

Surviving The Wilderness

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Date: 02 February 2025

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[0:00] I would like to direct your attention to Deuteronomy chapter 8. Again, thank you for being here with us today.

I pray that God continues to move and bless you in the remainder of this service and through the ministering of his word today.

I would never come to this pulpit with a feeling or thought that the word that I'm going to present to you is not important.

But especially today, I feel like this is a very important message for us today. Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 2. Verse 3.

And he humbled thee, and he suffered thee to hunger, and he fed thee with manna, which thou knowest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

[1:31] And I want to preach to you a very important message today, surviving the wilderness.

Surviving the wilderness. Help me pray. Lord Jesus, I thank you for this word today.

God, I pray, Lord, that you anoint me to deliver it. God, the word that you've placed in my heart for this congregation, for these people today. God, I pray, Lord, that you help me deliver it in the way that I received it when you gave it to me, God.

God, I know the importance of it. And I pray, Lord, that you give us ears to hear it today, Jesus. But not only ears to hear it, God, but you would motivate us into action to respond in a tangible way.

God, that would change our lives. And I give you the glory today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. You may be seated in the presence of the Lord. The setting today is in the land of Egypt at a time when the Israelites were slaves to Egypt.

God promised his people he would give them their own land in the land of Canaan. And it was called their promised land. And God used a man named Moses to deliver his people from their bondage.

[2:42] And after they left the bondage of Egypt and headed towards the promised land of Canaan, they had to go through a wilderness, a desert wilderness.

And it should have only taken them a short time, but they were wandering in that wilderness for 40 years. And then finally, after a whole rebellious generation died in the wilderness, God allowed them to enter into their promised land.

One thing that we need to understand is that in the Old Testament, the focus was on the physical. And in the New Testament, the focus is on the spiritual.

And so when you read things in the Old Testament, maybe in the Psalms, for example, you see David making prayers to God to utterly destroy his enemies.

Those were actually prayers to destroy flesh and blood people of enemy nations he was praying against. But in this dispensation of time that we are in today, we aren't picking up swords and fighting against God's enemies physically and killing people.

[3:53] But it's spiritual warfare that we fight. The Bible says we in this dispensation are not fighting against flesh and blood. It's a spiritual battle that we fight, a battle over the hearts and souls of men.

And so we look at the stories of the Old Testament and the things they went through physically. And we learn of their examples and how it pertains to us today spiritually.

When we read through the Old Testament story of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, we discover there were three major experiences that they went through. The first was the fact that they were literally slaves.

They were in bondage in Egypt for 430 years. Generation after generation went by, born into slavery. And they had an experience of being delivered from that bondage. And the second was the wilderness. They were in it for 40 years after coming out of Egypt. After being delivered from the bondage, they went through a wilderness for 40 years. [4:59] And then the third experience is when they crossed over that Jordan River and entered into that promised land that God had promised them. So deliverance from Egypt, surviving in the wilderness, and then crossing into the promised land.

Three different seasons of their existence. And as children of God, spiritual Israelites that we are, we go through the same exact three seasons in our experience with God. When we're born again, we experience deliverance from the bonds and the chains of the world. We're born into a sinful world. We're born into a sinful nature. We're bound by sin. We then have to survive a wilderness of spiritual growth and maturity after we're delivered from those things.

When we experience deliverance from that, we still have to go through that wilderness. And it's for spiritual growth and maturity. And then the promised land for us is a state of living.

[5:59] In which we are completely and totally surrendered to God. And we're operating in the power of the Spirit. In the place that we're meant to be in God's plan and will.

And the promised land is a state of existence in which we are totally sold out to God. God is in his rightful place in our lives. God's sitting on the throne of our lives.

We've removed ourselves from that place. We've removed other things from that throne in our lives. And we've placed and allowed God to be there. And like the Israelites, when they got into their promised land, they were still fighting battles.

