to drink?'

²⁵ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink.

There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. ²⁶ He said, 'If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.'

²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Manna and quail

16 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.'

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.'

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' ⁸ Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.'

⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, 'Say to the entire Israelite community, "Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling."'

¹⁰While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked towards the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses, ¹²‘I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, “At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”’

¹³That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.

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Mark 1:9-13 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

The baptism and testing of Jesus

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’

¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³and he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

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Exodus 7:14-16 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

The plague of blood

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh’s heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river. Confront him on the bank of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. ¹⁶Then say to him, “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened.

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Questions for discussion

Reflect and share your experiences together using the following questions.

Take time at the end to ask what is God teaching you this week to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus?

1. Is there anything from the readings or message this week that stood out to you?

“At once the Spirit sent him out into the Wilderness”.

Mark 1:12

2. What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit?
3. In Your own life think about the times when the Holy Spirit has guided you? Have these times been when you feel like you are on a “mountain top” or have they come when you are in “the wilderness”?
4. Many have described their experience of the pandemic as being in the wilderness. Has that been your experience? How have you known the leading of the Holy Spirit during this time?

(God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and say)

**“The LORD, the God of the Hebrews,
has sent me to say to you: let my people go,
so that they may worship me in the wilderness....**

Exodus 7:15-16

In the service Steve said that wilderness worship can be about taking away rather than adding more, which is why some aspects of worship can involve fasting, solitude and simplicity. Those times of worship often turn us towards silence, or lament, or giving things away.

5. What aspects of worship for you have been taken away during the pandemic?
6. What have you learnt about worshipping God without those things?
7. How have you known the blessing of God as described in Deuteronomy 8:2 in your wilderness experiences?

Reflection

Holding the experiences that we have shared in our hearts and minds, slowly read through the Psalm, and allow its words, its imagery to speak into your life and your situation. Let this Psalm be your request to God

Psalm 102:1-11 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

- ¹ Hear my prayer, LORD;
let my cry for help come to you.
- ² Do not hide your face from me
when I am in distress.
Turn your ear to me;
when I call, answer me quickly.
- ³ For my days vanish like smoke;
my bones burn like glowing embers.
- ⁴ My heart is blighted and withered like grass;
I forget to eat my food.
- ⁵ In my distress I groan aloud
and am reduced to skin and bones.
- ⁶ I am like a desert owl,
like an owl among the ruins.
- ⁷ I lie awake; I have become
like a bird alone on a roof.
- ⁸ All day long my enemies taunt me;
those who rail against me use my name as a curse.
- ⁹ For I eat ashes as my food
and mingle my drink with tears
- ¹⁰ because of your great wrath,
for you have taken me up and thrown me aside.
- ¹¹ My days are like the evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.

(pause)

Psalm 102:17 gives us God's response
so, hear these words as God speaks to you

- ¹⁷ He will respond to the prayer of the destitute;
he will not despise their plea.

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Prayer

Take some time to share prayer needs, pray for one another, for the church and for our local community before finishing with the words of the grace.