

Rooted Resistance

The Work of Imagination | Lent 1

Jesus begins Lent not by moving forward, but by staying. Staying in the wilderness. Staying with hunger. Staying with silence. Staying faithful when shortcuts are offered.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has just heard the words, "You are my beloved." Almost immediately, that identity is tested. Not denied, but tested. The questions Jesus faces are subtle and familiar: *If this is who you are, why suffer? Why wait? Why not take the easier way?*

We know those questions well.

Jeremiah writes to people who want to go home, to be free, to escape exile. Instead, God invites them to do something unimaginative by the world's standards but deeply faithful: build, plant, seek the good of the place where you are. Stay. Let your roots grow even in foreign soil.

This is the work of imagination Lent invites us into. Not imagining a dramatic escape, but imagining faithfulness right here. Not imagining power, but imagining presence. Not imagining success, but imagining endurance.

Rooted resistance is not loud. It is not flashy. It does not rush. It shows up quietly, day after day, choosing trust over impulse, depth over speed, love over fear.

This week, notice where you feel the urge to take a shortcut. Where you want to hurry past discomfort, skip the hard conversation, grasp for certainty. Then pause. Breathe. Ask yourself: *What would it mean to stay rooted here?*

God is not absent in wilderness or exile. God is growing something there.

Reflection Questions

- Where in my life am I being tested with shortcuts right now?
- What might faithfulness look like if I chose staying over escaping?
- What practices help me grow deeper roots?

A Simple Prayer

God of the long road,
teach me the courage of staying.
Root me deeply in your love,
so I may resist what diminishes life
and remain faithful where I am.
Amen.