

WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING

**A year long quest for Spiritual formation,
reorientation and activation written by Brian
McLaren.**

Our Bible study is progressing through parts of the
above book.

We will be exploring God's Word progressively over
the next six months. Our first 7 lessons invite us to
**Join the Adventure – the adventure of the life,
Jesus.**

Women's Bible Study is held every Friday morning
from 10.30 to 11.30am in our Chapel – to ensure
safe distancing. We share a takeaway cuppa
afterwards.

**For further information please contact Rev. Judi
Turnham on
0423 375 714.**

JOIN THE ADVENTURE July 3rd

Introduction: To never be given a chance to succeed – that’s a tragedy. But in some ways it’s even worse to have your chance and not be ready for it. That’s why in almost every story of a great hero, there is an ordeal or a test that must be passed before the hero’s adventure can begin.

That was the case with Jesus. Before He could begin His public adventure, Jesus felt the Holy Spirit leading Him away from the crowds, away from the cities and away from the fertile Jordan Valley, out into the solitude of the harsh, dry, barren Judean desert.

Luke invites us to link Jesus’ fasting in the desert for 40 days to Moses who, before becoming the liberator of the Hebrew slaves, spent 40 years in the wilderness, where He eventually encountered God in the burning bush.

The newly liberated Hebrew slaves who were tested for 40 years in the wilderness before they were prepared to enter the promised land. Jesus is mirroring the experience of His ancestral people.

Read: Luke 4:1-13

Question: how do you imagine the devil in Luke’s story?

Luke uses vivid language of Jesus’ encounter with the devil. Some take this language literally. Others see the devil as a literary figure developed overtime by storytellers to personify all that is dark, evil and violent in human nature and culture.

Turn these stones into bread – the devil is saying you don’t need the character formation and self control that come from spiritual disciplines like fasting – that’s too hard and too long. You can have it all now – public influence, private self-indulgence if you use your miraculous powers to acquire what you desire.

You can rule over all the kingdoms of the world – the devil offers this if Jesus would worship him. Come on – fast track to power by acknowledging that self-seeking power, not self-giving love, reigns supreme.

Prove yourself as God's beloved child by throwing yourself off the temple – this suicidal move with angelic intervention would provide Jesus with the kind of public-relations spectacle that showmen love.

Question: how does Jesus respond to these temptations?

Jesus sets the course for the work before Him – not driven by a human lust for pleasure, power or prestige, but empowered by the Spirit.

If we want to join Jesus in His great work – we must face our own inner demons and discover the same Spirit-empowerment.

Read: Luke 4:14-30

Jesus goes to His hometown Nazareth and chooses a passage from Isaiah to read in the synagogue.

Question: why do you think this stirred up the people?

Jesus didn't say "someday this Scripture will be fulfilled" He said it is fulfilled today.

Imagine if a prophet arose today and said – now is the time to dismantle the military-industrial complex and reconcile with enemies. It's time for CEOs to slash their mammoth salaries and give generous raises to all their lowest-paid employees. It's time for criminals, weapons factories and armies to melt down their bullets and guns to make trumpets, swing sets and garden tools. It's time to stop plundering the earth for quick corporate profit and start healing the earth for long-term universal benefit.

And it's not someday or tomorrow – the time is today!!!

I wonder how many heads would spin?

No wonder Jesus needed that time of preparation in the wilderness. He needed to get His mission clear in His own heart so that He wouldn't be captivated by the expectations of adoring fans or intimidated by the threats of furious critics,

If we dare to follow Jesus and proclaim the radical dimensions of God's good news, as Jesus did, we will face the same dangers of intimidation.

Question: What do you think the reason was for Jesus to tell the two miracle stories?

Jesus escaped execution that day but it was just the start of hostile opposition. Soon He began to select individuals to be His followers. To become disciples of a rabbi meant entering a rigorous program of transformation, learning a new way of life, a new set of values, a new set of skills. It meant leaving behind the comforts of home and facing a new set of dangers on the road. One did not say YES to discipleship lightly.

The word ***Christian*** is more familiar to us today than the word ***Disciple***. Christian often seems to apply to some people who would throw Jesus off the cliff, rather than being His true followers.

The word Disciple occurs over 250 times in the New Testament. In contrast, the word Christian occurs only 3 times.

Perhaps the time has come to rediscover the power and challenge of that earlier, more primary word Disciple?

To be alive in the adventure of Jesus is to hear that challenging good news of today, and to receive that thrilling invitation to follow Him – and to take the first intrepid step on the road as a disciple.

Engage:

1. What one thought or idea from today's lesson especially intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenged, encouraged, warmed, warned, helped or surprised you?

2. Share a story about a time you went through some hardship or temptation that prepared you for a later opportunity; or a time when you missed an opportunity because you were unprepared.

For this week:

Activate: Write the word **DISCIPLE** in prominent places to remind yourself of Jesus' invitation to you.

Meditate: In silence, imagine Jesus calling your name and saying two words – **FOLLOW ME.**

Allow that invitation to stir a response in you at the deepest part of your being.