

Into the Wild

2026-01-05 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Matthew 4

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

Look at the order of events in Matthew 3 and 4. At his baptism, Jesus hears his Father say: this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit leads him into the wilderness. Approval first, wilderness second. Pastor Matt's point is that the wilderness is not evidence that God is absent or displeased. Sometimes it follows his approval. And provision often arrives in a form nobody would call provision. A cloud heavy with rain looks exactly like a storm coming. He tied it to the church's twenty-one days of prayer and fasting: the wilderness does not test you to find failure. It proves what God already put in you.

To get started

- What is something good in your life that arrived looking like bad news at first?

Looking back at the message

The order of events in the passage is the whole point. Make sure everyone has it.

- 1 Jesus hears his Father's approval, and immediately the Spirit leads him into the wilderness. Why does that order matter for how we read our own hard seasons?
- 2 Pastor Matt said the wilderness proves what God has already put in you rather than hunting for your failure. What is the difference between being tested and being proven?
- 3 A cloud heavy with rain looks exactly like a storm coming. What in your life has been both the storm and the provision? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Matthew 3:16-17 and 4:1-2 together so the join is audible.

- 4 Read Matthew 3:16-17. What is said over Jesus, and who says it?
- 5 Read Matthew 4:1. Who leads Jesus into the wilderness, and what does the verse say the purpose is?
- 6 Verse 2 tells us that after forty days of fasting, Jesus was hungry. Why would the text bother saying something that obvious?
- 7 Read James 1:2-4. What does that passage say testing produces, and what is the finished product? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

Some people in the room are in a wilderness now. Do not explain it away for them.

- 8 Have you ever read a hard season as proof that God had pulled away from you? What did you conclude at the time?
- 9 If the wilderness can follow God's approval instead of your failure, how does that change the story you tell about your hardest seasons?
- 10 Pastor Matt suggested fasting from one thing for a season so God can take its place. What would you honestly choose?
- 11 What have you stopped hoping for? You do not have to say it out loud. OPTIONAL

The group together

Jesus went alone. Nobody here has to.

- 12 Jesus went into the wilderness alone. What could a group like this offer someone who is in one right now?
- 13 How do we encourage someone without minimizing what they are going through?
- 14 Is anyone here in a wilderness season the rest of us have not asked about?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What could you set aside for a season so that something else has room to grow?

You might pray about

- For those in a hard season who have read it as abandonment
- For provision we would not recognise as provision
- For endurance to have its full effect rather than being cut short
- For dreams that have quietly been put down