

Worship Material
Tools to survive and thrive
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 9th March

Begin with an opening prayer

Loving God, at the start of Lent,
help us as we explore what it means
to survive and thrive, even in the difficult times.
Thank you that you go before us
and show us the way.
Amen.

Read Luke 4.1-13

Bible notes

The wilderness is traditionally the place of testing, formation, new beginnings and encounters with God. In the Hebrew Bible, it is in the wilderness that the people of God learn, through trying and failing, through instruction and practice, through encounter and through experience, to live God's way. This difficult, formational time for the embryonic people of God followed fast on the heels of the high point of experiencing salvation from oppression and slavery through the plagues, the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea. Similarly, Jesus has just experienced the high point of his baptism and the reassurance of the voice from heaven confirming his identity; now he needs to work out how to live this out. The 40 days – like the 40 years for his ancestors – may or may not be an exact length: '40' denotes a 'significant' period of time. As with the wilderness experience of his ancestors, Jesus faces temptations around his identity, the need to be fed, the question of who to worship and why, and the enticement to test God. Jesus responds differently from his ancestors, providing a different model of living out our identity as the people of God. Key to his survival in the face of these difficult circumstances is Jesus' security in his identity as the Son of God, affirmed by God at his baptism – it does not need to be put to the test. Jesus is also secure in his knowledge of Scripture, God's instructions on how to live. Filled with the Holy Spirit and secure in the Word of God, Jesus has what he needs to survive and grow.

Prayer

Father God, thank you for your Word,
an effective weapon that equips us for survival.
We give thanks for the unshakeable truths
on which we can stand firm.

Lord Jesus, we praise you for always watching over us,
through good times, bad times and desert times.
Thank you that when we falter all we need do
is cry out to you and we are heard.

Holy Spirit, thank you that no matter what hardships we encounter,
whatever dry wilderness places we may find ourselves in,
you always guide us through.

We praise you for the angelic help we receive in times of
weariness from neighbours, friends, colleagues or strangers.

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thank you for helping us to survive and thrive.
Amen.**

A prayer to conclude

Creator God, you tell us that you will make a way in the wilderness.
Help us to see it, however faint it may be to our human eyes.
Guide us through the desert and help us to find the oases,
so we may flourish for you.

Amen.