



# 19B LENT 1B - ONLINE LITURGY

Beloved

## Abstract

And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."  
Mark 1:11

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## 19B Lent 1B - Online Liturgy

### Beloved

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021 | LENT | FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT | YEAR B

Old Testament	Genesis 9:8–17
Psalm	Psalm 25:1–10
New Testament	1 Peter 3:18–22
Gospel	Mark 1:9–15

### 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.

This experience places knowing who he is before what he does. Thinking about our identity, both our own individuality and our identity as a child of God – knowing God, and that we are loved by God – may help us cope with our difficult 'wilderness' experiences, whatever their nature might be.

**This week we explore** being ready to face the wilderness of today's world.

	<b>Pre-Service</b>
	<b>Introit</b> How deep the Father's love for us
	<b>Greeting</b>  May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all
	<b>We Gather</b>  Come together to be God's people. Come together and be yourselves. Bring to God your joys and your struggles. Bring to God your hopes and your fears. Come together to be God's people, and let us worship the living God.
	<b>Acknowledgements</b>

	<p><i>Let us pray</i>  Loving God, thank you  for drawing us together to be your people.  Help us, as we meet together,  to see ourselves as you see us.  Give us faith to hear your words of love  beyond some of the hard realities of our lives.  May your Holy Spirit guide and inspire us  to recognise your presence in all we do.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b></p>
	<p><b>Welcome</b>  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 contrast to the tough temptations Jesus then faces.  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.</p> <p>This experience places knowing who he is before what he does.</p> <p>Thinking about our own identity,  both our own individuality and our identity as a child of God  knowing God, and that we are loved by God  may help us cope with our difficult 'wilderness' experiences,  whatever their nature might be.</p> <p>This week we explore  being ready to face the wilderness of today's world.</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i>  To you, O Lord, we lift up our hearts,  offering worship and praise.  Show us your path.  Teach us to follow.  Guide us in your truth.  For our hope is in you all day long.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Readings</b>  Mark 1:9–15</p> <p><i>respond</i>  For the word of the Lord</p> <p><b>Thanks be to God</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song/video</b></p>

	Wild Goose-Iona Community	Come Holy Spirit	Bell
<p><b>We say Sorry</b></p> <p>Beloved Lord Jesus, you stepped from water to wilderness, from God's voice to the taunting voice of the enemy. In the wilderness of today's world, we face many enemies, many temptations. Forgive us for succumbing to selfishness, greed, lust, anger, power.  <b>Lord most high, forgive us, we pray.</b></p> <p>Sometimes difficult times follow fast on the heels of one another. And it's hard to keep our focus on you. Forgive us. Help us not to wallow in selfish self-centredness, but to remember your promises and recognise you in those you bring alongside.  <b>Lord most high, forgive us, we pray.</b></p> <p>Forgive us when our minds fail to focus on you and your word. Help us to remember that no matter what we're going through, you've been there before us. Whether we're swimming in the warm waters of your love, or journeying through the arid wilderness, help us not to lose sight of your hand guiding us to eternal glory at rainbow's end.  <b>Lord most high, forgive us, we pray.</b>  <b>Amen.</b></p>			
<p><b>Words of Assurance</b></p> <p>Lord Jesus Christ,  you went from water to wilderness to suffering on the cross.  There you, beloved Son of God,  died in your physical body for our sins.  Through your blood we are washed clean of all our guilt,  and we can enter the presence of God with whom you now sit,  having been raised in the Spirit.  All angels, power and authorities submit to you.</p> <p>Because of you, we are forgiven.  <b>Thanks be to God.</b>  <b>Amen.</b></p>			
<p><b>Hymn/Song</b>  P&amp;W 739      Firm foundation      Gordon/Harvill</p>			

## Response

The Road to the Wilderness  
Mark 1:9-13

There is a show on ABC I love to watch called Back Roads  
Heather Ewart and special guests take us on a sensitive trip  
through areas of Australia we would rarely visit.

Similarly. on the Sundays between now and Easter  
we will go on the road with Jesus of Nazareth  
on the roads Jesus travelled  
in order that we can see him more clearly and understand more nearly  
what it is we are to do.

