



## Into the Wilderness – Understanding & Embracing the Dark Times of Your Life

Words translated as “wilderness” occur nearly 300 times in the Bible. Wilderness seasons are brutal, but God is powerfully at work in the wilderness seasons of our lives. The only question is, do we have eyes to see it?

In order for God to give us the choice whether or not to trust him, He must present us with a moment of crisis, and, since he wants us to seek help from Him, he brings us through the wilderness to remove all other help first. When we’re in a wilderness season, it’s easy to lose sight of God’s protection, provision, and preparation. We might even wonder, “How can I trust God’s goodness when I’m in this desolate place?” But remember Jesus! He went through the ultimate wilderness—the desolation and humiliation of dying under the curse of God. If that is the measure of God’s love and commitment to us, we can trust him in our own wilderness seasons. Let’s journey together!

Highland Colony Men’s Roundtable

[www.MensTable.com](http://www.MensTable.com)

Wilderness: The Experience – Feel It!

February 27, 2020

*A Man Understands how God uses the wilderness to shape and train.*

**Bible Verses:** I Peter 4:1,2;

**Music:** Third Day - Cry Out To Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeGNgBwPTMA>

**Videos:** Band Of Brothers – Disc Two – Part 4 – Replacements

**Resources:** *Walking with God through Pain & Suffering* by Timothy Keller.

*Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* by Diane Langberg.

*Restoring the Shattered Self – A Christian’s Counselor’s Guide to Complex Trauma* by Heather Davediuk Gingrich.

### Into the Wilderness: The Wilderness Experience.

- \_\_\_\_\_ → Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent—the 40 day period leading up to Easter. The Lord has always used a time period of 40 to change, test, grow, and challenge His people. What does God have in mind when He takes us on a wilderness experience? See Exodus 15:22-27. Exodus 16 & 17 → What God did next ... God provided – His mercy, grace, and kindness was evident.
- Wilderness journeys are marked by three characteristics:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → Get alone with God and be quiet. A wilderness experience can be the time where you develop your own faith and relationship with God, not living out someone’s faith. Spiritual solitude builds character.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → Fear and depression is often the beginning of transformation. Elijah wanted to die. Israel grumbled and complained throughout their wilderness experience. They asked to go back to slaves. God wants to build strength and stamina through wilderness experiences.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → God uses wilderness experiences to prepare us because preparation builds confidence and readiness to pursue God’s mission for our lives. Jonah needed three days in the belly of a fish to get his heart right before preaching to Nineveh (Jonah 2:1-10). Moses needed 40 years separate himself and his people from the Egyptian identity, embrace God, and return to God.

### Into the Wilderness: Weeping My Way Home.

- \_\_\_\_\_ → Job’s grief was expressed with powerful emotion and soaring rhetoric (Job 1:20-22). Job was not afraid to express his anger, cries, or laments. He did not “make nice” with God, praying politely. He was brutally honest about his feelings. God did forcefully call Job to acknowledge his wisdom and majesty and He ultimately vindicated him (Job 42:1-11).
- \_\_\_\_\_ → We should never say to ourselves or another person in grief and sorrow “pull yourself together.” Suffering people need to be able to weep and pour out their hearts, and not to immediately be shut down by being told what to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ → There is seldom a place provided for lamentation in a man’s journey. We need the freedom to weep and cry out! Psalm 88:1-18 – an invitation to be open and candid about our inner turmoil, to pour it out and express it honestly.

### Into the Wilderness: Jesus Leads the Way.

- \_\_\_\_\_ → We may feel God has abandoned us, but if we have put our faith in Christ, there is “no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1). He is always working “all things” out for good (Rom. 8:28).
- \_\_\_\_\_ → Jesus really was abandoned by God. When Jesus died, He felt the darkness of betrayal, denial, rejection, being forsaken by His Father. Total darkness was indeed Jesus’ only friend (Matthew 27:45-46). Because Jesus was truly abandoned by God, we only seem to be or feel to be abandoned by Him. But are NOT abandoned, despite our failures. Because of Jesus—there is always hope, even in the darkest moments of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ → Sorrow and Grief drive us into God and shows us the resources we never had (I Peter 1:6-9). YES! – Feel the grief. Jesus felt his sorrow and he wept in His grief. He is always weeping, a man of sorrows. The weeping drives us into the joy, it enhances the joy, and then the joy enables you to actually feel your grief without it sinking you. Then, you are emotionally healthy when you feel the sorrow, the pain, and the sadness.

