



## First Sunday in Lent

The journey of Lent leads straight into the desert. It is barren, unforgiving and lonely. There is no place to hide and nothing to distract us from our own soul. The desert confronts us with harsh realities and it makes us face life as it is. Yet even through these barren deserts of self-reflection God is there to guide us.

God invites us into life and into a deeper relationship through prayer. The discipline of Lent is God's invitation for us to come closer, to be more real and more alive. Lent is not something we do like putting another notch in our spiritual belt, but it is our response to what God is doing in us. We pray from the very inkling God stirs in our hearts. We fast because God creates a hunger for a deep relationship that is more satisfying than food. We give gifts because of the joy of the Lord.

In this first week of Lent try to **listen** to God in the deepest longings of your heart. Do not judge yourself or expect too much from yourself. Do not put on yourself goals you cannot keep. Listen daily in quiet prayer and in all your relationships for the God who calls you forth from the desert of your denial and aimless reality, your confusion and your selfishness.

### Reflection

1. Jesus, help me through the temptations of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Help me realize your work in me is leading to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I am preoccupied with \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jesus, help me to let go of \_\_\_\_\_.

*Jesus, open me to the journey of faith. Help me sort out the deserts in which I surround myself. I am lost in my own selfishness. I wander through mountains of denial and valleys of discouragement. Show me the way, lead me home.*



## Dis·cov·er

to obtain sight or knowledge of for the first time. A Breakthrough

### ▶ The Gospel is an invitation to **Discover Life**

*“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”* Luke 11

### ▶ The Good News proclaims the **Kingdom of God**

*“I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”* Luke 4:43

### ▶ The Kingdom of God is obscured by **busyness**

*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”* Matt 6:31-33

## W H A T C A N Y O U S E E ?

**Real Hurts** - *“he saw the crowds and had compassion on them”* Matt. 9:36

**Stop → Look → Listen**

**Real Hope** - *“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”* 1 John 1:5

**Share your story**

**Real Help** *“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat”* Mt.14:16

**Serve somebody**

**This is God's Word for my life in this place and at this time. Today, I am a new creation in Christ, I am God's very own, and I believe He has a purpose for my life.**

## ***Matthew 13:10-17 (NIV)***

<sup>10</sup>The disciples came to him and asked,

"Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

"He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>13</sup>This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;

though hearing, they do not hear or understand. <sup>14</sup>In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

" 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

<sup>15</sup>For this people's heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup>For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

## **Kingdom of God Scripture Verses**

Matt. 13:33 -- "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast ...

Matt.13:44 -- "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure ...

Matt.13:45 -- "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like fine pearls.

Matt.13:47 -- The kingdom of heaven is like a net

Matt.13:52 -- the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house

**Isaiah 52:7** How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

**Matthew 24:14** "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

**Mark 1:15** "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

**Luke 8:1** After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God."

**Luke 4:43** "But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."

**Luke 9:2,6** [Jesus] sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

**Acts 5:42:** Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

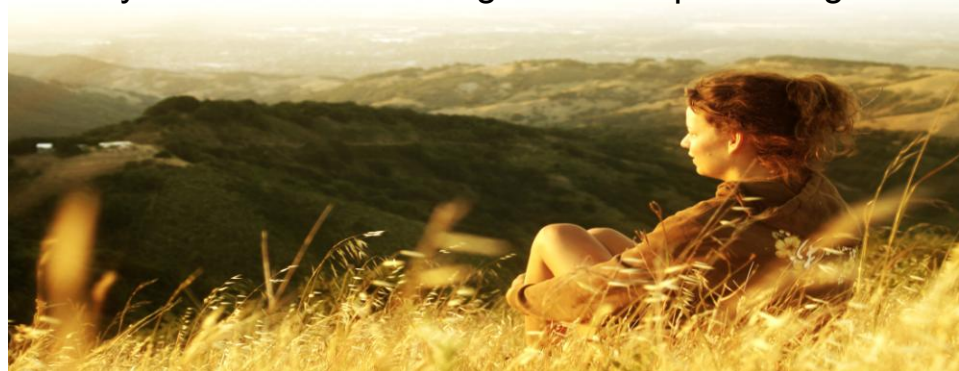
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