



Full to The Brim ~ An Expansive Lent

Tuesday Small Group Session

First Week of Lent – Even in the Desert

Gathering /Welcome

Introduction/Background for *Full to the Brim* –

The Sanctified Art creative team that developed the Full to the Brim Lenten resources are several Presbyterian pastors and artists, mostly women of color, who provide this context for the theme:

“The origins of Lent were that one was to leave their old life behind to fast and prepare to be baptized into a new way of living. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith.

And so, our Lenten theme, Full to the Brim, is an invitation— into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It’s an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God’s lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.

Full to the Brim reminds us to live fully—as we pursue justice and hope, or express grief and gratitude. And so, this Lent, let us trust—fully—that we belong to God. Let us increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us.”

Sharing the Scripture.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’^[b]”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’^[c]”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’^[d]”

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[e]”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

*To add additional voices to our conversation...here’s some commentary from the Full to the
Brim devotional:*

Commentary | Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia

GUEST WRITERS



REV. LARISSA KWONG ABAZIA

Larissa (*she/her*) is an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and founder of Courageous Spaces, inviting others to co-create spaces for disruption, transformation, and change. Larissa has dedicated her life and career to racial and gender justice, and is interested in the ways that the intersections of all parts of one’s identity can be embraced as strengths. CourageousSpaces.com

It was four years ago when two women, one of whom had dark ash in the shape of a cross on her forehead, were locked in aloud, screaming embrace as tears streamed down their faces. That year, American Christians marked the beginning of Lent with a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. Four. Years. Ago. What is different?

While I want to say there have been small, incremental wins, my heart breaks at how little has changed. Too often, I am enveloped in doubt: I doubt my 3 year old daughter and 10 year old son will know a world without violence, divisiveness, homophobia, sexism, racism, classism and the countless other “-isms” that plague us. I doubt we will embrace our role as stewards of Creation, reversing the damage already done. I doubt our churches will embrace true welcome, transformed by those we deem “other” rather than simply providing a “space for one more.” I doubt that we can live as the faith-filled, wholistic community to which we are called.

Lent invites us into our own wilderness journey. It’s a patient walk of exploration which we inevitably escape on Easter morning. But if I were really honest with myself (and with all of

you), I would say that we are never leaving this desolation. These doubts are rooted in the limitations of who we are as human beings, falling short of transformation over and over again.

But what if it isn't about getting out of the desert? What if we are called to dwell in our doubts, fears, anxieties, and brokenness? What if we are meant to stand in solidarity with those trapped in their own wilderness experiences? I wonder if we can imagine making a home right here, a place existing in the tension between desolation and burgeoning possibility.

In the desert, we cast aside the temptations of this world and actively engage in the promise that abundant love will always have the final say. The desert may very well be right where we belong.

Note: In February of 2018, a gunman opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, killing 17 and injuring 17 others. The beginning of Lent in 2022, the publication date of this devotional, marks 4 years since this tragedy.

Discuss:

What is the desert like for you right now?

What doubts, fears, anxieties, and brokenness are you carrying this Lent?

What does it mean to stand in solidarity with those trapped in their own wilderness experiences?

Closing Poem -

<p>From Here in the Sand</p> <p>You've been here before. I squeeze that truth like an orange in my hands, willing some form of comfort to run out, roll down my wrists, calm these aching nerves.</p> <p>You've been here before— in the wilderness, in the desert, in the place where nothing is what it seems and everything is sharp.</p>	<p>You've been here before so surely you know how hard it is to hold tight to what is real in the middle of a storm.</p> <p>But because you've been here before, I will stand tall. I will sing songs of the river, from here in the sand. I will sing songs of the river, into the wind.</p> <p>~Poem by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed</p>
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