

Beauty for Ashes—Daily Reading and Reflection—March 15th, 2020

Our communities are facing an unprecedented situation. How can we move forward in faith when we are told not to leave our homes? This week's message from Pastor Jacob invited us to "keep on going" through this present wilderness. God's promises are still true. These brief reflections can help you to remember them each day.

Daily Reading and Reflection

Each day this week, read the scripture three times slowly. Listen to God. Reflect on the question. Pray this prayer:

God, you have always been with your people in the wilderness. These days feel like wilderness to many of us. Things are significantly quieter. There's less to cheer for on tv or from the stands. There are less gatherings. Be with us Jesus, let us hear from you in the quiet. By faith we will be still and by faith we will move when you call. Restore our hearts—may they bloom like the trees outside. New life is coming, we look to you! Amen.

Monday

Mark 1.12-13

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

- Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. 40 is a number that is used often in the scripture to refer to a long period of time. It's the number of days Jonah was in the belly of the big fish (Jonah1-4), and the number of years the people of Israel traveled through the wilderness. It's a period of discomfort and uncertainty. What about these days feels uncomfortable and uncertain to you? What other periods of wilderness have you been through? How did God show up during those times?

Tuesday

Hebrews 11.1-2

Now faith is confidence in what hope for and assurance of what we do not see.

- How would you define faith to someone who had none? How do you have confidence in hard times?

Wednesday

Hebrews 11.8

...by faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

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- Abraham trusted that God’s promises of a new land and a great nation were true. (Read Genesis 12.1-4 for more!) Is there anything about your current situation that has you admitting that you don’t know where you are going?

Thursday

Hebrews 12.1

Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

- When the Bible so often reminds us that we are not alone. Most often this is a reminder that God is with us. But we also know that we are surrounded by all of the faithful people of God who have gone on before us. What people of faith come to mind when you try and picture the “great cloud of witness”?

Friday

Isaiah 61.3,11

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

- What beauty have you seen in the world around you recently? It may be people, it may be the early signs of Spring. In some ways you may feel planted right now in a way you didn’t expect. What sprouts might God be able to grow in this soil of our current situation? What does it look like for “praise to spring up before all nations”?