

Matthew 14:22-34: Several valuable lessons. Jesus has just finished feeding a crowd of thousands with two fish and a few loaves of bread. The disciples are beginning to see who Jesus is, but their faith in Him still has room for growth, and so does ours as a Church Body

Directly following this miracle, Jesus launches into His next lesson. By now it's evening, and Jesus has not yet had time to get alone with His Father, the very reason He had come to this isolated place near the sea. **So, Jesus sends His disciples on ahead in a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee**

I asked the question three weeks ago, "Why does God send them into the wilderness?"

Christians can go into a wilderness season for **several biblical reasons**

The key is this: not every wilderness is punishment; sometimes it is **correction, preparation, protection, and sometimes it is spiritual warfare**

Sometimes **God simply strips away the noise** so we learn to depend on Him

Sin and rebellion can bring us into the wilderness

Israel's wilderness experience was often **connected to unbelief, complaining, idolatry, and disobedience**

And I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant Ezekiel 20:37 NKJV

In **Ezekiel 20**, God brings His people into the wilderness to **confront them, correct them, and purge rebellion from among them**

In that sense, the wilderness becomes God's divine, holy intervention. Why?

Because He loves us too much to let us keep walking in the wrong direction

Biblically speaking, we often reject wilderness seasons because the wilderness confronts the very things our flesh prefers to keep: comfort, control, certainty, independence, and immediate answers

We reject the wilderness because we prefer Comfort

The wilderness is uncomfortable. Israel had been delivered from slavery, yet once life became difficult, they began remembering Egypt selectively

And the children of Israel said to them, Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Exodus 16:3 NKJV

Think about that: Egypt had enslaved them, **yet hardship made slavery look attractive**

That is what wilderness seasons can do.

When following God becomes difficult, yesterday's bondage can suddenly look more appealing than today's dependence on Him

Biblical Principle

We can become so uncomfortable with God's process that we romanticize what He already delivered us from

We reject the wilderness because we want Control

In the wilderness, Israel could not control the food supply, the water supply, the route, or the timing

They had to follow the cloud

Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. Numbers 9:17 NKJV

God determined when they moved

For believers, wilderness seasons **often expose how much we enjoy trusting God as long as we still control the schedule**

The wilderness teaches us: God is God, and we are not

We reject the Wilderness because we fear the Unknown

Egypt was terrible, but it was familiar; Canaan was promised, but it was unknown

The wilderness **stood between** the familiar and the promised

That is one reason wilderness seasons are frightening. We may know what God has brought us out of without knowing exactly what He is bringing us into

The Israelites repeatedly asked questions such as, "Where will we get food?" Where will we get water? Who will protect us? How long will this take?

Fear makes us want guarantees before we obey

But faith says: **For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV**

We reject the Wilderness because it exposes what is inside Us

This may be one of the biggest biblical reasons

God uses the wilderness to expose what is really in our hearts

The wilderness has a way of revealing things comfort can hide: **pride, impatience, fear, unbelief, bitterness, self-reliance, compromise**

And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know **what was in your heart**, whether you would keep His commandments or not Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV

In **Revelation 12:6** and **12:14**, the wilderness is not a place of abandonment or punishment; it is a place of God's divine **protection, provision, preparation, and preservation**

Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Revelation 12:6 NKJV

But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. Revelation 12:14 NKJV

The woman represents Israel's remnant., During the Great Tribulation, God will preserve a remnant of His people from satan's attempt to destroy them

Although these verses describe a future prophetic event, they also reveal important truths about the wilderness seasons God permits in our lives today

The wilderness is not a hiding place. **It is a prepared place**

When we begin to truly live with the conviction that the wilderness is not merely a hiding place **but a prepared place**, it changes how we interpret difficult seasons

The wilderness was not an accident. God had already gone ahead of her and you

This truth produces several changes in a believer's life

We stop interpreting hardship as abandonment

Instead of asking, Where is God?, we begin asking, What is God doing here?

And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:8 NKJV

The wilderness may feel lonely, but it does not mean God has left

We begin looking for God's provision instead of only looking for an exit

In **Revelation 12**, God does not immediately remove the woman from the wilderness. He feeds her there

Sometimes our prayer is, Lord, get me out, but God's answer may be, I am going to sustain you here

The wilderness seasons teach us that God does not have to change our location in order to meet our needs

Israel learned this through manna. They could not stockpile enough to become independent of God. **They had to trust Him day after day**

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV

The wilderness teaches us something prosperity will not teach us: **God Himself is enough**

We stop wasting the wilderness by fighting it

If we believe the wilderness has no purpose, we will spend the entire season trying to escape it

But if we believe God has prepared something there, **we start asking these questions**

Lord, what are You teaching me? What are You removing from me? What are You developing in me? What do You want me to see about You?

Our faith becomes less dependent on circumstances

In comfortable seasons, it is easy to say, God is good

The wilderness asks a deeper question: Can I still say God is good when I cannot see what He is doing? **Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Job 13:15 NKJV**

Wilderness faith says - **I do not understand the road, but I trust the One who prepared it**

We become spiritually stronger. The wilderness removes many of the things we normally lean upon. **That can be painful, but it produces endurance**

Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. James 1:3 NKJV

God is not simply trying to get us through the wilderness; **He is doing something in us while we are there**

Some things about God are learned only **when the usual supports have disappeared**

Sometimes we take a leap of faith with similarly good intentions, but, like Peter's, our faith soon falters

Peter's exercise of faith does not end in failure

Although he is sinking in fear, he calls out to the Lord, "Save me!" God loves to hear our cry for help

It means we know we can't save ourselves

Peter helplessly cries out to the only one who can help him

The disciple's experience reminds us that a lapse of faith is merely a stumble. The Lord is near to raise us back safely to our feet when we call to Him for help