

- INTO — THE DESERT





You are invited to attend The Clearing,
a contemplative worship experience
held the 2nd Saturday of every month at the

Vineyard Church of Augusta
3126 Parrish Rd., Augusta GA 30907

-OR-

Online

Please check our website the week prior
to confirm the format.

From 9-10 am

The next Clearing will be held on:

March 13th

Please join us as we rest from the noise and busyness of life.
Prayer prompts and Scripture meditation exercises are offered
as an invitation to be still in God's presence.

Questions? Please contact:

Michelle Bauer

706.863.9766 - michelle@vineyardaugusta.org



Looking for a place to call home?

Join us Sundays @ 10 AM

In person or online at Facebook Live
Vineyard Church of Augusta

Nursery through middle school ministry
at each celebration.

Small group opportunities
throughout the week.

For more information, please call 706.863.9766
or go online: vineyardaugusta.org

3126 Parrish Rd., Augusta, GA

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5*

So often we hear this familiar verse as a command – something to be obeyed. But what if we heard it as an invitation? God, who loves *you* with all of his heart, soul and strength, is inviting you to love him back. That changes everything!

If your desire is to accept this divine invitation then we must begin to prepare our hearts and souls and bodies for the task of loving well. For many, it is easier to think about strengthening our bodies than it is our souls. We are grateful for opportunities to build muscle and condition our cardiovascular systems. If we aren't careful, though, our souls are left behind.

This series of booklets has been designed as tool to care for your soul. Or better yet, as a tool that will allow *God* to care for your soul. When you are able, find a few moments in a quiet space to talk with and listen to God. We trust that God will be waiting to meet you there.

If you would like to talk with someone about your faith or would like someone to pray for you, you are invited to send an email to prayer@vineyardaugusta.org.

Into the Desert



During the month of March many Christians around the world observe the season of Lent. We set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday (Feb 17th) and Easter (April 4th) for self-reflection and repentance. In this way, we imitate the time that Jesus spent in the desert in prayer and fasting.

This month we will walk through Jesus' experience of temptation in the desert. In the desert we are stripped of our masks and come face-to-face with our weakness. In the desert we are faced with our sin and invited to give up our struggle for control. As we remember the temptations Jesus faced, we will confess our sinful choices and ask for God's mercy. The desert is a harsh place but also a place where healing can begin. We pray that will be true for you!

Luke 4: 1-13

1. 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 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.'"
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.'"
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.'"
12. Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"
13. When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Week One
Sunday, February 28th – Saturday, March 6th

When you are able, find a quiet spot
and spend a few moments alone with God.

Quiet

Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

Read

Slowly read through Luke 4: 1-13.

*The complete text of the passage has been included
at the beginning of this booklet.*

Ponder

Sunday: Luke tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. How does trusting the Spirit to lead you allow you the opportunity to rest?

Monday: How comfortable are you with the Holy Spirit? What have you been taught about the Holy Spirit? What more would you like to learn or experience?

Tuesday: The Holy Spirit plays a main role in this story from Jesus' life. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your day-to-day life? What would growth in the Spirit look like for you? Talk to him about that.

Wednesday: Are you able to remember a time when you felt full of the Holy Spirit? What was that experience like? If your desire is to experience more of that feeling, talk to God about that.

Thursday: How do you feel about the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the desert where struggle and temptation lurk? What fears do you have about where the Spirit might lead you?

Friday: When have you found yourself in a desert place? How would you describe that place to someone else? What did you learn there? In what ways was your relationship with Jesus strengthened or weakened in the desert?

Saturday: "...he was hungry." This seems like an understatement, to say the least. How would you re-write the ending of this verse? How might physical hunger have affected Jesus emotionally, spiritually and mentally?

Quiet

Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

Pray

Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.



*Leave this quiet time trusting
that you are not alone in the desert.*

Week Two
Sunday, March 7th – Saturday, March 13th

When you are able, find a quiet spot
and spend a few moments alone with God.

Quiet

Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

Read

Slowly read through Luke 4: 1-13.

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at the beginning of this booklet.*

Ponder

Sunday: Being confident in our identity as a child of God gives us permission to rest from our striving. In what ways do you sense yourself striving? Allow yourself to rest today in God's love and full acceptance.

Monday: When you are meeting new people, what are the first three things you tell them about yourself? What are you hoping those things communicate about you?

Tuesday: The devil is convinced that he can distract Jesus by questioning his identity. What do you notice about what Jesus doesn't say in response to this taunt? Do you sense that Jesus has any need to prove who he is?

Wednesday: It's been 40 days and Jesus is hungry. What would have been so wrong about him making some bread to eat? The devil is tempting Jesus with self-sufficiency. Jesus shouldn't have to wait to be fed. He can make bread! In what ways are you tempted by the idea of self-sufficiency?

