

February 22, 2026

**WISDOM IN THE WILDERNESS:
THE WILDERNESS AS A PLACE OF SPIRITUAL TESTING
Genesis 4.1-7, Matthew 18.8-9**

But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” Genesis 4.7

➤ The wilderness has the ability to **EXPOSE** our **SIN**.

The 8-Thoughts (sins): John Cassian (4th-5th c) Desert Father

- Gluttony (more than overeating)
- Greed (or love of money)
- Dejection (blaming others for our failings)
- Vainglory (boasting or showing off)
- Lust (more than just sex)
- Anger
- Acedia/Sloth (apathy or listlessness)
- Pride

Being in the wilderness during Lent is a good opportunity for us to perform a **SPIRITUAL AUDIT**.

Think of God’s warning to Cain of sin “crouching at your door.” Have you ever stopped to consider what sin(s) crouching at your door?

Two things to remember when thinking about this:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1.8-9

1. You are **NOT ALONE!** This affects **EVERYONE!**

2. You are **FORGIVEN!**

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace... Ephesians 1.7

- The wilderness can also inspire in us a passion for **HOLINESS**.
- We live a holy life by actively **OVERCOMING SIN**.

The bible uses strong, active language for opposing sin:

Gouge eye out, cut off hand/foot. Matthew 18.8-9

Throw off everything that hinders and sin that so easily entangles. Hebrews 12.1

Resist the devil (James 4.7)

Put to death the things of this world (Colossians 3.5)

Flee from sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6.18)

We will battle against sin the rest of our lives. Are you ready to fight?

Gluttony – fast one meal in the next week (or if you can’t for medical or other reasons perhaps you could fast from coffee or social media, for example).

Lust – Become mindful of the shows you are watching and the time spent on your devices.

Greed – lean into generosity every chance you get this week. Could you forego buying something for yourself, and gift that money to someone else?

Anger – Practice breath prayers this week as a way to calm your inner world or take time to pray for those people who frustrate you.

Dejection – Start a gratitude journal: begin each day this coming week by naming ten things you are thankful for.

Acedia/Sloth (Apathy/Listlessness) – Commit to prayer walking each day this week.

Vainglory (Boasting) – Fast any posting on social media this week which showcases admirable aspects of your life. Commit to spending more time listening to others and not sharing your own experiences.

Pride – Be honest with someone you trust about this week’s talk and the areas of struggle you are dealing with.

Walk with us this Lent while learning about the commitment of the Desert Fathers and Mothers by downloading the Lectio 365 app onto your phone at lectio365.com.