And they still had to overcome obstacles. But the difference was they were doing it in the place that God called them to be. And with the power of God on their side. And so through this message, God wants you to recognize where you are today.

Have you experienced deliverance yet? Are you still in the bonds of sin? Have you been born again? Have you been delivered from Egypt? Have you repented of your sins?

[7:06] Have you applied the blood of Jesus' sacrifice to your life yet? By being baptized in Jesus' name. Full submersion of water. Like a burial, as the Bible describes.

Have you received his spirit inside of you? Have you received the baptism of his spirit? And if you have experienced that deliverance, are you in the wilderness right now?

Or have you reached the promised land and are operating in the power of the spirit and his perfect plan and will for your life? And so we need to take a minute and just self-assess where are we at in these three experiences.

The sooner you can get from Egypt to the promised land, the better. The sooner you get through the wilderness, the better. We all have to go through the wilderness to get to where God wants us. But we don't want to cause delays in the wilderness. We have to survive the wilderness. And in our scriptures, God said, you need to remember every way in which I led you those 40 years.

[8:06] And the purpose was to humble you and to prove you so I can find out what's in your heart. And so I can find out whether or not you're going to keep my commandments or not. And so that is God's purpose for our wilderness between our deliverance and the promised land.

And it's in the wilderness you're going to be tested by the Lord. It's in the wilderness you're going to be humbled by the Lord. It's in the wilderness that you're going to be tested with hunger in a spiritual sense.

But God will feed you the manna from heaven. And the whole point of this is to teach you that you are not to live by fleshly bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, which is spirit.

For the children of Israel, the promised land is not their ultimate destination. And for us, it's not our ultimate destination. We're not talking about heaven when we're talking about the promised land. They still had to fight battles. They still had, when they got to the promised land, they still had enemies. There were still struggles. That's not going to be how it is in heaven. There's, in the promised land, there's still battles and enemies and struggles.

[9:11] The difference is, is where we are, where God, exactly where God wants us to be, and we're in the spirit. And there's, there's, but there's still this eternal presence of God that we want to obtain. There's still an eternal life.

When we talk about heaven, there's still a heaven to gain. The promised land was just a state of existence in which they were in the place God called them to be. And operating in the spirit. And that's where God wants us, as, as disciples of Jesus Christ. And there's a place in your walk with God that is your promised land. A place God wants you to obtain spiritually while you live on this earth.

The promised land for us is not heaven that comes later. But the promised land is the state of existence in our spiritual growth and walk with God. That no matter what comes, we are firmly planted.

We're not turning back. We're not going anywhere. It's the state of existence in God that we are putting God absolutely first in our lives. Nothing stands between us and God. And the promised land is not the end.

[10:11] When we get to be with Jesus forever. It's not that. But it is the place where we can exist. Surrounded by the world of sin. With all of its turmoil and challenges.

But be completely trusting and secure in God. And as far as heaven goes, I don't think it's a mystery or a question whether or not you would like to be saved and go to heaven.

That's not a mystery. It's not a mystery that you want to meet Jesus. It's not a mystery that you want to be a part of the millennial reign. That 1,000 year kingdom that he establishes on the earth when he returns.

There's no doubt that we want to be forever present with the Lord. To have received that prize of eternal life. And to see what God has in store for us in eternity.

I'm looking forward to heaven. I'm looking forward to that. I want to make it to heaven. I want my family to make it to heaven. I want you to make it to heaven. And I'm sure you too desire to see the grandeur of heaven.

[11:11] It's high walls made of jasper. The 12 gates named after the 12 tribes. Which each gate being one gigantic pearl. One single pearl makes a gate.

And there's 12. One for each of the tribes of Israel. And to see the 12 foundations. Adorned with every kind of precious stone.

To see the city that is described as pure gold like transparent glass. With no need for the sun or moon to give light. Because the glory of God illuminates the city. We all anticipate and expect that we will enter into eternity with God.

