

COLLECTIVE

The Rhythm of Rest

Part 4

Matthew 4:1-2

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Read Matthew 4:1-11

Why would the Spirit lead Jesus into solitude to be tempted by the devil? Do you find this confusing? It doesn't make sense if you read it this way: The devil comes to Jesus in his weakness – after forty days, all alone, with no food or water, in the dry, hot desert. Isn't it typical for the enemy to target us when we're feeling weak, tired, and vulnerable?

However, the story connects when you realize you had the whole thing backwards: Solitude isn't the place of weakness. **It is the place of strength!** After forty days in solitude, Jesus was at the height of his spiritual powers! Then and only then did he have the strength to defeat the devil.

Solitude is not a kind of private spiritual wellness therapy. It is more like a war zone. According to the wisdom of the desert fathers and mothers, solitude confronts you with “the three enemies of the soul.”

- 1) The world – when we step away from the world's noise, we begin to realize how many of the sinful societal norms we have come to accept, how compromised our hearts are, and how we've lost our convictions.
- 2) The flesh – the bent, distorted desires in our heart and body itself all come up.
- 3) The devil – demonic thoughts attack our mind.

The practices of solitude and silence are radical because they challenge us on every level of our existence. ... All the forces of evil band together to prevent our knowing God in this way, because it brings to an end the dominion of those powers in our lives.

- Ruth Haley Barton

C.S. Lewis, in his masterpiece of satire, *The Screwtape Letters*, created a fictional series of letters between a senior demon named Screwtape and his apprentice demon named Wormwood on how to best tempt a young man they call “the patient.”

In it, Screwtape says there are two things the devil cannot stand — music and silence. Because they open the human heart to God. Instead, the devil's counterstrategy is noise.

And then Screwtape has this haunting line:

“We will make the whole universe a noise in the end.”

This is the agenda of the evil one — to fill your life with noise, distraction, triviality, diversion.

However, if you draw on God's power to fight evil, you will discover that on the other side of the struggle is freedom. Notice that people who spend a lot of time in solitude are some of the most calm, tranquil, joyful people you know. They just radiate this inner peace. But it is a peace that was won by struggle. The key is just to stay with it – to persevere!

Most of us are not called to quit our job and move into the desert. But all of us who follow Jesus are called to fashion our own desert in the rhythms and routine of our daily life.

COLLECTIVE

Practice

In the past few practices, we've been focusing on silence and quiet prayer. Today, we want to invite you to go further in your practice of solitude. The goal of being alone with God in the silence is, ultimately, to hear God's voice over all the other voices in our head – especially from the three enemies of our soul.

The ultimate litmus test of the truth of God over the lies of the enemies is found in Scripture. Which is why, in solitude, when Jesus was confronted with lies from the enemy, he calmly quoted Scripture to anchor himself in God's truth.

Our practice for today is called **Lectio Divina**, which is a Latin phrase meaning “spiritual reading.” It is an ancient way of reading Scripture slowly and prayerfully, listening for God's voice over your life.

- 1) **Read** a passage from Scripture very slowly and prayerfully, and pay special attention to any words, phrases, or thoughts that seem to stand out to you or touch you emotionally in any way. We recommend you start with a psalm or a selection from the Gospels or a New Testament letter.
- 2) **Reflect.** Re-read the passage again, this time lingering over the words or phrases that feel highlighted to you, just turning them over slowly in your mind, thinking about what God may be saying to you.
- 3) **Respond** by praying those impressions back to God.
- 4) **Rest** in God's loving word to you. Let your whole body slow down and sink into God's presence and peace.

安息的节奏
第四部

马太福音 4:1-2

随后,耶稣被圣灵带到旷野,受魔鬼的试探。

耶稣禁食了四十昼夜,就饿了。

读马太福音 4:1-11

圣灵为什么带领耶稣到独处,受魔鬼的试探?你不觉得奇怪吗?照这样读,其实一点都不逻辑。过了四十天,耶稣独自一人在干热的沙漠,没有食物和水 – 魔鬼就趁耶稣最软弱的时候来试探祂。敌人总趁我们虚弱、疲惫和容易攻击的时候下手,不是吗?

然而,当你换个视角读这篇故事,它就变得成立了:独处并不是软弱的地方,而是力量的泉源! 耶稣在旷野独处四十天后,领受了极大的恩膏!只有在这个时候,祂才拥有战胜魔鬼的力量。独处并不是一种个人的灵性健康疗法,它更像是一个战场。

根据沙漠教父教母的智慧,独处会让你面对“灵魂的三大敌人”:

世界 - 当我们远离世界的喧嚣时,我们才会开始意识到自己的内心接受及妥协了多少罪恶的社,以致我们失去信念。

肉体 - 我们内心和身体本身被扭曲的欲望都会浮现出来。

魔鬼 - 恶魔般的念头攻击我们的心灵。

独处和安静的操练能在我们身心灵每个层面带来极大的改变。所有的邪恶势力都联手起来阻止我们以此种方式认识上帝,因为这可以终结神在我们生命中掌权的力量。

路得芭彤

C.S. 刘易斯 (C.S. Lewis) 在他的讽刺杰作《魔鬼代言人》(The Screwtape Letters) 中,创造了一系列虚构的书信往来,内容是高级恶魔斯克鲁皮 (Screwtape) 和他的学徒虫舌 (Wormwood) 之间关于如何最好地诱惑一个他们称为“病人”的年轻人的讨论。

斯克鲁皮说,魔鬼不能容忍的两件事 – 音乐和安静。因为这两件能使一个人对神敞开人心。魔鬼的反策略就是噪音。

然后斯克鲁皮说了一句惊人的话:

“最终,我们会让整个宇宙都充满噪音。”

这正是邪恶的计划 – 用噪音、干扰、琐事和消遣来填满你的生活。

但是,如果你依靠神的能力对抗邪恶,你就会发现困难的另一面是自由。留心观察那些花很多时间独处的人,他们通常是你认识中最平静、安详、快乐的人之一。他们身上散发着内心的平静。但这是一种经过困难得来的平静。关键在于坚持下去 - 永远坚持!

我们大多数人不是蒙召辞职然后搬到沙漠隐居。然而,所有追随耶稣的人都被呼召在日常生活中,通过既定的节奏和习惯,塑造出属于自己的“旷野”体验。

练习

过去几次练习中,我们一直学习怎么沉默和静默祷告。今天,我们想邀请大家更深入怎么与神独处。与神独处,最终的目标是聆听祂的声音,胜过我们头脑中所有其他声音,尤其是来自我们灵魂的三大敌人。分辨神的真理与敌人谎言的最终判断在于圣经。这就是为什么耶稣在独处面对敌人的谎言时,祂能够镇定地引用圣经,让自己扎根于神的真理中。

我们今天要进行的练习叫做 (Lectio Divina),这是一个拉丁语,意思是“灵修阅读”。这是一种以缓慢和祷告的心态阅读圣经,聆听神对你生命说话最古老的方式。

1. 以缓慢和祷告的心阅读一段经文,注意任何让你印象深刻或深深触摸你心里的字,词句或想法。我们建议你从诗篇、福音书或新约书信开始。
2. 默想。再次阅读这段经文,这次仔细琢磨那些触摸你的话语,缓慢地思考它们,想想神可能会对你说什么。
3. 接着祷告将你心里的感受回应给神。
4. 安息于神对你慈爱的话语中。让你的整个身体慢下来,沉浸在神的同在与平安中。