

MAKING SPACE FOR CHRIST

A Self-Guided Prayer Reflection for Lent

So often we enter into Lent without taking time to pray and consider what sort of fasts and spiritual practices that God is inviting us into. This reflection offers a way to discern with God through Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer.

MEDITATE

Begin your time of prayer by reading through Matthew 4:1-11 a couple of times slowly. Now, read it again, paying attention to a particular word or phrase that stands out to you. Spend some time with the word/words that were highlighted. You may want to write it down on a piece of paper and begin to decorate and embellish the word - feel to be creative as you would like. However, you can also just mull over these words in your mind. Begin to explore this word or phrase. Consider why this word is standing out to you.

Next, ask God for his input on why this word or phrase is being highlighted. If you are drawing, you may want to write out your questions or thoughts. Tell God how this word or phrase makes you feel. Leave space to listen for God and his insight.

After a few minutes, return to a place of quiet, thanking God for his word for you today.

WALK

Now, go on your own wilderness walk (Note: depending on your mobility, feel free to walk as long or as short as you would like). As you are walking you may want to continue to return to your word or phrase. Does it take on new or differing meanings as you move? Can you imagine what it would be like to spend 40 days in the wilderness? What do you think your concerns would be while wandering in the desert?

IMAGINE

Once you have finished your walk, return to the Matthew passage and imagine yourself in this scene. You may want to slowly read through the passage a few times so that it is fresh in your mind. What is the weather like in the wilderness? What do you see, hear, smell, and feel? How do you experience your hunger after 40 days of fasting?

Imagine that you are being tempted by the devil. How does he tempt you? Does he use one of the same temptations that he did with Jesus? Does he use a different temptation? How do you respond?

Why do you think this specific temptation is a challenge for you? What has been your experience with it? How have you experienced Jesus in this place of temptation? Does he feel distant? Does he feel close? Can you let him into these parts of your heart? What is it like for you to acknowledge your need of God in light of your own temptations?

DISCERN

What is God inviting you into during this Lenten season? Does he want to address the temptation you prayed about before? Is there another area in your life that he is bringing to light? If multiple temptations come to mind, you may want to ask God to highlight one or two.

Are there any particular things to abstain from during Lent? Is there anything that has distracted you from God or maybe has contributed to your temptation? Do you have a sense of what might help break your heart of the attachment to this?

Now, are there any particular practices to incorporate during Lent? Ask God what might help you to attune your heart towards him. If multiple ideas come to mind, again, you may want to discern which one or two God is directing you towards.

Close your time by engaging with this prayer:

Jesus, like you did, I am embarking on 40 days in the wilderness. And yet, even in the places of my heart that feel the most wild and unruly, you are there. Be my food, be my drink, as I open up to my need for you and seek to create space for you in my life. May this time of Lent be characterized by your love for me, more than by my efforts. Transform me into the kind of person for whom fasting, prayer, and generosity are as natural as taking breath. By Your Spirit I pray, Amen.