

Israel's time in the wilderness is of great importance to Christians because of the way Christ fulfilled so many of the themes and promises throughout the narrative. God's chosen people, the Israelites have been set free from their slavery but are now in the wilderness and in the process of learning what it means to be God's people before His plans come to completion. Does that sound a little familiar? For us, it's often representative of the fact that we were all born as slaves to sin but because of Jesus' great love and sacrifice we are free. We, too, are in our own wilderness as we have access to freedom but await the completion of God's promises and plans.

New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this week:

- Before you begin your devotional time, spend some time in prayer. So much of following God is making yourself available to God, to receive what He might have for you.
- Let Scripture change your understanding of Jesus. Ask, "What did I think about Jesus before I read this?" and, "What might be a new revelation to me?"
- Consider looking at your weekly schedule and carve out time to have a daily devotional. To be in relationship with Jesus, we need time with him! Start intentionally planning those times into your routine.

Monday, April 9th

Read John 5:39-40

³⁹ You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

What has been your experience with Scripture? Has it been encouraging, confusing, boring, exciting, or a combination of things? Have you pursued Scripture diligently or as a quick fix?

If eternal life is in Jesus, what role does Scripture have? Why does it matter that Scripture testifies about Jesus? What does that mean we should ask or understand of Scripture? How does Scripture help us know God?

Does your study of Scripture lead you to know God more deeply? Why or why not? Do your interactions with Jesus lead you to Scripture? Why or why not? Why might we need both things? How can you pursue Scripture and relationship with Jesus simultaneously in your life?

Tuesday, April 9th

Read Mark 1:14-18

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" ¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

What would it have been like to be Simon and Andrew? How do you think they made the decision to leave everything behind to follow Jesus? Why do you think they chose to follow Jesus?

Who is Jesus in this passage? What does he do and what purpose does he serve? What commands does he give that we ought to obey? What does it look like for you to repent, believe and follow Jesus?

What is the good news of God? What does it mean that the kingdom of God has come near? What do we know about God because of who Jesus is in this passage?

Wednesday, April 10th

Read John 14:5-9a

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." ⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." ⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?"

When have you felt similarly to Thomas asking, "Jesus, where are you and what's the right thing?" What do you think about Jesus' response? Is it frustrating? Is it encouraging? Why?

When have you felt like Philip, like you don't know the Father or there's just one thing you need to know and then you'd be satisfied? What does Jesus' response say?

Jesus clearly says if you know him, you will know the Father. How can you make seeking Jesus as the way and the truth and the life a priority? Have you felt Jesus nudging you saying, "I've been with you all this time, come know me!"?

Thursday, April 11th

Read John 14:22-24

22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

We can empathize with Judas asking, "Jesus, why don't you just show up a little more loudly!" When have you felt that way about Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus' response to Judas is that he should obey his teaching? How have you learned and obeyed Jesus' teachings? What impact might that have on you, the people around you, and the world? How might it change your perspective on how Jesus "shows up"?

What do you think it means that God would come to make a home with us? How might that make Jesus available to you—to learn about and to be in relationship with him? How might your love for God and your obedience grow in light of this?

Friday, April 12th

Read and meditate on Psalm 63:1-9. What parts of this psalm resonate with you? What things have you experienced? What things seem distant to you? Spend time with God, inviting him to be with you and asking that this psalm could be a representation of your relationship with Him.

*1 You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.*

*2 I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.*

*3 Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.*

*4 I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my
hands.*

*5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest
of foods; with singing lips my mouth will
praise you.*

*6 On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of
the night.*

*7 Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.*

*8 I cling to you;
your right hand upholds me.*

Unsettled

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