

GROWING IN THE WILDERNESS

LENT 2022 | DIOCESE OF ATLANTA

WEEK 5: CONVICTION GROWING IN CONFIDENCE

These reflection guides are designed to supplement the videos, for use in a small group Bible study. They are created for the leader's ease of use, and with links to free web-based resources.

REFLECTION

In wilderness seasons we're forced to compare, contrast, purge and adopt our convictions so we can adapt, survive, even thrive.

Before his blindness and vulnerability, St. Paul's confidence was in his pedigree and accomplishments.

He's convicted now that those things are "rubbish" compared with the "...surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus."

Wilderness won convictions are compelling and propelling!

~Bishop Wright

SCRIPTURE

Read Phil. 3:4-14: St. Paul put his confidence in earthly things until he learned to put his confidence and conviction in knowing Christ, which is of "surpassing value" compared to everything else, which he regarded as "rubbish."

Read John 12:1-8. Mary regards everything as rubbish compared to knowing Christ. She "wastes" an expensive bottle of perfume, worth a years' wages, to have an intimate moment with Jesus. Her conviction that knowing Jesus was worth more than ANYTHING was perhaps born out of her wilderness time in losing her brother (previous chapter)...

Read John 11:17-44. Jesus purposefully delayed coming to Bethany, and Lazarus died. In her wilderness of loss, Mary couldn't bring herself to greet Jesus. Mary knew Jesus could heal, but this wilderness invited Mary to know him better, that he could bring new life! This is perhaps where her conviction to know Jesus above all else was born.

DISCUSSION

- What are things that you have put your confidence in? Like St. Paul, how have you learned to put confidence in things that have heavenly value rather than earthly value?
- What are some of your most deeply held values and convictions?
- How have wilderness times tested, refined, or given birth to those deeply held values?
- What do you think it means that "the Holy Spirit is building an 'Altar in the Wilderness' in us, and out of us, for the world"? How can we be an "altar in the wilderness" for others?

ARTICLES

[For Further Reading:](#)

More about Altars

<https://www.kingjamesbibledictionary.com/Diction/altar>

TAKE-AWAY

Often in the Old Testament, when a person had an encounter with God in the wilderness, the person built an altar to the Lord, to remember what God had done there in that wilderness time.

Think back over your personal Lenten wilderness time. Create a space on your desk or in your home with objects that commemorate what you've learned and experienced this Lent, and keep it visible through Holy Week. You can also add to it as you continue to learn and experience God through the end of Lent.

PRAYER

God who met our forebears in the wilderness, meet us in our wilderness times, and give us strength to live out our conviction to know you more, that we may walk in obedience, compassion, simplicity, liberty, and love. Amen.