



Week 1 – Sunday 22 February - Jesus is tested in the wilderness.

Week 2 – Sunday 1 March - Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

Week 3 – Sunday 8 March - The Samaritan woman

Week 4 – Sunday 15 March - Jesus heals a man born blind.

Week 5 – Sunday 22 March - The Death of Lazarus

Week 6 – Sunday 29 March Palm Sunday - The betrayal, judgement and death of Jesus

Holy Week: (Monday 30 March to Saturday 4 April)

Week 1 – Sunday 22 February

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses.
4. Connect with each other and take the readings and reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

WORSHIP SONG:

Kari Jobe: All I am is yours: <https://youtu.be/emW0QrFoaM?si=Oz9hSA9Kf957BR6p>

BIBLE READINGS:

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus is tested in the wilderness.

Matthew 4:1-11 New International Version

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” **4** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” **5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” **7** Jesus answered

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him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’”⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Written by: REV HILTON VOLKWYN

With this series we are now officially starting our Lenten Journey.

Lent for true followers of Christ as well as those who desire a deeper relationship with Him, is described by most scholars as a sacred season of renewal and reflection. It is the season we prepare ourselves as we move toward remembering that poignant moment in history when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ died. But it is always a good thing to look back; not that we hold onto the past but to see how far we have come in our spiritual walk with God. We do this to pick up maybe where we have gone slack or to improve and better ourselves to become more Christ-like. As we look back, I am almost sure that you would agree with me that there were highs and lows. Times we were on the mountain top and times we found ourselves in the valleys.

Jesus' ministry started in a 'valley' the wilderness. For forty days Jesus fasted in preparation for His ministry here on earth. After forty days of fasting, He was hungry. Hunger weakens us to the point of temptation. And Satan knew it and tried to take advantage of the situation. Now, “wandering in the wilderness” can be described as a period of hardship or spiritual struggle. And instead of seeing it in a negative light, have you ever thought that it offers lessons in humility, self-reliance, the importance of preparation and skilling oneself for what lies ahead, and how to find strength in a challenging environment?

In a physical wilderness, one is forced to learn some practical skills like navigation and first aid, while in a spiritual or emotional wilderness, you often learn deep faith, dependence on God, and the ability to discern what is truly essential. Nobody enjoys wandering in the wilderness, yet we've all found ourselves there. Maybe, at present you are navigating a difficult relationship, wrestling with job loss, or carrying the burden of grief while wondering if life will ever feel “normal” again.

When we find ourselves in the desert that is where God will meet us. So what are the lessons we can learn from our desert experiences?

I. Your resources may run out but God's supply never does.

If you have ever been in a desert, you would know that there is very little to survive on. It is hot, dry, and stripped of everything we need to survive. That's precisely what makes it the perfect classroom for God to demonstrate this truth: when our resources run dry, God's never do.

It was our God who sustained and gave strength to Jesus even when he was hungry at the end of His fast and Satan came with his tricks. But as proof that God's resources never run out do you recall when the Israelites were wandering the desert during those forty years, how God provided manna and quail for them? Not one day did they go hungry (Deuteronomy 8:2-3). This represents God's miraculous provision after the Israelites grumbled about hunger.

When Satan said to Jesus “tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy.

2. God speaks in the Wilderness.

Another truth about the desert/wilderness is that it can be very lonely. But what we learn is that, in loneliness - we are always looking for company. That is the time we look to God. In the loneliness God whispers, “You are not alone.” Elijah discovered this in a cave on Mount Horeb. After running for his life, feeling abandoned and ready to die, God met him not in earthquake, wind, or fire, but in a gentle whisper. (1 Kings 19:11-18)

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Jesus understood the power of wilderness solitude. Despite the crowds constantly pressing around Him and demanding his attention, He regularly withdrew to lonely places to pray. (Luke 5:16), “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” He sought mountainsides and deserts where He could commune with the Father without interruption.

In the quiet emptiness of a wilderness, God’s presence feels closer, God’s voice sounds clearer, and His love penetrates deeper than ever. If you’re feeling isolated today, recognise it as a divine invitation for intimacy with the One who never leaves you. God’s promise “I will never leave you nor forsake You.” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

3. The wilderness may be your training Ground.

The wilderness isn’t just testing - it’s God’s training ground, designed to prepare His people for their calling. Moses spent 40 years in the desert before God called him to deliver God’s people. Moses entered the wilderness at 40 as a hothead who murdered an Egyptian. This is radically different from the Moses who emerged at 80, ready to stand before Pharaoh and calmly declare, “Let my people go”. Jesus, too, entered the wilderness for preparation. For 40 days, He faced hunger, thirst, and Satan’s temptation. When He emerged from that spiritual training ground, He was ready to launch His ministry with crystal-clear purpose.

The wilderness strips away everything non-essential and refines what remains. It burns off self-reliance, deepens faith, and aligns our hearts with God’s will. What feels like wasted time is actually sacred preparation.

So, if you’re struggling in the wilderness today, take heart. This isn’t punishment, it’s preparation. Rely on God’s provision, draw close in isolation, and trust Him to shape you into who He’s called you to be. Remember that wilderness experiences can be the start of the next chapter of your life.

GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Would you agree that we all face trials and is yes do you think it is God’s doing?
2. How did you survive your wilderness experience?
3. Share how much stronger you came out from your wilderness experience.
4. How are you going to prepare yourself for this season of Lent?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER:

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23 Psalm 32; 1 Kings 19:1–8; Hebrews 2:10–18

Memory Verse: “Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” — Hebrews 2:18

Prayer: Lord, when I am weary and afraid, remind me that You understand my suffering. Strengthen me today with Your presence and sustaining grace.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 Psalm 32; Genesis 4:1–16; Hebrews 4:14–5:10

Memory Verse: “Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy.” — Hebrews 4:16

Prayer: Merciful God, search my heart and lead me away from sin and resentment. Teach me to come to You honestly and receive Your grace.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 Psalm 32; Exodus 34:1–9, 27–28; Matthew 18:10–14

Memory Verse: “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.” — Exodus 34:6

Prayer: Compassionate Lord, thank You for Your patience and unfailing love. Help me reflect Your mercy to those who feel lost or forgotten.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26 Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:1–3; 2 Timothy 1:3–7

Memory Verse: “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love.” — 2 Timothy 1:7

Prayer: God of hope, lift my eyes when fear tries to overtake me. Fill me with courage, love, and a sound mind today.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 *Psalm 121; Micah 7:18–20; Romans 3:21–31*

Memory Verse: “He delights in showing mercy.” — Micah 7:18

Prayer: Faithful God, thank You for forgiving me through Your great mercy. Help me live humbly, trusting in Your grace alone.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 *Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:4–8; Luke 7:1–10*

Memory Verse: “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him and said, ‘Not even in Israel have I found such faith.’” — Luke 7:9

Prayer: Lord Jesus, grow my faith even when I feel unworthy or unsure. Teach me to trust fully in Your authority and compassion.

FAMILY TIME BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR

Week 1: Family Devotion - “In the Wilderness with Jesus”

Scripture: Matthew 4:1–11 (NIV)

Season Focus: Lent: learning to walk with Jesus when things are hard.

1. Opening Connection (2–3 minutes)

Lent is a season where we slow down and walk with Jesus toward Easter.

It’s a time to notice our hearts, our choices, and where we need God’s help.

Question for everyone:

Have you ever had a hard week where everything felt like a test?

Let a few responses land. No fixing, no judging, just listening.

2. Read the Story (Interactive)

Before reading, give younger children a mission:

Listen for the three ways Jesus is tested. Each time, quietly hold up one finger.

Read Matthew 4:1–11.

Questions:

- How many tests did Jesus face? (Three!)
- Was Jesus weak or strong when this happened?
(He was hungry, alone, and tired.)

Lent connection: The wilderness comes *after* Jesus’ baptism, which is right after a spiritual high.

3. The Three Temptations (Lent Lens)

Temptation 1: “Turn stones into bread”

Meaning: Fix your problem fast. Use your power for yourself.

- For younger kids:
Jesus was hungry, but He trusted God to care for Him.
- For teens:
This is the temptation to meet real needs in the wrong way, or too quickly.

Questions:

- Kids: What do you want right now, even if it’s not good for you?
- Teens: Where are we tempted to take shortcuts instead of trusting God?

Lent reminder: Lent teaches us to wait, not rush God.

Temptation 2: “I’ll give you all the kingdoms”

Meaning: Take the easy way. Skip the suffering.

- For kids:
Jesus didn’t want to be king without loving people first.
- For teens:
This is about power, popularity, and success without sacrifice.

Questions:

- Kids: What does it mean to be a good leader?
- Teens: Where does our culture promise success without cost?

Lent reminder: The way of Jesus is love, not shortcuts.

Temptation 3: “Prove who you are”

Meaning:

Show off. Make God rescue you so people will believe.

- For kids:
Jesus didn't need to prove God loves Him.
- For teens:
This is the pressure to perform, to be impressive, to seek approval.

Questions:

- Kids: Does God love you even when you mess up?
- Teens: How often do we tie our worth to likes, success, or approval?

Lent reminder: Lent helps us remember: We are already loved.

4. Big Lent Truth (All Ages)

Say together (call-and-response style):

Leader: “Jesus was tested...”

Family: “...but He trusted God.”

Leader: “Jesus chose obedience...”

Family: “...even when it was hard.”

Leader: “Jesus walks with us...”

Family: “...even in the wilderness.”

5. Simple Lent Practice (Hands-on)

Option A: Desert Stones

Give each person a small stone or imagine holding one.

Ask:

- “What is one thing that feels hard for you right now?”

Quietly pray: “Jesus, help me trust You in this.”

Place the stone somewhere visible for the week as a Lent reminder.

Option B: Fast + Focus

As a family, choose one small Lent practice:

- Less screen time
- One extra act of kindness a day
- A short daily prayer

Explain: We don't give things up to be miserable, we make space for God.

6. Closing Prayer (Family-Friendly)

Jesus, You know what it's like to be tired, tempted, and tested. Walk with us during this Lent season. Help us trust God, choose love, and follow You—even in the wilderness. Amen.