

# In the Wilderness with Jesus

Mark 1:9—15

## Introduction

As we begin another season of Lent, we want to remember what it's all about. Lent is a season of preparation, a time in which we prepare ourselves to walk with Jesus through His Passion to the cross. Today, we read where Jesus started His journey (Read **Mark 1:12—13**). To prepare to walk with Jesus through His Passion to the cross, we begin with Him in the wilderness.

## Urgency

What does it mean that *the Spirit immediately drove [Jesus] out into the wilderness* (v. 12)? Did the Holy Spirit have to compel Jesus? Was He reluctant? No. This is in harmony with the rest of Mark's Gospel. It conveys a sense of urgency. Mark uses the word "immediately" more than any other Gospel writer. And in **Mark**, Jesus frequently uses "must", especially when talking about His death. Not only was it necessary for Jesus to go out into the wilderness, but it was also imperative that He go *now*.

## Loneliness

Jesus was *out in the wilderness* and was *with the wild animals* (v. 13). As opposed to being in the city, with human beings. What He was about to face, He must face alone. Being alone meant that He was on His own, but it also meant that He had no distractions. If we are going to face our temptations, we must face them alone. Other people can't help us with them. They only ruin our concentration and focus.

## Spiritual Warfare

Jesus' forty days in the wilderness reminds us of Moses being on Mount Sinai forty days and Elijah fasting while walking forty days to Mount Horeb. It even reminds us of Israel wandering through the wilderness for forty years. These were all times of spiritual struggle. But they were also times of the Lord's care for His people. He gave Moses the Law on Mount Sinai. Elijah was nourished by heavenly food from God before he began his journey and was restored by God at the end of it. God cared for the children of Israel, giving them food and water, and keeping their shoes and clothes from wearing out.

## Kingdom Harmony

Being with the wild animals reminds us of the words of **Isaiah** (Read **Isaiah 11:6—8**). This is a prophecy concerning the kingdom of God. Jesus with the wild animals is a glimpse into the kingdom where man and all animals get along.

## Everybody Needs a Little Help

*Angels were ministering to Him* (v. 13). Mark doesn't say what they were doing exactly. In some way, they were caring for Jesus, comforting Him, and upholding Him. In His state of humiliation, He needed spiritual help. We think about Jesus as the Son of God and may be tempted to think that everything just came easy to Him. He did have the advantage of being holy, not having a fallen nature.

But being human, He was still tempted. We must remember, He is one of us, too. So, what does all this say to us?

## It's Not Easy

You've heard the saying, "Gowing old isn't for sissies." Neither is being a disciple of Jesus. We must remember, when telling others about Jesus, that we don't sugar coat it. We don't want to give people the impression that following Jesus minimizes problems or makes life easier. As a follower of Jesus, we are swimming upstream. The spirit of the world is a spirit of anti-Christ. Society and the forces that be do all they can to stifle Christianity. Life in Christ is an uphill battle that lasts all lifelong.

## It's Not Naval-Gazing

Mark's Gospel is action-packed and fast-moving. He doesn't go into detail concerning the temptations, like Matthew and Luke do. Jesus is going through these temptations to build Himself up and prepare Himself for ministry. That's what counts. This isn't a time to sit around and contemplate the origin of the universe. It's a time to get ready to go, with the emphasis on *go*. Following Jesus is a life of service, not one of contemplation and spiritual naval gazing.

## Not Really Alone

With all this, there is an upside, along with the reward of eternal life. While it may seem like we are alone at times, we are never truly alone. God has given angels to minister to us. Also, Jesus has promised to *always be with us to the end of time (Matthew 28:20)*. And He is here with us today in Word and Sacrament. Let us prepare ourselves for walking with Jesus by spending time with Him in the wilderness.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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