



April 6, 2025

**The Wilderness – A Time of Doubt
Mark 1:9-13; Mark 9:21-24**

Big Idea: The wilderness beckons us to bring our whole selves, full of trust, belief, doubt, and uncertainty, to Jesus.

Overview: As Mark demonstrates, the baptism of Jesus immediately leads him into the wilderness. It is the theme of wilderness that defines the season of lent – a period of 40 days leading up to Easter. Throughout this series we join Jesus in the wilderness, learning dependence in the various trials we face. This week, we look at the idea that the wilderness is a place of doubt. We continue in Mark's gospel to see a desperate father, asking Jesus to heal his son.

This story follows the transfiguration of Jesus. The transfiguration is a moment of clarity the gospel writer gives as to the identity of Jesus. He is resplendent in glory, showing himself to be the God. From the mountain, he comes down to a squabble between his disciples and the scribes. At the heart of the conflict is a father asking the disciples to heal his son from demon possession, but they can't.

Jesus interacts with the father, beckoning his faith. The father cries out to Jesus for help, asking for him to heal his son. In a moment of honesty, brokenness, and desperate faith, the father exclaims, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

Such is the reality of wilderness seasons in our lives. We believe in God's power and goodness, and yet we are dismayed and shattered by some of what we are going through.

Doubt, instead of being a deconstructive moment in the life of faith, actually can serve to be a catalyst to a deeper communion with God.

Life Group Objectives:

Remember why you exist as a group! Life Groups are to:

1. Reflect on this past week's message and passage or dig into the series you are going through as a group. When we all track together on the sermon series, we learn and grow together as a church.
2. We desire for you to have the Bible play a key role in your time together. Please have people open up Bibles, seeking clarity, asking questions, sharing insights, and allowing it to guide your time together.
3. Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members. How can you build one another up this week?
4. As we work through things like doubt, let's ensure that we do not bible-verse each other out of difficult emotions and experiences. Of course, we are people of the Book, moored to Scripture and finding our path lit by it. Yet, we also need to be aware of the deep emotional pain and wounds that take time to work through with God, using Scripture as a guide and foundation.

Conversation starters:

- Can you think of a time when you believed in something but still weren't sure? How did you handle it?
- If you could ask Jesus one question, that would remove some doubt in your life, what would it be?

Learning from God's Word: Bible Study Discussion

Read Scripture: Mark 9:14-29

Questions for Discussion:

1. The Cry of Faith vs. 21-22

- What emotions would the father be feeling at this point? How do some of these connect with you today?
- The word "pity" here appeals to the deep compassion of Jesus for people. How has Jesus showed you compassion in your life? What about this week?
- What is your area of greatest need right now? Are you crying out to Jesus?

2. The Object of Faith vs. 23

- Jesus is interested not in just performing this miracle but actually shaping the father's trust structures. In seasons of doubt, where are you tempted to place your trust?
- What could be possible in your life if you trusted that God is able to act?
- Often, we think that our faith determines God's action. Much damage has been done to people with this approach – "If you only believed more, _____ would not/would have happened." How hopeful is it that what matters more is not the intensity of our faith but rather the object of it (Jesus!)?

3. The Reality of Faith vs. 24

- What do you think the father meant when he said, "I believe; help me in my unbelief!"?
- Have you ever had a time where you believed but still struggled with doubt? Have you found this to be normative in your life?
- In what areas do you find believe (trust) in God easy? What areas are more difficult?
- How do you respond when you experience doubt?

Listening to God:

- The Lord speaks, and we need to discern. What are some key themes that have emerged in your time together? What is the Holy Spirit impressing upon us?

Application:

Cry out to God for each other in prayer.