

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster  
Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Advent II  
Baruch 5:1-9, Cantic 19a the Song of Zechariah, (Luke 1:69-79),  
Philippians 1:3-11, Luke 3:1-6

Today we have images coming at us, both darkness and wilderness. Maybe this suggests that we are in Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas, like Lent but not quite so heavy but still.....

And I think we are all experiencing a time of darkness and wilderness.

I am reminded of the story I have told before, the one about the man who walking home one-night falls into a great big hole and cannot get out. He calls out for help and a man comes to the edge of the hole and looks down and jumps into the hole with the other man. The first man says to the second now there are two of us down here who can't get out. The second man says but now you're not alone.

The new thought I had is that maybe the second man had been in a situation similar before and that is the value of being in community together is walking with others in their time of pain and suffering without being able to solve the problem and get them out of the situation.

There is great value in having some kind of understanding about what the other is going through and being able to relate to what the other is feeling. So having gone through a similar situation may be very helpful.

The times we spend in the darkness and the wilderness can be a learning experience for us as individuals and also be of help to others when they are in their own time of darkness and wilderness.

Maybe that is what the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins is all about. We are to understand ourselves and know of our weaknesses which bring about a kind of humility which is the motivation to be in community and in relationship with God and others.

This time of isolation, of wilderness and darkness can be a time of learning, as we tend to learn more at this time, when we are in the valley of life, not on top of the mountain.

Unfortunately, at this time there is more a feeling of wilderness and darkness than mountaintop experience. We need to find some sort of balance and find joys and blessings we never saw before.

We can see and feel the wilderness, but where are the blessings?  
So, my final question is; where are the blessings and joys in your life today, even in this time of wilderness? What do you look forward to?

Amen