

**2023-02-26 ... 8am Communion Sermon ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt**

**Matthew 4: 1 – 11**

**Lent 1**

We can look at and experience Lent as a time of transition. We move from Christmas and the early life and ministry of Jesus from the temptations and all the way to Good Friday ... and then Easter Day.

For Jesus this idea of transition is also present. Straight from the rite of baptism by John, we are told Jesus is 'led by the Spirit' into the wilderness, for his own journey of transition into his role as leader and saviour.

He is offered choices that test his identity and purpose, and he draws on wisdom texts to guide him. Although hungry and exhausted, he comes through the trial, demonstrating a secure sense of who he is and who he serves. Just like Jesus, we often find that in coming through times of challenge or trial, we can experience transformation. 'Post-traumatic growth' is the phrase researchers have used to describe the positive change that results from wrestling with the effects of traumatic events. Survivors describe a deeply meaningful and spiritual change in their relationship with themselves and the world, as they struggle to make sense of abusive experiences or other traumatic experiences.

Young or old, new or mature in our Christian faith, Lent is an invitation to enter our personal wilderness and renew our relationship with ourselves and our calling. It's often our inner demons that tempt us. Can we trust ourselves to make good choices and do the right thing? Can we overcome any sense of shame or worthlessness to have confidence in who we are and how we live our life? Can God find us trustworthy? And do we trust God – to provide, to keep us safe, to give us the wisdom and guide us on our way?

Facing up to the temptations to choose badly can be hard. Do I bother to make that phone call to a friend in need or do I settle down with a good book or a favourite TV programme instead? Can I forgive myself for the shame of my mistakes or do I somehow hang onto them and am restricted by them? Jesus reassures us that by seeking God's loving guidance, we don't journey alone and even these struggles can lead to growth. Amen.

Adapted from: [Explore and respond \(rootsontheweb.com\)](https://www.rootsontheweb.com)