We expect that. We expect to see and experience the richness and the beauty and the perfection that heaven is. There's no question. We look forward to that day when there will be no more tears. There will be no more pain. There will be no more sickness. There will be no more death. There will be no more dying over there. I look forward to that day. When our tears would be wiped away. If I had asked you right now to raise your hand.

[12:12] If you want to see it. Every hand would be raised. If I asked you to stand up. And if you're looking forward to that day. All the seats in this place would be empty. But if I asked you.

Do you want to go right now? This instant. There would be hesitation. Because you know what that would mean. You would have to pass from this life to the next destination.

I want to go pastor. But just not yet. I want to see Jesus face to face. But just not yet. I want to make it to heaven.

I want this mortal flesh. This mortal body. To be raised immortal. And to receive the gift of eternal life. Just not today pastor. Or tomorrow.

Actually next week is not looking good either. You know what? I'm busy next month too. Actually next year is not looking that promising either. What is that?

[13:09] Why is that? Have we forgotten that we are living in a cursed world? Read Genesis. The fall of man. We're living in a cursed world.

Are we enjoying the uncertainty and the turmoil of this life? Because there's a lot of uncertainty. There's a lot of turmoil. Do we prefer heartache? The stresses of this world.

The concerns. And the storms of life that seem to come around every corner. Do we prefer those things? Do we prefer a constant pulling of the flesh of sin? That wars with the spirit?

A constant fighting. To break away from the things that want to pull us down. And away from living a godly lifestyle. Do we prefer the constant state of war between the flesh and the spirit within us?

Do we enjoy that this world has to offer? Are we enticed by sin? Is the entertainment of this world more desirable to us than heaven?

[14:08] What is it here and now that is more valuable than anything we can obtain in the presence of God? Because if I asked each and every one of you right now, do you want to go see Jesus right now?

And offered you a way to make that happen for you? I'm guessing none of you would take me up on that offer. So what is that? It's a tough question. But God's given us an answer today.

The fact that we may not be willing to go see Jesus right now needs to be considered. What is that? Why is that? And of course I want to make it to heaven at some point.

Just not right now. Is that the right stance? Is that to have on the issue? Should that be how it's felt about? Let's take a look.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5 and 8, we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

[15:10] Paul said, I'm confident that when I leave the body, I will be with Jesus and I would rather be absent from this body and be present with the Lord. That's a completely different mindset than most of us have today.

Paul is telling us what it is to be in the promised land. That place in God where we're completely, totally sold out to God.

That place in God where we've reached the point where he wants us to get to beyond the wilderness. Paul survived the wilderness to be able to say that. We can try to explain it any other way we want.

But the fact and the reality is that we are in a love affair with the things we have in this life. Even with all its turmoil and with its bondage of sin, it is a wilderness.

It's not the promised land where most of us are. God wants us to be in the promised land. But that does, what does God's word teach us about that?

[16:12] So let's take a look. 1 John 2, verse 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

That's kind of tough. That's kind of hard to swallow. If you love the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in you. I thought I loved God at least a little bit. But Scripture says if you love the things of the world, then the love of the Father is not in you.

Verse 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. If you want to put meeting Jesus on hold for any desired accomplishment in this world, we got a love of the world problem.

And we're still in the wilderness. And we're still in need of some humbling. If you aren't ready and willing to meet Jesus right now, today, because you still want to accomplish something in your life, then the Bible says you have the love of the world problem, and the love of God is not in you, and you still are in the wilderness, and you still need a humbling.

[17:32] If you aren't ready and willing to be absent from this body and be present with the Lord right now, today, because you don't want to leave someone or some relationship you have with another person, then we have a love priority issue.

You're still in the wilderness, and you are still in need of humbling. According to the scriptures in John, you have one or more of three following issues keeping you in the wilderness existence.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. The wilderness is necessary. But the longer you're in the wilderness, the more likely you're never going to make it to the promised land. The Bible says when the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt, that 600,000 Israelite men left the bondage of Egypt.

