

SERMON NOTES:



1st March, 2026

Lent Part 3
Abide

Pastor Mick Spann

1. The Journey So Far

- Week 1: Jesus led into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1)
 - Not punishment or weakness, but preparation.
- Week 2: Battling distraction and sin
 - Not to earn salvation, but in response to salvation

2. Lent Is Not Just About Doing Less, it's about abiding more

- Lent is not mainly about what we give up
- It is about who we walk with

3. The Hidden Life with God

Matthew 6:6

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door...”

- Jesus assumes His followers will have a secret life with God
- What is done in secret matters
- Spiritual growth is often invisible

Matthew 6:1

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others...”

- Giving, praying, fasting — not for show
- It is possible to look spiritually active but remain spiritually shallow

4. Jesus Modelled This

Luke 5:16

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

5. The Vine and the Branches

John 15:4–5

“Remain in me... apart from me you can do nothing.”

- Jesus does not say: “try harder!” He says: “remain in me”
- A branch does not detach to produce fruit. It stays connected.
- Spiritual formation is absolutely essential... However it is also:
 - Hard to measure on a graph
 - Typically messy and slow

6. Prayer Is Not Secondary Work

Psalms 46:10

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Colossians 4:2

“Devote yourselves to prayer...”

- Devotion implies persistence
- A steady rhythm, not bursts

Galatians 6:9

“Let us not become weary... at the proper time we will reap...”

- You cannot rush roots
- You cannot microwave maturity

7. God’s Goal Is Transformation

- God is not primarily after our achievements
- He is shaping who we become
- Our transformation into Christlike love

Hebrews 12:1

“Throw off everything that hinders...”

James 4:8

“Come near to God and he will come near to you...”

8. Rest Is Found in Nearness

Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me... I will give you rest...”

- Rest is not found in productivity
- Rest is found in closeness

9. Practical Invitations for This Week

- Turn off the radio — talk to God
- Sit in silence during lunch
- Practice Lectio Divina (reflecting on a passage of scripture throughout the day)
- Set aside 10–30 minutes of prayerful stillness before the day begins

Ask in prayer:

- “Who do I want to be when I die?”
- What does God’s spirit desire to form in my character?

10. A Gentle Caution

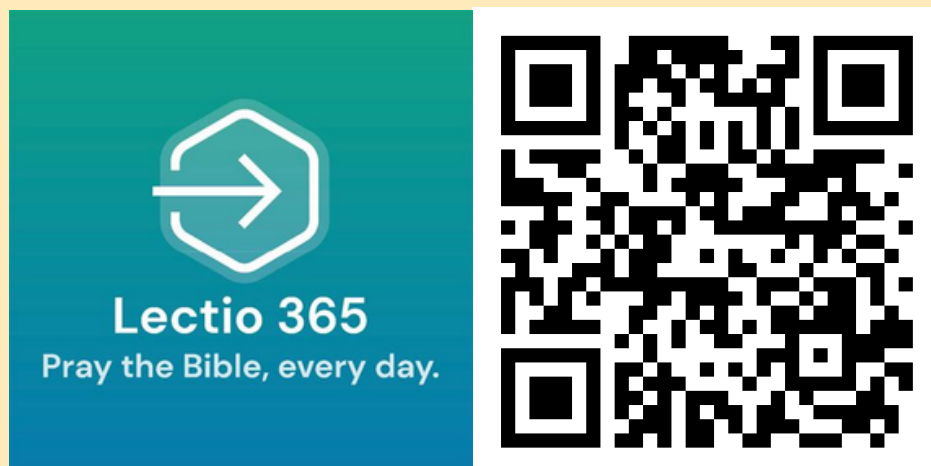
Even silence and prayer can become performance.

Don’t chase a spiritual high... and don’t worry about scoring how you’re doing...

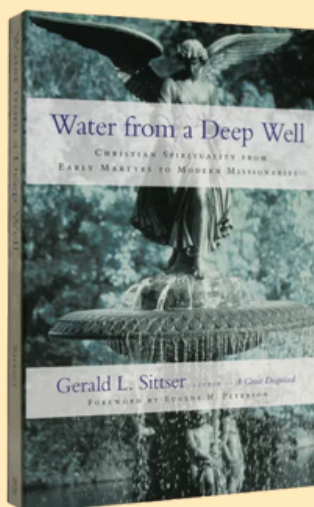
Simply trust that in the hidden places, God is doing His deepest work.

This series is based upon resources lovingly provided by Lectio 365 and the 24-7 Prayer Movement. The companion study guide on the next page is designed for small groups to consider each weekly theme more personally.

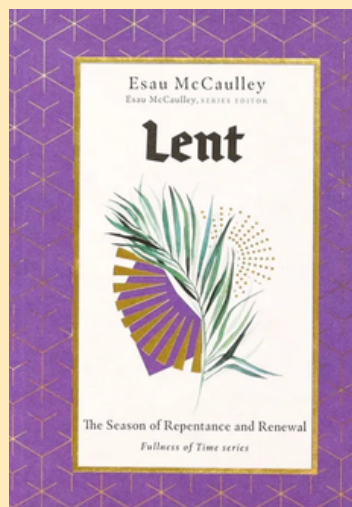
The Lectio 365 App provides daily guided prayers, in the style of meditative lectio divina. Over the next 40 days, the App will focus specifically upon these themes of Lent.



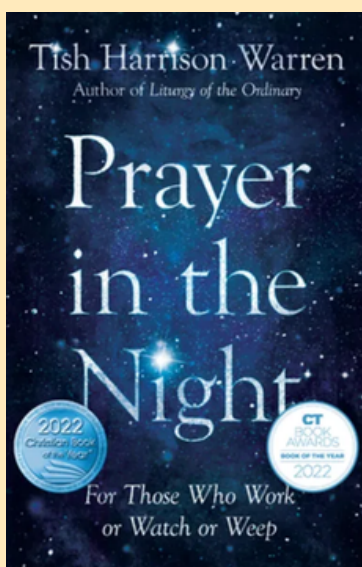
In preparation for this series, Mick has found these books to be very good:



Water from a Deep Well
by Gerald L. Sittser



Lent
by Esau McCauley



Prayer in the Night
by Tish Harrison
Warren





Week 3

(The second week after Ash Wednesday)

Loving Silence and Solitude

The Desert as a Place of Loneliness and Kindness

Icebreaker Question

What is the longest you have ever been silent?

Watch



lectio365.com/desertresources
Week 3: Macarius of Egypt

Read



Matthew 4:1–11
Luke 5:15–16

Discuss

1. Do you resist or avoid silence in your life?
2. When you do find yourself quiet and alone, what thoughts and feelings tend to bubble up to the surface?
3. In the video, Pete talked about the demon who was powerless against Macarius because of his humility. Discuss the ways in which you see a correlation between silence and solitude, and humility. Conversely, how can constant noise and busyness lead to pride in our lives?
4. The Psalmist says, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Do you find being still in God's presence an easy or a difficult thing to do? What do you think the Psalmist means by "know" in this verse?
5. Sabbath is an opportunity to resist the constant pressure to produce, and instead to stop, and trust that God is in control. Do you find it uncomfortable when you feel as if you aren't achieving and producing? How could you try and practise Sabbath this Lent?