

PRAYER STATIONS

The Wilderness. John the Baptist was baptizing people in the wilderness, and Jesus came up from Galilee to be baptized. John was like, “no, no, no—I can’t baptize you. You need to baptize me.” It always feels good when someone affirms our identity. But Jesus insists, and as he emerges from the water, a voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then Jesus is led on out into the wilderness for a prayer retreat, and the tempter shows up.



In the Genesis story, God put the man and the woman in the garden to till it and keep it. God said, “You may freely eat of any tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” Later in the story, the tempter shows up and says, “**Did God say**, ‘you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’ Actually, you won’t die. God knows that if you eat it, you will become like God.” And they saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes, and that it would make them wise—so they ate it.”

In the wilderness, the deceiver invites Jesus to eat. And after 40 days of fasting, I’m sure the stones were already looking like loaves of bread. We’re tempted to deviate from God’s design and plan.

And once again the enemy challenges God’s words and strikes at Jesus’ identity: “If you are truly God’s son...”

The desert eagle owl is stunning in its beauty—mesmerizing beauty, but deadly to its prey. Satan even uses the scriptures to deceive us.



The wilderness can be a harsh and frightening place. Remember Jesus’ promise to never leave you alone. Know that inside a cactus is life-giving water. And flowers. Ask God for the healing you need—to grow flowers in

your wilderness place.

John 14:18-19 “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.”



Baptism. The water of baptism reminds us that we belong to God. We are created, claimed, redeemed, and called by God.

Isaiah 43:1, 4 “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you [and] formed you: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. You are precious in my sight, and I love you.’”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”



Holy Communion. “By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. Offer yourself in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us. Proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.”