

Home

## Reflection for March 30



*By Krystal Goodger and the UM Foundation*

This is a new, troubling time. The unknown, fear, and frustration is palpable. We are all asked to do something new... work from home, not go out, be a teacher, learn from home, or be surrounded by your entire family all the time. We are in a time of wilderness.

The term "wilderness experience" rarely, if ever, means a time or place of leisure. In fact, by definition it is a remote environment devoid of all ease, hope or comfort. It is a hostile place where few would willingly go. Most of us actually would resist going into a wilderness, yet that is exactly where God sent His Son.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." (Luke 4:1) Jesus just had a mountain top experience where he was blessed by God at the Jordan River. He heard God! He received the Holy Spirit! This should have been a time of

celebration, but instead he is thrust into the wilderness. He is in the wilderness for 40 days, without food and water. Without the voice of God. Without knowing when it would end.

We too are in a time of wilderness. Wilderness is not a place of leisure is it? Sure, it seems simple: stay at home. Home is where my family is. Home is where I can find Netflix. Home is where my puppy is. It seems easy. But our wilderness time is not easy. It is filled with worries and frustrations. When will this end? How do I teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade math again? What if I lose my job? What if we can't pay our mortgage? Deep in the midst of the wilderness, we may feel lost and lacking God

Yet Jesus was with God and God was with Jesus in that wilderness. The good news also is that the wilderness time is not forever! Following Jesus's time in the wilderness he went out to begin his public ministry. After "social distancing", the first thing he did was gather together with people: He called his first disciples.

Our time in the wilderness will not be permanent either. Soon we will be able to gather together and worship God at church and in other social areas. But our churches need our help now. Our churches need your prayers, presence (during online worship), gifts, service (wherever possible), and witness. How can you pray for the church, others, and the world? How can you serve the church during this time? How can you uplift those around you? How can you give to your church?

The great news is that you are not alone; we are together in the wilderness. And though the wilderness is difficult, it does end. Soon we will celebrate Easter and other mountain top experiences together. Do not lose hope. Look forward!

The Foundation invites you to remember your church in giving as well as your prayers, presence, service and witness. How can you give to the church? You can still send in your check to the church! They will still take your money! Or if your church has electronic giving, please support them in that way. If your church does not have electronic giving, many groups are offering support during this time. (VANCO is offering free services for the next 3 months OR the WI Conference is offering to filter electronic gifts through their VANCO account.) [Donate to your local church](#)