

May 24, 2026

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 23:14–29 | Psalm 63 (NIV)

Sermon Title: David & The Wilderness (on the run): Heavy is The Head

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BIG IDEA

God uses the wilderness to form men and women after His own heart.

The wilderness is not accidental. – It is formative.

THE WILDERNESS IN SCRIPTURE (FOUNDATIONAL FRAME)

Throughout the Bible, the wilderness (desert) is a place where God uniquely forms His people.

Biblical Insight

- The Hebrew word for *desert* is **midbar**
- Its root word is **davar**, meaning *word* or *to speak*

The desert is not silent—it is where God speaks.

Key Wilderness Encounters in Scripture

- **Moses** encounters God at the burning bush
- **Israel** is formed during 40 years in the wilderness
- **Hagar** meets “the God who sees me” (Genesis 16; 21)
- **Elijah** is sustained by angels while fleeing Jezebel
- **Jacob** wrestles with God
- **Job** experiences a stripped-down existence (theological wilderness)

New Testament

- **John the Baptist:** “A voice crying in the wilderness”
- **Jesus:** tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4)
- **Paul:** time in the desert after conversion

Rabbinic tradition sees the wilderness as:

- A place of humility
- A place of purification
- An in-between space where transformation happens

INTRODUCTION: WHEN CALLING GETS HEAVY

David has already been:

- Anointed king
- Affirmed by God
- Promised a future

Yet David is hiding in caves.

This challenges a common assumption:

If God has called me, things should get easier.

In reality, calling often **increases pressure before fulfillment.**

David bears:

- The weight of a future crown
- The emotional tension of Saul’s decline
- The knowledge that Saul’s death means Jonathan’s loss

Two Perspectives, One Season

- **1 Samuel 23** → What is happening *around* David
- **Psalms 63** → What is happening *within* David

Psalm 63 tells us exactly when it was written:

“When David was in the wilderness of Judah.”

Same season.

Same moment.

Different lenses.

Key Insight:

The wilderness always reveals what your heart is truly chasing.

PART 1: GOD PROTECTS DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS

(1 Samuel 23:14–15 | Psalm 63:1)

External Reality (1 Samuel 23)

- Saul searches for David *every day*
- No stability
- No safe place
- Constant threat

Yet Scripture says:

God did not give David into Saul’s hand.

David is:

- Exposed, but not abandoned
- Hunted, but not handed over

Internal Reality (Psalm 63)

David does not begin with fear or complaint.

He begins with hunger.

Key phrase:

“Earnestly I seek you... I thirst for you.”

Spiritual Principle:

The wilderness shows what you truly thirst for.

God’s protection does not always remove danger.

Often, it preserves us *within* it.

Study Reflection:

- What are you thirsting for in your current season?
- Are you seeking relief—or God Himself?

PART 2: GOD ENCOURAGES DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS

(1 Samuel 23:16–18 | Psalm 63:5–6)

External Encouragement

God sends Jonathan—not an army.

Jonathan:

- Speaks truth
- Reaffirms God’s promise
- Strengthens David *in God*

Biblical encouragement always points **back to God**, not just forward to solutions.

Internal Formation

Psalm 63 shows David learning to shepherd his own soul.

Key themes:

- Satisfaction in God
- Remembering God at night
- Meditating before deliverance

David remembers God **before** rescue comes.

Insight from Spurgeon (summarized)

God's love is compared to the richest possible feast.
True satisfaction is not circumstantial—it is spiritual.

Key Insight:

What Jonathan does externally, God is already doing internally.

Study Reflection:

- Who has God used to strengthen you?
- How are you learning to strengthen yourself in the Lord?

PART 3: GOD DELIVERS DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS

(1 Samuel 23:26–29 | Psalm 63:7–8)

The Crisis

- David surrounded
- Capture imminent
- No escape route

The Turn

- Philistines attack
- Saul retreats
- David escapes

The Deeper Truth

Psalm 63 shows David's heart was already anchored.

Key phrase:

“I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.”

David clings to **God**, not outcomes.

Spiritual Principle:

God steadies the heart before He changes the situation.

Study Reflection:

- Are you clinging to results or to God Himself?

TRANSITION: DAVID AND THE GREATER DAVID (JESUS)

David’s story prepares us for Jesus.

Comparison

- David: anointed → wilderness
- Jesus: baptized → wilderness

Calling precedes testing.

David faces prolonged pressure.

Jesus faces direct temptation.

Jesus refuses shortcuts.

Key Principle:

Any shortcut around God’s will leads away from God’s purpose.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

- David thirsts for God
- Jesus says, “I thirst” on the cross
- David is rescued
- Jesus is not—He gives His life
- David is preserved
- Jesus steps into death for us

Gospel Truth:

David clung to God in the wilderness.

Jesus was crushed on the cross so we would never be separated from God.

FINAL REFLECTION: WHAT THE WILDERNESS PRODUCES

The wilderness is not:

- Just endurance
- Just survival
- Just escape

It is learning that **God Himself is enough.**

Key phrase:

“Because your love is better than life...” (Psalm 63)

Final Thought

Sometimes we do not fall into the wilderness.

We are **sent** there.

Jesus entered the wilderness intentionally.

David fled there expectantly.

Closing Truth:

Do not avoid the wilderness.

At times, we are meant to enter it—expecting to meet God there.