

Title: Crying Out In The Wilderness

**Scripture: John 1:6-8,19-28**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

**Commentary from Facilitator Maggie Gough:**

Overcoming the shame that comes with accessing safety net resources literally requires having to state that one needs help. When thinking about "crying out in the wilderness" in a way that calls to the presence of Jesus, it seems that the bravery it takes to ask for this type of support could be a modern day cry.

In the News: Millions of hungry Americans turn to food banks for 1<sup>st</sup> time

The deadly pandemic that tore through the nation's heartland struck just as Aaron Crawford was in a moment of crisis. He was looking for work, his wife needed surgery, then the virus began eating away at her work hours and her paycheck.

The Crawfords had no savings, mounting bills and a growing dread: What if they ran out of food? The couple had two boys, 5 and 10, and boxes of macaroni and cheese from the dollar store could go only so far.

A 37-year-old Navy vet, Crawford saw himself as self-reliant. Asking for food made him uncomfortable. "I felt like I was a failure," he says. "It's this whole stigma ... this mindset that you're this guy who can't provide for his family, that you're a deadbeat."

Hunger is a harsh reality in the richest country in the world. Even during times of prosperity, schools hand out millions of hot meals a day to children, and desperate elderly Americans are sometimes forced to choose between medicine and food.

Continue reading Millions of hungry Americans turn to food banks for 1<sup>st</sup> time by Sharon Cohen with AP News <https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-hunger-coronavirus-pandemic-4c7f1705c6d8ef5bac241e6cc8e331bb>