

Why the wilderness?

Ex 15 :22-27 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.²³ And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?²⁵ And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, **and there he proved them.** ²⁶ And said, **If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.** ²⁷ And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

The wilderness reveals the character.
The place of lack, suffering or trials.

Ps 23: 4-6 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

- Our fears are exposed
- Death seems inevitable
- Enemies are seen

God must discover things in you. He must unearth them, bring them to the surface. He must plough, as He plowed the rebellious Israel with the plow of affliction. -Charles Haun

Ps 129:1-3 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

Furrow-is a trench you plant seeds

Key understanding - you cannot ascend to God beyond your awareness.

It means that your ascent will be directly affected by your awareness of God's character and ways, and your proper response to such awareness.

Key principle -your progress in God will only be to the extent of your spiritual awareness.

Let's try to explain these principles through those who went through wilderness experience that came out both good and bad.

Miriam -went in dancing and worshipping the Lord.

Ex 15:19-21 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them, **Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.**

Her character if we stop there is a worshipper of the Lord.



But Miriam was not aware of her own potential for murmuring and complaining when she sang and danced in her joy of victory.

Num 12:1-16 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. 3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

The Lord's rebuke

4 And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5 And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? 9 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed. 10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

The rebuke of Miriam

11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. 12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. 13 And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. 14 And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. 15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. 16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

- Miriam was the fault Finder. Miriam found fault with Moses's wife.
- Miriam was loved by the Lord because he rebuked her.
- Miriam will now understand loneliness as she is shut out of the camp for seven days because she is a leper.
- Miriam had this fault since she was a child but the correction never took root in her so good character would show forth.

Moses

Ex 3:10-11 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Num 20: 10-13 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

12 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.

Moses finally got angry the meek man blew his top.

Moses forgot who he was speaking for.

Moses lost the big picture and got angry at those he served.

Many pastors today and leaders have done the same thing.

Do not assume you are unbeatable the wilderness will find you out.

Humility is the greatest virtue one could have.

1 Cor 10: 11-13 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

- The example of the wilderness
- believers are never to assume that we got it together falling Will happen

- you will not be tempted above your breaking point but you will be tempted in your breaking point. Whatever temptation the Lord is giving you the ability to bear it.

Caleb

Num 13: 29-31 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

Jos 14:7-11 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God.

10 And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Caleb is in the promised land because he believed in the promise.

Caleb followed the Lord with all his heart.

Caleb is now old 85 years old we'll now take the place the Lord swore to him.

Caleb does not fear war or anything else he seized the goal the promise of God.

Jesus

Matt 4:1 lead into the wilderness

Mk 1:12 was driven into the wilderness

Lu 4:1 was full of the Holy Ghost going into the wilderness

His second wilderness experience is the hardest. The cross.

Heb 12:1-3 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Lu 22: 42 Saying, Father, if thou be **willing**, remove this cup from me: nevertheless **not my will**, but thine, be done.

Get light when going into the wilderness.

Lay aside all the sin would so easily get you.

Run with patience.

See the goal

the goal is Jesus

Jesus authored our salvation Jesus we'll finish the story

use joy to get through the wilderness not complaining

endure suffering

do not become weary and faint in your mind

Ps 18:33 He maketh my feet like **hinds'** feet: and setteth me upon my high places.

Deer were created to walk over mountains so they can graze on the grass and see their enemies. The mountain is a dangerous place from falling to weather change. But the deer is created for the high place.

David is explaining to us that we are created to go through anything as long as the Lord is our trust and our refuge. Sometimes and if not most the mountaintop is your wilderness.