

Wilderness Experiences

Lessons we can learn

Psalms 42:1-5 (NIV)

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” 4 These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. 5 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

Introduction:

- We all go through “wilderness experiences”.
- Some of us are there right now!
- What should my perspective be?
- What should we learn?
- How long does it last?
- Why do we go through these seasons?

Today we will attempt to answer some of these questions.

Q. What comes to mind when I say “wilderness”?

- Barren, Empty, Dry
- Uncultivated, Unoccupied
- Deserted, Desolate, Desperation
- Waste land
- Lonely, Confused, Isolated, Feeling lost
- Place of survival, Place of hardships, Place of testing, Place of discipline
- There’s a Lack of comfort, very hot, very cold, little to no protection, no shelter, rocky terrain.
- “Without form” Gen 1:2
- Place of restlessness, Place of worry, anxiety, and feelings of depression, downcast, disturbed.
- Place of imminent death, Place of survival
- Place where you can easily lose your bearings, lose your mind, lose your way.

Q. Are you there? What do we do? What should we do?

Matthew 3:1-3 (NKJV)

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” 3

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "

- We never stop preaching This Gospel of Good News.
- We continue to be "a voice of one calling in the wilderness..."

Matthew 4:1-2 (NIV)

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."

- It is possible that The Spirit has led us to this place!
- If so, it is for a purpose!
- Jesus responded with **"it is written..."**.
- We need anchors in these seasons of wilderness Experiences.

- Luke 3:2 (NIV) "during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness."

- God's Word must anchor us in the wilderness.

- God's **Voice** must anchor us.
- God's **Presence** must anchor us.
- God's **Purpose** must anchor us.
- Know that God's **POSITION** does not change when ours does.
- Know that God's **PURPOSE** does not change.
- Know that God's **POWER** does not change.
- Know that God's **PROVISION** does not change.
- Know that God's **PEACE** is still available.

It's a place of **PREPARATION**.

- God shaped Moses in the wilderness, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Joseph, David, Jesus....Paul...etc
- Maintain an **ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE**. God is at work in us and through us. Romans 8:28," ... God is at work in ALL things.."
- *John 3:14-16 (NKJV) "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*
- **It's a place of HOPE & HEALING. God makes a way!**
- *John 6:48-51 (NKJV) 48 "I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone*

eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

- It's a place of **PROVISION**.
- It's a place of **divine REVELATION**.

Our Response:

Hebrews 3:7-8 (NKJV)

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, “

James 1:2-3 (NIV)

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

Philippians 4:4-7 (NKJV)

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord [is] at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

ALSO:

- Don't blame God.
- Don't disconnect from community.
- Don't waste that time. Ask God what He is doing or teaching you.
- Maintain an eternal perspective based on God's promises, His Character and His faithfulness. Keep your eyes fixed on the goal. Jesus!
- Complaining doesn't help. Rather giving of thanks. Like Paul, he rejoiced in his suffering.
- Don't lose your joy. Rejoice. Sing His praises. Paul & Silas at midnight in prison!
- Cry out to God. Stay connected to God. Stay hungry and thirsty. He is our only hope!
- Trust God & His process.

Conclusion:

Like Joseph, **God took him from the PIT to the PALACE**, He will bring you through.

God is not done with me. He is not done with you.

He is the potter, we the clay. Surrender completely to Him. Lord, have Your Way!