Thursday: Have you, or someone you know, experienced food deprivation in their life? What are the long-term results of that experience? What role do you think the Spirit played in Jesus' ability to remain centered on his mission and purpose during this time?

Friday: In this passage, Jesus demonstrates his knowledge of the Scriptures. He wasn't born knowing them. He learned them. What has your experience of memorizing Scripture been like? What would growth in this practice look like for you?

Saturday: Jesus responds to temptation by telling the devil, "Man does not live on bread alone." Re-write this verse to reflect your personal temptation. I do not live on _____ alone. Experiment with using this as a prayer as you face temptation.

Quiet

Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

Pray

Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.



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Week Three
Sunday, March 14th – Saturday, March 20th

When you are able, find a quiet spot
and spend a few moments alone with God.

Quiet

Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

Read

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at the beginning of this booklet.*

Ponder

Sunday: What a kind and loving God we follow! He desires to be worshiped today through your rest. Set aside your tasks for as long as you are able today and rest in his presence.

Monday: What promise of God brings you the most comfort when you are in a desert place? The devil has taken a promise that the Father has made to Jesus and twisted it. In times of temptation and suffering, are you tempted to hear God's promises from a different slant? How hard is it for you to trust God when things are hard?

Tuesday: The devil was offering Jesus a short cut. The Father had promised Jesus authority over all the kingdoms of the world, but the devil's plan would have allowed Jesus to skip over the cross. What would the devil's shortcut for you be? What would it allow you to skip over?

Wednesday: Superman's weakness was Kryptonite. What is your Kryptonite? How are you and God working together to protect this vulnerable spot?

Thursday: The devil isn't exactly sure what Jesus' Kryptonite is. So, he tries out a couple of things to see what gets a reaction. Authority and splendor works with a lot of people but not Jesus. Why not?

Friday: If the devil was going to offer you something on a silver platter, what would be the most tempting? Why? The devil was offering Jesus control of the world. In what areas do you seek to be in control? What is God teaching you about your need for control?

Saturday: What or who, besides God, are you tempted to worship? When did you first experience this temptation? How have you tried to break the power of this temptation? Talk to God about this struggle.

Quiet

Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

Pray

Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.



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Week Four
Sunday, March 21st – Saturday, March 27th

When you are able, find a quiet spot
and spend a few moments alone with God.

Quiet

Once you have found a comfortable place, spend a few moments in silence. Take a few deep breaths and feel your body begin to relax. When you feel your mind becoming quiet, offer a simple prayer to God, thanking him for his presence and inviting him to speak to you.

Read

Slowly read through Luke 4: 1-13.

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at the beginning of this booklet.*

Ponder

Sunday: This week we will see the devil tempt Jesus with the idea of forcing God to speed up his plan. What would it look like for you to rest in God's timing today?

Monday: When do you most feel like a child of God? When do you struggle to feel like God's child? The devil again strikes at Jesus' identity as the Son of God. What do you think allowed Jesus to stand strong against these attacks? What do you learn from Jesus' example?

Tuesday: The devil has taken Jesus to the religious center of the Jewish world and invited him to reveal himself as the Messiah. What experiences would Jesus have avoided if he had accepted? How does it feel to be doubted and misunderstood?

Wednesday: The devil quotes the Bible back to Jesus but, true to form, twists it to fit his scheme. He quotes from Psalm 91 but leaves out verse 9 which says “*If you make the Most High your dwelling... then no harm will befall you.*” How would throwing himself off the temple disqualify Jesus from the promise of this verse? In what ways are you making the Most High your dwelling?

Thursday: In this temptation, the devil is offering Jesus control over the timeline. “Why wait to be revealed as the Messiah when we can go to the temple and show everyone right now?” In what situation would you like to gain control of the timeline? What would you do?

Friday: Jesus is content to let God be God. He feels no need to wrestle for control over timing or methods. What would it look like for you to let God be God over your life? What struggle would you be able to release? What question would you lay aside?

Saturday: It is hard to wait. In what situations do you find waiting the most difficult? Are there any situations where you don't mind waiting?

Quiet

Offer your ponderings to God and ask him to speak to you.

Pray

Offer a prayer in words to God. Thank him for his presence. Express your desire to experience his presence in an even deeper way.



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God Loves You



It's simple but true. You are loved by God – no matter who you are, what you've done, who you've disappointed, or what you have suffered.

Unlike others who may say they love you and fail to show it, God demonstrated his love for you by sending his son, Jesus, to earth to give his life as a ransom for yours.

Jesus died and was raised to life by his loving Father not as a one-time, show-off move but as an example of what God wants to do in *your* life. He wants to give you new life.

The invitation has been offered. How will you respond?

Maybe you are ready to tell Jesus that you want him to be your Savior and Lord? Maybe you want to begin a conversation with God?

Whatever your next step is, you will find God ready and waiting to listen and respond to you.

If you have questions or would like to talk about your next step with someone, please email us at prayer@vineyardaugusta.org.