They only counted the men because it was how they knew how strong they were for their army. So besides women, children, and the elderly, 600,000 men, probably well over a million, 600,000 Israelite men left bondage of Egypt.

[18:43] They were delivered. They put on the blood on the doorposts. They were passed over. All those plagues that came in Egypt that caused them to be delivered, and that blood was applied.

They went through the Red Sea. The Bible calls it like a baptism through the Red Sea. They were at the Mount Sinai. They saw it all, which is like a Holy Ghost experience in the New Testament.

So they had the blood applied. They went through the Red Sea. They had the Mount Sinai experience. They saw it all. They had their deliverance. They were delivered out of Egypt. They

were now in the wilderness. But how many of those 600,000 delivered men entered into the Promised Land?

How many? What does the Bible say? Out of 600,000 men, only two men survived the wilderness and made it into the Promised Land?

After the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they wandered a wilderness for 40 years. That's a great tragedy because the distance from Egypt to the land of Canaan that was promised to them was only about 300 miles.

[19 : 45] But it took them 40 years to get there. Why? Why? They could not conquer the lust of the flesh. They complained about the food in the wilderness. They longed for the food of their bondage in Egypt.

They always looked back to Egypt and said they had it better. We should have just stayed in Egypt in the bondage. And when God gave them food, when they did get the provisions from God, they overate until they were sick and dying, showing that they couldn't control their fleshly lusts. Remember, these are physical things, examples in the Old Testament. They're spiritual applications today. Also, they could not conquer the lust of their eyes while their man of God was up on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from the Lord.

They were down the mountain melting their jewelry and forming a golden calf out of it and began worshipping it. They were still given to idol worship, driven by the lust of the eyes, where they desired something tangible and something visually appealing to worship, forgetting about the unseen God who had delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt.

The third thing, they could not conquer the pride of life. Two years into the wilderness, God had taken them to the border of the promised land. It was 50 days from the time they left Egypt to the time they got to Mount Sinai, and they set up camp there, and they were there for about a year, and they went to another place.

[21 : 06] But the total time, God took them to the border of the promised land and presented the promised land to them. They could have walked across to Jordan and taken the promised land just two years after they left Egypt.

All they had to do was take a step of faith across that Jordan River, and they sent spies into that promised land to check it out. And after the 12 spies returned, 10 of them spread a bad report about the land, focusing on the strength of the inhabitants rather than on trusting God's promises.

That's the pride of life, thinking that they knew better than God about their ability or their lack of ability to conquer that land. In other words, they didn't trust God would be with them because what they would be up against would take a miracle.

And that lack of faith in God's promise of security and victory and even the most trying of times caused God to judge them in the wilderness. We have to be careful about that because we today can look at things in life, and God can be calling us to do something, calling us to do something, and out of fear, we hesitate, and we don't want to trust God.

But we want to be careful about that because it can delay us in the wilderness. God judged them in the wilderness, and God told them that that whole generation would have to die in the wilderness except for the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, that tried to convince the people to trust God.

[22 : 26] Forty years worth of going in circles, backtracking, and detours until every unbelieving, unfaithful one died in the wilderness. Of 600,000 men, only two, Joshua and Caleb made it into the promised land.

Not even the man of God made it. Moses didn't even get to go into the promised land. It was all a disaster, all of a mess because they're in the wilderness of sin, and they had the pride of life.

They had the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness. We can read it in the New Testament, Luke chapter 4, verse 1. And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being 40 days tempted of the devil.

And in those days he did eat nothing. And when they were ended, he afterwards was hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made to bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written that man shall not live by bread alone but every word of God. But Jesus, while in his wilderness experience, referred back to the lessons learned by the children of Israel and their wilderness.

[23 : 38] And this is what the temptation of the lust of the flesh was. The Bible says he was hungry. And the first thing the devil tempted him with was to turn stones into bread to eat. And Jesus' answer to that was quoting our opening scripture that we are not to live by bread alone but by every word of God.