Today we travel the road to the wilderness.  
William Barclay, that great Bible scholar, said  
that when John the Baptist summoned people to the Jordan river  
Jesus went there also because  
he "knew that for him the hour had struck."

One day - with no apparent warning  
he walked down that street in Nazareth  
and headed down toward Jerusalem.  
Somewhere along that road he turned eastward toward the Jordan River.

At the river he found cousin John the Baptist holding a revival meeting.  
And Jesus was baptized there,  
identifying himself with all the people as a sign of God's kingdom and its new age.  
And, a voice from heaven said,  
"Thou art my beloved son; with thee I am well pleased."

Then Mark writes, "The spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness."  
He stayed there for a period of 40 days.  
He took the road to the wilderness - because God led him to that place.  
He took the road to the wilderness - because he needed that time alone  
to think about what lay ahead.  
He took the road to the wilderness - because he needed to prepare for the mission ahead.  
He took the road to the wilderness - because he was on a journey  
from which there was no turning back.

It was a time of personal struggle, trial and testing,  
not unlike that night he spent in the garden.  
Jesus spent 40 days in agonizing thought.

I suspect that many of us have wilderness times  
when we go down that road to the wilderness  
and find ourselves truly alone in the midst of some life-changing decision.  
Maybe as we look at Jesus in the wilderness  
we can come to better understand how we can face our own wilderness moments.

During that time in the wilderness Jesus clarified his mission, his message and his method.  
His mission was to usher in the new age of God's kingdom,  
to claim the world for God and to offer his own life as proof of God's love.  
His message was about a radical upside down view of the world  
entirely different from what people thought.  
His method was to gather about himself a small group of disciples,  
train them to spread the message about the mission  
and to become a fellowship, his church.  
Jesus sorted out what he would do.

Do you know what it is you are going to do?

I am the man who at the age of 30

was still trying to decide what he was going to do when he grew up.

One little boy said in Sunday school,

"I want to follow Jesus and spend my entire life serving him when I grow up.

If I can't do that then I want a VCR and a colour television."

Have you sorted out what you are going to do with your life?

Could you say in the words of that hymn,

"I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back."

It was a time when Jesus faced the temptation to be less than he was.

Mark doesn't give us all the details about the temptations of Jesus  
in the way Matthew and Luke have recorded them.

He merely says "He was in the wilderness 40 days tempted by Satan."

It is from those other gospels that we learn what those temptations were.

They tell us Satan tempted Jesus to use his power in the wrong way,  
for selfish reasons, to gain an easy victory, an easy following

But, Jesus refused all of that.

He had heard the voice of God at his baptism,

"You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased."

Jesus remembered who he was.

Do we remember who you are?

You see, what we do is determined by who we are.

That is always the key to every moral and ethical question we face.

The answer is determined not so much by what we ought to do, but by who we are.

When we have heard the voice of God saying,

"You are my beloved son or daughter, with you I am well pleased."

then we know what to do.

Then we resolve to be true to all we are, children of God.

Someone else may not remember, but you must remember who you are.

We are children of God.

Jesus made that decision and so can we.

It was a time when Jesus made the commitment to see it through.

He committed himself to carrying out this mission God the Father had given him.

No wonder then that later on he was able to pray in the garden,

"Not my will but yours be done."

Jesus didn't make that decision in the garden that night.

He made it way back over there in the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry.

That is when he made the choice and the commitment to see it through.

You can tell all there is to know about a person's life

by the kind of commitments that person has made.

The thing that matters is never the kind of reputation -but having a mind of dedication.  
 The thing that matters is never our style of living - but cultivating the art of giving.  
 The thing that matters is never our street location - but traveling the road of dedication.  
 You can tell all there is to know about a person's life  
 by the kind of commitments that person has made.

That great saint used to say,  
 "Give the best you have to the highest you know."  
 I wonder if we are willing to do that?  
 Have we made that kind of commitment?

A great preacher closed a service by asking,  
 "If we could compare the kingdom of God to a locomotive,  
 what part would you like to be?"  
 One person said, I'd like to be the whistle and sound God's praises."  
 Another said, "I'd like to be the wheel and just roll down the track."  
 The preacher was not really impressed by any of that.  
 But, then one man said,  
 "Brother, I'd like to be the black coal and burn for Christ's sake!"  
 And the preacher replied,  
 "Brothers and sisters, we have enough whistles and wheels in the church now.  
 We need more coal."<sup>i</sup>

No church fellowship ever moves forward if it is made up of whistles and wheels.