### ACTION: Journal this!

- What benefit has the Wilderness been to you?
- How was weeping/crying modeled for you as you were growing up?
- Who do you know that is in the wilderness NOW?

## Bible Verses – The Message

**I Peter 4:1,2 - 1** Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. **2** Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.

**Exodus 15:22-27 - 22** Moses led Israel from the Red Sea on to the Wilderness of Shur. They traveled for three days through the wilderness without finding any water. **23** They got to Marah, but they couldn't drink the water at Marah; it was bitter. That's why they called the place Marah (Bitter). **24** And the people complained to Moses, "So what are we supposed to drink?" **25** So Moses cried out in prayer to God. God pointed him to a stick of wood. Moses threw it into the water and the water turned sweet. **26** That's the place where God set up rules and procedures; that's where he started testing them. God said, "If you listen, listen obediently to how God tells you to live in his presence, obeying his commandments and keeping all his laws, then I won't strike you with all the diseases that I inflicted on the Egyptians; I am God your healer." **27** They came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. They set up camp there by the water.

**Job 1:20-22 - 20** Job got to his feet, ripped his robe, shaved his head, then fell to the ground and worshiped: **21** Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I'll return to the womb of the earth. God gives, God takes. God's name be ever blessed. **22** Not once through all this did Job sin; not once did he blame God.

**Job 42:1-11 - 1** Job answered God: **2** "I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything. Nothing and no one can upset your plans. **3** You asked, 'Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?' I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head. **4** You told me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.' **5** I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand - from my own eyes and ears! **6** I'm sorry - forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor."

**7** After God had finished addressing Job, he turned to Eliphaz the Temanite and said, "I've had it with you and your two friends. I'm fed up! You haven't been honest either with me or about me - not the way my friend Job has. **8** So here's what you must do. Take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my friend Job. Sacrifice a burnt offering on your own behalf. My friend Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer. He will ask me not to treat you as you deserve for talking nonsense about me, and for not being honest with me, as he has." **9** They did it.

Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what God commanded. And God accepted Job's prayer. **10** After Job had interceded for his friends, God restored his fortune - and then doubled it! **11** All his brothers and sisters and friends came to his house and celebrated. They told him how sorry they were, and consoled him for all the trouble God had brought him. Each of them brought generous housewarming gifts.

**Psalms 88:1-18 - 1** God, you're my last chance of the day. I spend the night on my knees before you. **2** Put me on your salvation agenda; take notes on the trouble I'm in. **3** I've had my fill of trouble; I'm camped on the edge of hell. **4** I'm written off as a lost cause, one more statistic, a hopeless case. **5** Abandoned as already dead, one more body in a stack of corpses, And not so much as a gravestone - I'm a black hole in oblivion. **6** You've dropped me into a bottomless pit, sunk me in a pitch-black abyss. **7** I'm battered senseless by your rage, relentlessly pounded by your waves of anger. **8** You turned my friends against me, made me horrible to them. I'm caught in a maze and can't find my way out, **9** blinded by tears of pain and frustration. I call to you, God; all day I call. I wring my hands, I plead for help. **10** Are the dead a live audience for your miracles? Do ghosts ever join the choirs that praise you? **11** Does your love make any difference in a graveyard? Is your faithful presence noticed in the corridors of hell? **12** Are your marvelous wonders ever seen in the dark, your righteous ways noticed in the Land of No Memory? **13** I'm standing my ground, God, shouting for help, at my prayers every morning, on my knees each daybreak. **14** Why, God, do you turn a deaf ear? Why do you make yourself scarce? **15** For as long as I remember I've been hurting; I've taken the worst you can hand out, and I've had it. **16** Your wildfire anger has blazed through my life; I'm bleeding, black and blue. **17** You've attacked me fiercely from every side, raining down blows till I'm nearly dead. **18** You made lover and neighbor alike dump me; the only friend I have left is Darkness.

