

The Voice of one calling in the Wilderness

by: Jess Mastriana

“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God...” (Luke 1:76-78, NIV)

John the Baptist had a special connection with his cousin, Jesus, before they were born. He leapt in the womb when Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, came to visit his mother, Elizabeth. We don't know much about John's youth except that his parents were advanced in age and Luke 1:80 says, “the child grew and became strong in spirit.” The Bible says John appeared in the wilderness, wearing clothes of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. When asked who he was he didn't hesitate in saying that he wasn't the Messiah. He told them, as Isaiah prophesied, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” John called people to repent for the forgiveness of their sins and to be baptized with water. He explained that one more powerful than he would be coming to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. When Jesus comes to be baptized, John announces, “Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NIV). Jesus came to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. (Matthew 3:13-15, NIV)

John the Baptist willingly spent time in the wilderness. Having the Spirit growing up, I can imagine the connection John felt with God by intentionally getting away in the wilderness. The closer my relationship becomes with God; my heart and soul crave ‘wilderness time’. When we are intentional, when we find time to truly Be Still with God, He finds us and fills us. If I could escape into the wilderness, I would run, right now, full sprint, into His arms. Even if it

is only for a limited time, I will intentionally find 'wilderness time' this Lent and I hope you will, too. There is no better time to re-center and prioritize our relationship with Jesus, than now.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so grateful for Your Presence in my life. As I humbly accept ashes upon my forehead this week, You come close and remind me of how much You love me. Even though I continually fall short, You forgive me and wash the dirt away, again and again. Throughout these next 40 days of Lent, bring me out into the wilderness, empty me of self and fill me with Your Presence. Draw my thoughts, my heart, my Spirit and soul to You as I reflect on the beauty and blessings only You can bring. Amen.