What about it? Have you been traveling in the wilderness lately?  
 Have you been trying to figure life out and answer all the questions?  
 Have you been trying to make some big decision about life?  
 When you come to understand that all the answers are found in him who is the hope of the world  
 then you will be ready to move on out of the wilderness.  
 And you will forever hear the voice of God ringing in your ears,  
 "You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter; with you I am well pleased."

Amen

	<p><b>Hymn/song</b>  <b>P&amp;W 657/SCE 436 Refiner's Fire Doerksen</b></p>
	<p><b>Offering</b>  <i>Some congregations may still be using a Covid- safe means of collecting the offering, in which case a dedication of the offering is all that is required.</i>  <i>Invite people to stand as they are able, to reflect the offering of their personal gifts and talents, as well as their resources to the service of Christ in the world.</i></p> <p><b>Dedication</b>          In the wilderness,              Jesus would have been reminded of all the gifts he had to do without:          sufficient food, good friends, family, regular work, adequate housing,              and his faith community.          We bring today Ourselves and the gifts              given to ensure that those who are "going without"</p>

	<p>have their needs supplied, and that those who feel powerless are strengthened.</p> <p>Loving God, bless the use of our gifts today and bless the givers, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be remembered and celebrated. Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Notices</b></p>
	<p><b>Prayers for all people</b></p> <p>O God, our Father in heaven, we bring before you the concerns of this world and the needs of those to which we are privy.</p> <p>We pray for your world, giving thanks for all creatures of land, sea and air and praying for those whose habitat is being destroyed by human invasion and greed.</p> <p>We pray for the Great Barrier Reef and for the ecology of the coastal lands of South Australia for mangrove swamps, and estuaries, for clean beaches and plastic free oceans.</p> <p>We pray for the work to contain the worldwide pandemic, and for the efficacy of the vaccinations being distributed.</p> <p>We pray for all countries to have access to vaccines, medical supplies and equipment that will alleviate suffering.</p> <p>We pray for all who mourn their dead and for all who are sick and for those who care for them to know your strengthening in their wilderness.</p> <p>We pray for our local community, lifting before you those who are working to provide essential services.</p> <p>We pray for police and ambulance workers, for CFS and SES volunteers and for social workers.</p> <p>We pray for teachers and childcare workers, nurses and doctors and hospital workers and aged care providers.</p> <p>We pray for our local shops as they provide the food and goods we need each day. Bless each one we ask.</p> <p>We pray for your Church Lord Jesus Christ, as we all live out our baptism and fulfil your good purposes.</p> <p>Bless the Uniting Church in Australia we pray, its Assembly and President, our Synod and Moderator, our Presbytery and its leaders and our local community churches.</p> <p>We ask to be strengthened in the mission of this congregation.</p> <p>In your mercy, help us look and see where you are already at work in our community and show us how we can help.</p>



	<p>We pray for the members of our congregation and ourselves.          Let your healing fall upon those who are sick or injured.          Lift up all those who are finding life difficult to bear.          Draw near in comfort to the dying and to those who are in grief.          Encourage the unemployed and all who are seeking meaningful work.          Bless family life and help those in difficult relationships              to find new ways to love and hold each other in dignity.          Help each of us with our problems we pray,              and free us for our service to you.          These prayers we offer in Jesus' name,              and we join as one voice to share the prayer he taught his followers, ...</p>
	<p><b>Lord's Prayer</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b>          TIS 745 Seek ye first   Lafferty</p>
	<p><b>We are sent out</b>          Creator God, you made us in your image          to be your people, wherever we go.          This coming week, whatever we experience,          wherever we find ourselves,          help us to know that you are with us –          guiding, revealing and sustaining – always.          Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us              and keep us          May His face shine upon us              and be gracious to us          May he lift up His countenance upon us              and give us peace          Amen</p>
	<p><b>Benediction</b></p>
	<p><b>Thank you</b></p>

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<sup>i</sup> Henson, William H., Solid Living In A Shattered World, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1985, p. 96.