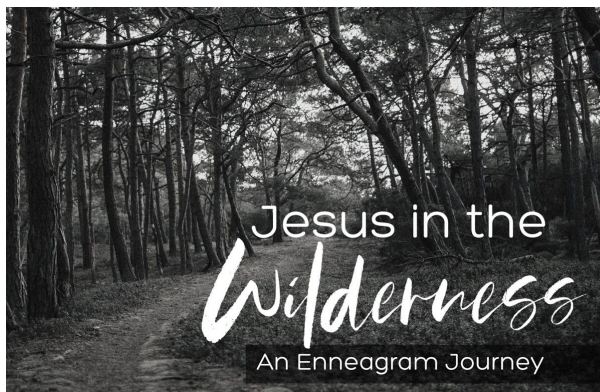


# JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS: INTRODUCING LENT

February 23, 2020

*Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister*



## Psalm 51:1-17

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup>You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

<sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

<sup>16</sup>For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

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## REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. The psalmist is in a dark place feeling cut off from God. Have you been in a place like that before? Did God show up in a surprising or healing way? What did you do and what did you learn during that difficult time?
3. Lent is a 40 day season when many Christians take up fasting of one kind or another, imitating the fast of Jesus in the wilderness before his public ministry. Have you done a fast of some kind before? What was that like? What did you learn?
4. Are you planning to practice lent this year? If so, how?

Refer to the **Lent Guide** at [southelkhorncc.org/lent](https://southelkhorncc.org/lent) to get ideas on how to creatively engage this season.

5. Reflect on or share your Enneagram type or another kind of personality inventory (StrengthFinders, DISC, Meyers-Briggs). What might this self-awareness and self-understanding do for you spiritually?

## LENT RESOURCES

Lent is a 40 day journey from Ash Wednesday (February 26) to Easter Sunday. It connects us to the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness praying, fasting, and being tempted.

Learn more about the meaning of Lent and how you can practice it, such as taking a “digital fast.”

Resources, guides, devotionals, and more available at:

[southelkhorncc.org/lent](https://southelkhorncc.org/lent)

## ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and prepares our hearts for the celebration of new life at Easter. The ashes signify a time of self-examination, repentance, and return to the God who made us: “from dust you were made and to dust you shall return.”

You can receive ashes, pray, reflect, and light a candle during the lunch hours on Ash Wednesday in the historic sanctuary. A prayer and reflection guide is available here.

### February 26, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

A worship service will also take place in the Historic Sanctuary with song, prayer, scripture and ashes.

**February 26, 6:00 PM, childcare provided.**

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### Listen Online

Sermon audio available at [southelkhorncc.org/sermons](https://southelkhorncc.org/sermons)