The water and the wilderness

Mark 1:9-15

In Mark's typical style, it is 'immediately' after Jesus' baptism that he is 'driven' into the wilderness. The baptism shows God's affirmation of Jesus as God's beloved Son. This is in stark contrast to the tough temptations Jesus then faces in the wilderness. But Mark, by placing them in this way, indicates that Jesus' baptism prepared him not only for his future ministry but also to endure the temptations.

Read this week's passage:



Grow

Take an avocado (loose is best). Remove the stone, wash it, peel it, cut a few mm off the end with the round scar and set it in a glass of water on a radiator. Watch as it grows just with the magic of water. Ponder with it each day until it is ready to plant (about 8 weeks, when it has two leaves and a root system).

BAKE

Vegan products are usually less costly for the environment. Try making vegan no-bake cookies as a quick and easy snack.

ACT

Explore Eco-Church: is it something your church could work towards? Or if your church is already registered, is there anything you could get involved in to help reach the next level?

Living Scripture

'And the Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness'. Mark 1:12

Crossing a desert requires some pretty specialist navigation skills. Bedouin peoples find their way across deserts where there are no roads or paths, and they still don't get lost. How do they do it? They usually use a combination of star navigation, knowledge of sand types (indicating weather patterns), and even trusting their camels to find water! Much of these techniques are passed down between generations, ensuring that each person has what they need to find their way.

How might you recognise the way God has laid out for you? He never leaves us unguided, but we often forget to look around for the subtle signs of God's presence. It can sometimes feel like we're wandering aimlessly, but at these times it's important to lean into the relationships that support us, without being afraid to ask for help or voice doubts. Like the Bedouin trusting in their camels' innate 'water memory', we sometimes need to be open to help and guidance from unexpected places.

Where have you seen waymarks on your faith journey so far? When has help come from an unexpected source? How would you respond if someone told you that they felt lost?

First impressions



- How does this image of the Australian outback illustrate today's theme, 'The water and the wilderness'?
- In what ways can God refresh you for challenging times ahead?
- How can Christians bring 'good news' to the climate crisis?

Pray



Creator God,
we can be so afraid of bleak places and times,
but they can hold so many blessings for us.
Help us to look for them
and hold on to them
as we find our way through.
Amen.

Research

The passage says there were wild beasts with Jesus in the desert – but it is not clear if these beasts are friends or foes! Research what kind of animals live in the desert habitats of the Middle East. Which ones were a danger to Jesus, and which ones may have been a source of company and comfort? Are any of these animals threatened by the climate emergency?

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