



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

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Wilderness: 7 Men Who Faced the Wilderness – Jonah

October 29, 2020

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

Bible Verses: I Peter 4:1,2; Jonah 1:1-17; Jonah 2:1,2; Jonah 4:1-11; Matthew 12:38-42

Music: Break every chain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t0LACmb4SE>

Videos: Author Eric Metaxas on Bonhoeffer, The Prophet and Spy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GHHg0QscIA>

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: Gideon in the Wilderness.

1. _____ → **Judges (6:1–10).** Israel responds to Midian’s oppression in two ways. First, they hide in mountain caves and holes dug out of the ground (6:2), but this approach just makes Midian’s oppression of Israel worse. Their second approach is much better. The people of Israel finally cry out to the Lord for help (6:6). When Israel cries out to the Lord for help, the Lord sends a prophet to speak before he sends a judge to save (6:7–10). The prophet delivers a word from the Lord that explains Israel’s subjugation at the hand of Midian. See Deuteronomy 8.
2. _____ → **Judges (6:11–16).** Israel was in trouble when God approached Gideon, declaring him to be a mighty warrior and calling him to save his people from the Midianites. But Gideon balked at the words and the call. Gideon was wrestling with his faith with questions similar to those we deal with. He wondered, if God had abandoned them, but cried out for favor.
3. _____ → **Judges (6:17–40).** Seeing the angel of the Lord changes Gideon’s life. Gideon is first called to eradicate the idols in the household of his father, and he clearly obeys this command of the Lord (v. 27). The text is also clear that Gideon is “afraid” to obey such a command, given the danger of the situation. Fear and faith are not at odds, however. Gideon obeys in fear and by faith. Having first destroyed the idols in the household of his father, Gideon is now called to destroy the Midianites (et al.) from the land. After summoning warriors from the tribes of Israel (vv. 34–35), Gideon asks for a public sign from the Lord—the well-known fleece signs. Many have suggested that Gideon’s request shows weakness and lack of faith. But consider the facts: first, Gideon is “clothed” with the Spirit when he makes this request (v. 34); and, second, the Lord willingly performs these signs without any rebuke of Gideon. If Gideon already knows the will of God, why does he ask the Lord to perform these fleece signs? See Exodus 4:1-8.

Into the Wilderness: Wilderness Lessons from Gideon.

1. _____ → When Gideon needs to know how it would ever be possible for him to do the will of God in his life, the Lord answers, “I will be with you” ([Judg. 6:16](#)).
1. _____ → When the Lord called Moses to save Israel from Egypt, Moses asked the same question and received the same answer: “I will be with you” ([Ex. 3:11–12](#)). This promise from the Lord is so central to his plan of redemption that it is enshrined in his covenantal name. Just after the Lord promised that he would “be with” Moses, the Lord revealed his covenantal name, “I am,” or “I will be” ([Ex. 3:14](#)). This raises the question, “I am” or “I will be” what? The answer is multifaceted, but part of the answer is surely that the Lord “will be with you” in light of his divine promise, “I will be with you” ([Ex. 3:12](#)).
2. _____ → This is seen also in another Hebrew name, Immanuel, which means “God with us” (see [Isa. 7:14](#)). It is no accident, then, that the name Immanuel is applied to Jesus ([Matt. 1:23](#)) as the ultimate expression of the promise, “I will be with you.” The divine presence is the one reality in the universe that can satisfy fully for all times ([Ps. 16:11](#)), and this is why it is the very hope of eternity ([Rev. 21:3](#)).
2. _____ → The power to do the will of God is forever fueled by the promise of God in Christ, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” ([Matt. 28:20](#)).
3. _____ . One thing is crystal clear in the book of Judges: Israel’s suffering and hardship is not due to the Lord’s failure to protect and provide for his people but is due to their disobedience to God and his covenantal word (see [Judg. 2:2; 6:10](#)). This reality is as old as sin itself. The first man, Adam, experienced the same reality. Remember what God said to Adam: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life” ([Gen. 3:17](#)). If Adam’s disobedience merited God’s curse, and if Israel’s disobedience merited God’s curse, and if we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God ([Rom. 3:23](#)), then what hope is there for us? The good news of the gospel is that our only hope for perfect and complete obedience from the heart is found in the obedience of Jesus Christ. Only by being united to him can we know for certain that we have God’s favor. Praise God, then, that he has provided in Jesus all that he requires from us: “As by the one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s [Jesus’] obedience the many will be made righteous” ([Rom. 5:19](#)).
4. _____ → When Gideon is called for service by the angel of the Lord, he asks about all of the great miracles performed by God in the days of Moses ([Judg. 6:13](#)). To most of us it seems as if the angel of the Lord simply ignores his question and moves forward with Gideon’s commissioning, but not so. The details of the text provide the answer to Gideon’s question. Since Gideon longs for the days of Moses, the Lord will make Gideon into a new Moses. The connections between Gideon and Moses are no accident; they constitute the answer to his question. Both men are called to deliver God’s people from foreign oppression. Both men object by stating that they are not qualified for the job. Both men receive the promise of the divine presence as the answer to their objection. Both men receive private and public signs to confirm their calling. Both men destroy the illicit idols present in the midst of God’s people. Both men build altars and make offerings to the Lord. Finally, both men speak with God face to face. When man needs a new deliverer, he needs a new Moses. When

we need saving, we need a new exodus. It is no accident, then, that when the greatest act of salvation in the history of the world is to occur through Jesus, Moses reappears to speak with Jesus about his "departure," or, more precisely in Greek, his exodus (Luke 9:30-31).