**I Peter 1:6-9 - 6** I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. **7** Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory. **8** You never saw him, yet you love him. You still don't see him, yet you trust him - with laughter and singing. **9** Because you kept on believing, you'll get what you're looking forward to: total salvation.

## Cry Out To Jesus – By Third Day

<p>To everyone who's lost someone they love Long before it was their time You feel like the days you had were not enough When you said goodbye And to all of the people with burdens and pains Keeping you back from your life You believe that there's nothing and there is no one Who can make it right There is hope for the helpless Rest for the weary Love for the broken heart There is grace and forgiveness Mercy and healing He'll meet you wherever you are Cry out to Jesus, Cry out to Jesus For the marriage that's struggling just to hang on</p>	<p>They lost all of their faith in love They've done all they can to make it right again Still it's not enough For the ones who can't break the addictions and chains You try to give up but you come back again Just remember that you're not alone in your shame And your suffering There is hope for the helpless Rest for the weary Love for the broken heart There is grace and forgiveness Mercy and healing He'll meet you wherever you are Cry out to Jesus When you're lonely And it feels like the whole world is falling on you You just reach out, you just cry out to Jesus</p>	<p>Cry to Jesus To the widow who suffers from being alone Wiping the tears from her eyes For the children around the world without a home Say a prayer tonight There is hope for the helpless Rest for the weary Love for the broken heart There is grace and forgiveness Mercy and healing He'll meet you wherever you are  There is hope for the helpless Rest for the weary Love for the broken heart There is grace and forgiveness Mercy and healing He'll meet you wherever you are Cry out to Jesus, Cry out to Jesus Cry out to Jesus, Cry out to Jesus</p>
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## **Wilderness: The Experience – “Feel it!”**

*1 Peter 4:1-2*



# Into the Wilderness: The Wilderness Experience

1. **Experience** → Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent—the 40 day period leading up to Easter. The Lord has always used a time period of 40 to change, test, grow, and challenge His people. What does God have in mind when He takes us on a wilderness experience? See Exodus 15:22-27. Exodus 16 & 17 → What God did next ... God provided – His mercy, grace, and kindness was evident.
2. Wilderness journeys are marked by three characteristics:
  1. **Solitude** → Get alone with God and be quiet. A wilderness experience can be the time where you develop your own faith and relationship with God, not living out someone's faith. Spiritual solitude builds character.
  2. **Challenge** → Fear and depression is often the beginning of transformation. Elijah wanted to die. Israel grumbled and complained throughout their wilderness experience. They asked to go back to slaves. God wants to build strength and stamina through wilderness experiences.
  3. **Preparation** → God uses wilderness experiences to prepare us because preparation builds confidence and readiness to pursue God's mission for our lives. Jonah needed three days in the belly of a fish to get his heart right before preaching to Nineveh (Jonah 2:1-10). Moses needed 40 years separate himself and his people from the Egyptian identity, embrace God, and return to God.

# Into the Wilderness: Weeping My Way Home

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2. **Weep, Feel Anger, & Feel Hopeless** → We should never say to ourselves or another person in grief and sorrow "pull yourself together." Suffering people need to be able to weep and pour out their hearts, and not to immediately be shut down by being told what to do.
3. **Find a Place** → There is seldom a place provided for lamentation in a man's journey. We need the freedom to weep and cry out! Psalm 88:1-18 – an invitation to be open and candid about our inner turmoil, to pour it out and express it honestly.

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2. **Jesus Takes the Darkness** → Jesus really was abandoned by God. When Jesus died, He felt the darkness of betrayal, denial, rejection, being forsaken by His Father. Total darkness was indeed Jesus’ only friend (Matthew 27:45-46). Because Jesus was truly abandoned by God, we only seem to be or feel to be abandoned by Him. But are NOT abandoned, despite our failures. Because of Jesus—there is always hope, even in the darkest moments of life.
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