We need to conquer the lust of the flesh and the temptations of the world. We are delivered from the things of the world should not entice us anymore. We need to conquer those things. But the word of God is the only thing that should entice us. Luke, continuing in Luke 4, verse 5. And the devil, taking him up to a high mountain, showed him unto all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee in the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me and to whomever I will give it. If thou therefore will worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. This is the temptation of the lust of the eyes.

[24 : 42] The devil tempted Jesus by showing him in an instant all the kingdoms of the earth and offered them to Jesus. And if Jesus would just worship him, worship the devil.

Jesus, while in the wilderness himself, answered that temptation by quoting the commandment God gave Moses in the wilderness. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him shalt thou serve.

You need to conquer the lust of the eyes. And the temptation to make your wants and your desires in this world greater than the purposes of the kingdom of God. The purposes that you've been called to.

Those things have to be conquered. You have to conquer the lust of the eyes. Chapter 4, verse 9.

And then he brought him into Jerusalem. And set him on the pinnacle of the temple.

And said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence. For it is written in scripture, He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee. And their hands they shall bear thee up.

[25 : 42] At any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering him said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. This temptation is the pride of life.

The devil tempted him to jump off the top of the temple. And prove that the angels would catch him. And keep him from hurting himself. And they would have if he would have done that.

But Jesus' response to that was, Do not tempt or test the Lord thy God. And so this verse refers to an event in the wilderness. Where the Israelites tested God's patience by demanding water.

They tested or tempted the Lord. And it was in that portion of scripture that says, Is the Lord among us or not? We want to see if the Lord's here or not. You know?

We're going through this situation. And they're tempting or testing God. Jesus uses the scripture to refuse Satan's suggestion that he would throw himself down from the temple. To prove God's protection.

[26 : 42] And this is emphasizing to us that we should not demand signs or proofs from God in such a manner like that. It shows a lack of faith. In other words, we have to conquer the pride of life.

And not challenge God or make God try to prove his promises are true before we fully commit to him. Like Joshua and Caleb, we have to have complete trust.

That no matter how big the giants seem in the promised land, we are more than able to take the land. Let's all stand today. Luke chapter 4 verse 13. And then the devil had ended all the temptation, and he departed from him for a season.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. And there went out a fame of him through the region at Roundabout. Notice, when Jesus went into the wilderness in verse 1.

When Jesus went into the wilderness, the Bible said he was full of the Holy Ghost. And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. When we get delivered out of Egypt, when we get that deliverance, when we receive, when we repent, we're baptized in Jesus' name.

[27 : 56] When we get the Holy Ghost, we're full of the Holy Ghost. And then we are led by the Spirit into the wilderness. But look what it said after Jesus conquered those three temptations in the wilderness at the end.

In Luke 4 verse 13. And when the devil had ended the temptations, he departed from him for a season. In verse 14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.

He went into the wilderness full of the Holy Ghost. But he came out of the wilderness still full of the Holy Ghost, but in the power of the Spirit.

There's a difference. You go into the wilderness full of the Holy Ghost, but if you survive the wilderness, you go into the promised land in the power of the Spirit. And that's where God wants us. He wants us in the power of His Spirit. He wants us in the place that He's called us to. And He wants us in the power of His Spirit. If you haven't been delivered from the bondage of sin, then we need to cry out to God.

[28 : 54] Like they did, like the children of Israel did. They cried out to God and God heard their cry and He sent a man of God to them and delivered them out of Egypt. Repent of your sins. Get baptized in Jesus' name.

Receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. If you're in the wilderness, pass the test. Pray to God to help you conquer the things keeping you from the promised land. Pray against the lusts of the flesh.

Pray against the lusts of the eyes. Pray against the pride of life. Pray God will help you survive the wilderness. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank you, God, for this word. God, I pray our timely word today, God. God, I pray our timely word today, God.