

Wilderness

Reflection:

Mark has brought us back to look at what FAITH looks like in the life of Jesus this week and it's brought us to something central. It's brought us to the need to ABIDE with God, to stay in constant connection with him. So many times Jesus withdrew to pray, to 'be with' the Father. I'd love to have been there, to know what that looked like. We don't know exactly but we do know that it was often and in a whole range of circumstances. Seems like he was always getting a bit of space to be with God. He then did something extraordinary. He invited us into this intimate relationship. He made it possible for us to commune directly with God too – the source of all life. And he told us to COME, OFTEN, ABIDE, REMAIN. It's so simple and we need it, all day, every day for the rest of our days, if we're to live the life of faith and be fruitful.

Oil is a symbol of our faith and commitment to Christ among other things. We're going to be sitting with God and experiencing that the fragrance of Christ is on us when we spend time with him.

Preparation:

Place some essential oil, perfume or aftershave in the centre of the room as a reminder to do the practice each morning. Any oily substance with a nice scent will do, preferably not the one you use every day. If you don't have that, you could use a chapstick or olive oil.



Practice:

Step 1.

Anoint yourself with the sign of the cross on your forehead as a sign that you belong to God, whilst saying aloud:

"...in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit"

Step 2.

Close your eyes and take a moment to confess your sins and receive forgiveness.

Step 3.

Imagine joining Jesus in the wilderness, or simply ask the Lord to sit with you.

Sit in silence with God for a couple of minutes.

If you get distracted in your thoughts, just gently come back to the image of Jesus in the wilderness, don't worry, focus comes with practice

Conclude by saying aloud:

"Remain in me Lord, as I remain in you"



Step 4.

Whenever you notice the scent throughout the day, pray about whatever you are doing or thinking in that moment, bringing the Lord into every tiny detail of your day.



*** You may want to do the practice in a 'wild place' on your daily walk or a special place in the garden to feel the elements, which is how it was for Jesus.

*** If you have kids, you could do the practice as a family using your camping chairs in the living room and talking about Jesus going to the woods. Of course, you would need to keep it relatively short and maybe finish by praying together for others.

*** A word of encouragement: spiritual practices are simply using everything we have in our desire to live the radical life of Christ. If anything I suggest doesn't mesh with you, don't discard the idea, just tweak it so it works for you. Our journeys are different and our learning styles are different. However you engage, may God speak and may we become more faithful and true disciples, like our faithful and true Christ.