



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

**21 February 2021**

**by  
David Hasson**

**Using resources from 'Worship in the Wilderness'  
By Engage Worship**



## A spirit led journey

God of feasting and fasting,  
mountaintop and desert,  
you gather us together by your Holy Spirit.  
May we follow Jesus into the wilderness,  
feeding on your living bread  
and tasting your water of life.  
We come hungry and thirsty  
for more of you, God. **Amen.**

### Hymn StF 18 – Be still and know that I am God

Link to music [here](#)

Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.
Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.
Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust.  
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.  
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

Anonymous Based on Psalm 46:10-11

### Deut. 8 : 1-5, 15-18

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. 2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

15 He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness,

something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

## Hymn StF 404 – God’s Spirit is in my heart

Link to music [here](#)

God's spirit is in my heart;  
he has called me and set me apart.  
This is what I have to do,  
what I have to do:

Just as the Father sent me,  
so I'm sending you out to be  
my witness throughout the world --  
the whole of the world:

He sent me to give the good news to  
the poor,  
tell prisoners that they are prisoners  
no more,  
tell blind people that they can see,  
and set the down-trodden free,  
and go tell everyone  
the news that the kingdom of God  
has come;  
and go tell everyone  
the news that God's kingdom has  
come.

Don't carry a load in your pack;  
you don't need two shirts on your  
back;  
God's workers can earn their own  
keep --  
can earn their own keep:

Don't worry what you have to say;  
don't worry, because on that day  
God's spirit will speak in your heart --  
will speak in your heart:

v. 1 and refrain Alan T. Dale (1902-1979)

vv. 2-4 Hubert Richards (b. 1921)

Words and Music: (c) 1969 Vanguard Music Corp

## Mark 1 : 9-13

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

## Thoughts

We're not very familiar with wilderness in our area but we are familiar with mountain tops and valleys. When we are feeling good we are said to be on a mountain top, when we are feeling down we are said to be in a valley. Mountain tops are light, spacious, views all round (well most of the time), there is a sense of freedom. Valleys can be hemmed in, dark, restrictive, there is a sense that you are constrained.

The Old Testament people of God talked about mountain top experiences and wilderness experiences in a similar way we do of mountain tops and valleys. Deuteronomy is reminding the people of God about the time in the past when they spent 40 years in the wilderness. It followed the huge mountain top experience when God led them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea away from the Egyptians who had enslaved them. Of course the wilderness experience meant that the people experienced all kinds of difficulties, it was not an easy life. Our reading from Deuteronomy is reminding the people that, just as God led them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea and it was obvious that God was there, as they journeyed through the wilderness God was still with them providing for their needs. He provided water to drink, manna to eat and protected them from venomous scorpions and snakes as they followed him.

Just as God's people had highs and lows so to did Jesus. Mark describes this very succinctly. First there was his baptism by John in the Jordan after which the Spirit descended upon him like a dove and the voice of God said 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.' What a high point that must have been for Jesus and for the people who witnessed it. But immediately after this the Spirit took Jesus out into the wilderness where he faced a variety of temptations. Jesus was able to resist these temptations because he recognised that the Spirit was with him and he listened to the Spirit.

We are no different to the Old Testament people and Jesus, we can have highs and we can have lows. It is tempting to always go for the highs, the

good experiences where God is obviously at work but it can be dangerous because what is a high now might not be later. Many of you know Anne and I have regularly come up to the Convention and that time spent in meetings was seen as a high point in our Christian life. One year we came after a very rough time in our church life and I went to the first convention meeting. During the first hymn I walked out because I couldn't cope with all the happy Christians there. I went and sat on Friars Crag until late at night. That time of stillness in the midst of the beauty of God's creation was the mountain top for me that week.

I guess for many of us this pandemic with all the lock downs is not a mountain top experience. We can't have our weekly time of worship where we come together to worship God in the presence of one another, to sing and to pray and to share in coffee afterwards. It is a big miss. We are thankful for those who have faithfully produced written services, you tube services, and worship on Zoom. This helps us to keep in touch with one another and helps us to worship God. But maybe like me you are not a great TV watcher and sitting looking at a screen or a bit of paper doesn't appeal to you especially when you look around and see you are alone. It is easy to be disheartened but don't be. The Israelites wandering through the desert often didn't feel that God was with them but he was. It is just the same with us, as we look around we think we are on our own but we are not, God is with us. Keep a hold on that thought, talk to him and listen to him, know that he loves you. He will be with you throughout these lock downs as he was with the Israelites for their 40 years in the wilderness which is much longer than the lockdowns will be. I hope!!

## Prayers

Sometimes we feel like we're walking through wilderness:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

When our spirits feel dry, help us trust in your Spirit:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

Fasting seems difficult, prayers seem unanswered:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

The world howls like wild animals all around us:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

We can choose to worry, or to trust you to provide:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

Temptation is everywhere, doubts can overwhelm us:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

You know what it's like to walk through this desert:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

You long to transform us with wilderness worship:

**Jesus we choose to walk with you.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **Hymn – Blessed be your name**

Blessed be your name  
in the land that is plentiful,  
where your streams of abundance  
flow,  
blessed be your name.

And blessed be your name  
when I'm found in the desert place,  
though I walk through the wilderness,  
blessed be your name.

Link to music [here](#)

Every blessing you pour out  
I'll turn back to praise.  
And when the darkness closes in,  
Lord,  
still I will say:

Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your name.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your glorious name.

Blessed be your name  
when the sun's shining down on me,  
when the world's 'all as it should be,'  
blessed be your name.  
And blessed be your name  
on the road marked with suffering,  
though there's pain in the offering,  
blessed be your name.

Every blessing you pour out  
I'll turn back to praise.  
And when the darkness closes in,  
Lord,  
still I will say:

Blessed be the name of the Lord ...

Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your name.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your glorious name.

you give and take away.  
you give and take away.  
My heart will choose to say,  
'Lord, blessed be your name.'

Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your name.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
blessed be your glorious name.

Matt Redman (b. 1974) and Beth Redman  
Words and Music: (c) 2002, Thankyou Music. Administered by worshiptogether.com Songs,  
excluding UK & Europe, administered by Kingswaysongs, a division of David C Cook  
<tym@kingsway.co.uk> Used by permission.

## Prayer

Holy Spirit,  
fill us with your water of life,  
so that even as we walk through the desert  
we might know your refreshing  
and share it with those around us.  
Lead us, as you led Jesus,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.