ACTION: Journal this!

1. What relationship keeps you anchored in reality?
2. How empowered are you to do what you know you need to do?
3. Who do you know that is in the Wilderness?

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.

Jonah 1:1-17 - 1 One day long ago, God's Word came to Jonah, Amittai's son: **2** "Up on your feet and on your way to the big city of Nineveh! Preach to them. They're in a bad way and I can't ignore it any longer." **3** But Jonah got up and went the other direction to Tarshish, running away from God. He went down to the port of Joppa and found a ship headed for Tarshish. He paid the fare and went on board, joining those going to Tarshish - as far away from God as he could get. **4** But God sent a huge storm at sea, the waves towering. **5** The sailors were terrified. They called out in desperation to their gods. They threw everything they were carrying overboard to lighten the ship. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship to take a nap. He was sound asleep. **6** The captain came to him and said, "What's this? Sleeping! Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe your god will see we're in trouble and rescue us." **7** Then the sailors said to one another, "Let's get to the bottom of this. Let's draw straws to identify the culprit on this ship who's responsible for this disaster." So they drew straws. Jonah got the short straw. **8** Then they grilled him: "Confess. Why this disaster? What is your work? Where do you come from? What country? What family?" **9** He told them, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship God, the God of heaven who made sea and land." **10** At that, the men were frightened, really frightened, and said, "What on earth have you done!" As Jonah talked, the sailors realized that he was running away from God. **11** They said to him, "What are we going to do with you - to get rid of this storm?" By this time the sea was wild, totally out of control. **12** Jonah said, "Throw me overboard, into the sea. Then the storm will stop. It's all my fault. I'm the cause of the storm. Get rid of me and you'll get rid of the storm." **13** But no. The men tried rowing back to shore. They made no headway. The storm only got worse and worse, wild and raging. **14** Then they prayed to God, "O God! Don't let us drown because of this man's life, and don't blame us for his death. You are God. Do what you think is best." **15** They took Jonah and threw him overboard. Immediately the sea was quieted down. **16** The sailors were impressed, no longer terrified by the sea, but in awe of God. They worshiped God, offered a sacrifice, and made vows. **17** Then God assigned a huge fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish's belly three days and nights.

Jonah 2:1,2 - 1 Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. **2** He prayed: "In trouble, deep trouble, I prayed to God. He answered me. From the belly of the grave I cried, 'Help!' You heard my cry.

Jonah 4:1-11 - 1 Jonah was furious. He lost his temper. **2** He yelled at God, "God! I knew it - when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That's why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness! **3** "So, God, if you won't kill them, kill me! I'm better off dead!" **4** God said, "What do you have to be angry about?" **5** But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city. **6** God arranged for a broad-leafed tree to spring up. It grew over Jonah to cool him off and get him out of his angry sulk. Jonah was pleased and enjoyed the shade. Life was looking up. **7** But then God sent a worm. By dawn of the next day, the worm had bored into the shade tree and it withered away. **8** The sun came up and God sent a hot, blistering wind from the east. The sun beat down on Jonah's head and he started to faint. He prayed to die: "I'm better off dead!" **9** Then God said to Jonah, "What right do you have to get angry about this shade tree?" Jonah said, "Plenty of right. It's made me angry enough to die!" **10** God said, "What's this? How is it that you can change your feelings from pleasure to anger overnight about a mere shade tree that you did nothing to get? You neither planted nor watered it. It grew up one night and died the next night. **11** So, why can't I likewise change what I feel about Nineveh from anger to pleasure, this big city of more than a hundred and twenty thousand childlike people who don't yet know right from wrong, to say nothing of all the innocent animals?"

Matthew 12:38-42 - 38 Later a few religion scholars and Pharisees got on him. "Teacher, we want to see your credentials. Give us some hard evidence that God is in this. How about a miracle?" **39** Jesus said, "You're looking for proof, but you're looking for the wrong kind. All you want is something to titillate your curiosity, satisfy your lust for miracles. The only proof you're going to get is what looks like the absence of proof: Jonah-evidence. **40** Like Jonah, three days and nights in the fish's belly, the Son of Man will be gone three days and nights in a deep grave. **41** "On Judgment Day, the Ninevites will stand up and give evidence that will condemn this generation, because when Jonah preached to them they changed their lives. A far greater preacher than Jonah is here, and you squabble about 'proofs.' **42** On Judgment Day, the Queen of Sheba will come forward and bring evidence that will condemn this generation, because she traveled from a far corner of the earth to listen to wise Solomon. Wisdom far greater than Solomon's is right in front of you, and you quibble over 'evidence.

"Break Every Chain" by Tasha Cobb

<p>There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain Break every chain, to break every chain, break every chain There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus</p>	<p>There is power in the name of Jesus To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain Break every chain, break every chain, break every chain There's an army rising up There's an army rising up There's an army rising up To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain There is power in the name of Jesus There is power in the name of Jesus</p>	<p>There is power in the name of Jesus To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain Break every chain, break every chain, break every chain There's an army rising up There's an army rising up There's an army rising up To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain I hear the chains falling There is power in the name of Jesus To break every chain, break every chain, break every chain</p>
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