

Sunday, February 18, 2024 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Bible Study
First Sunday in Lent
“Has Come Near”
Mark 1:9-15

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants talk about a time they’ve been in the “wilderness.” Perhaps it was a walk in the woods, a state or national forest. Was it a desert, forest, mountains, or swampland? Did you see wild animals? If so, what kind? How did you feel about being in the wilderness? Relaxed, excited, stressed, happy, frightened, awestruck?

Mark 1:9-15 Context. O God, some of us feel like we are in the wilderness. May we feel your angels taking care of us, even in the wilderness of our lives. Convict us when we need to repent. Open our spirits to know we are beloved in your sight. Guide us in ways to share the good news of your love and care to those who most need to hear it.

Read Mark 1:9-15

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read Mark 1:9-15 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- According to Mark 1:10, as Jesus was being baptized by John, “he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove.” How do you imagine the Spirit of God? If you were going to draw or paint the Spirit of God, what would it look like?
- As Jesus is being baptized, a voice from heaven says, “You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). What reminds you that you are God’s “beloved”?
- Mark 1:12 says the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. Have you ever felt driven (or nudged) by God to go somewhere or do something you wouldn’t normally do? How did this work out for you?
- Mark 1:13 says Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness. Can you think of other places in the Bible where the number forty is significant?
 - Genesis 7: In the story of Noah and the flood, it rains for forty days and nights.

- Exodus 24: When Moses received the Ten Commandments, he stayed on the ‘mountain of God’ for forty days and nights.
- I Samuel 17: Goliath taunts Israel for forty days.
- Acts 1: There are forty days between the crucifixion of Jesus and his ascension.
- Mark 1:13 says angels waited on Jesus while he was in the wilderness. What do you imagine those angels looked like? What might they have done for Jesus?
- Mark 1:14 says that after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. What good news does our world need to hear today? What good news does our community need to hear today? What good news do the most vulnerable in our community need to hear today?
- For personal reflection and prayer: Of what do you need to repent? What good news from Jesus do you long to hear?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

O God, some of us feel like we are in the wilderness. May we feel your angels taking care of us, even in the wilderness of our lives. Convict us when we need to repent. Open our spirits to know we are beloved in your sight. Guide us in ways to share the good news of your love and care to those who most need to hear it. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.