



What Happens in the Wilderness...?

Mark 1.1-8 & Isaiah 40.3-5

A service for the second Sunday in Advent

Welcome

This year at Christchurch, through Advent, along with our theme of *Longing for Light* we are thinking about *Homelessness and Hospitality* and in so doing supporting St George's Crypt in Leeds

Lighting of 2nd candle

Jesus Christ, we seek you through our Advent journey.

Fill the unrest of our troubled world with your peace

and fill the emptiness of our hearts with your hope.

Save us by the power of your living word and give us voices to speak for your justice.

Longing for light v. 2 – Singing the Faith 706

Verse 2

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Introduction

Today as we continue through Advent we focus on an apparently different part of Christ's story, one seemingly from much later in his life and ministry. It comes with a description of happenings in the desert and with a focus on someone who came before Jesus and who foretold him. It is nonetheless truly relevant to our Advent journey, but poses a question for us about "*What happens in the wilderness...?*"

Hymn – Light of the world you stepped down into darkness – StF 175

<https://youtu.be/6CKCThJB5w0>

Light of the world
You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you
Hope of a life spent with you

*So here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

King of all days
So highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above

Humbly you came to the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

*So here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross

And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross

So here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

Tim Hughes

Prayers as we come together

Homelessness and Hospitality – a video message about St George's Crypt from Matthew Nice

Reading – Mark 1.1-8 - The Preaching of John the Baptist

1 This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^[a] 2 It began as the prophet Isaiah had written:

"God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.'

3 Someone is shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!'"

4 So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching.^[b] "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." 5 Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 7 He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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Reflection – *What happens in the wilderness...?*

Hymn/worship song – From the breaking of the dawn – StF 156

https://youtu.be/ZDnwSF_IR3A

From the breaking of the dawn
to the setting of the sun
I will stand on every promise of your word.
Words of power strong to save
that will never pass away;
I will stand on every promise of your word.
For your covenant is sure,
and on this I am secure:
I can stand on every promise from your
word.

When I stumble and I sin,
condemnation pressing in,
I will stand on every promise of your word.
You are faithful to forgive,

that in freedom I might live,
so I stand on every promise of your word.
Guilt to innocence restored;
you remember sins no more;
so I'll stand on every promise of your word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice
I will listen for your voice,
and I'll stand on every promise of your
word.

Through this dark and troubled land,
you will guide me with your hand
as I stand on every promise of your word.
And you've promised to complete

every work begun in me,
so I'll stand on every promise of your word.

Hope that lifts me from despair,
love that casts out every fear
as I stand on every promise of your word.

Not forsaken, not alone,
for the Comforter has come,
and I stand on every promise of your word.
Grace sufficient, grace for me,
grace for all who will believe.
We will stand on every promise of your
word.

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Prayers for others

We pray...

For those lost in valleys.

May they be lifted up.

For those stuck in the heights.

May they be helped down.

For those in barren places.

May they find shelter.

For those in rough places.

May they hear eternal words.

For those seeking forgiveness.

May they find it.

For those seeking apology.

May they hear it.

For those waiting for a long time.

**May they find patience in your
patience.**

For those waiting for renewal.

May there be springs of growth.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, may your holy name be honoured;

may your kingdom come;

may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need.

Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.

Save us from the time of trial and keep us safe from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen

Hymn/worship song – Make way, make way for Christ the King – StF 264

<https://youtu.be/tK6XuYhL7JI>

Make way, make way

For Christ the King

In splendour arrives

Fling wide the gates and welcome Him

Into your lives

Make way! (Make way!)

Make way! (Make way!)

For the King of kings

(For the King of kings)

Make way! (Make way!)

Make way! (Make way!)

And let His kingdom in

Chorus

And those who mourn with heavy hearts

Who weep and sigh

With laughter, joy and royal crown

He'll beautify

Chorus

We call you now to worship Him

As Lord of all

To have no gods before Him

Their thrones must fall!

He comes the broken hearts to heal

The prisoners to free

The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance

The blind shall see

Chorus

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Blessing

The light of God to lead us.
The power of God to hold us.
The joy of God to heal us.
The grace of God to caress us.
The love of God to bless us.

Amen.

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