

## 1. Introduction

- a. Series Preview - Experiencing the Presence of God
- b. Series Recap - life works better, house rules, Jesus creed, influences
- c. Today: Key Questions: What do you believe? What do you practice?
  - i. What are you experiencing? Hardship? Blessing?
  - ii. I respect people who've survived hardship - 5 kids or more!
- d. Read Deuteronomy 8

## 2. What do you believe about your hardships (2-5, 15-16)?

- a. The wilderness was a place of becoming.
  - i. Humble
  - ii. Dependent
  - iii. Patient
  - iv. Blessed
  - v. ANALOGY: The invisible kingdom - where's Waldo?
- b. The wilderness was preparation for prosperity.
  - i. Trials foster dependence on God; prosperity fosters pride
  - ii. Necessary to learn dependence on God, but goal was not to stay there
  - iii. God's discipline was to yield self-discipline
    - 1. Galatians 3 - fruit of the Spirit is self-control
    - 2. Notice the assumption that parents discipline their children.
      - a. **Proverbs 3:11-12.** My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.
      - b. **Proverbs 12:1.** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.
      - c. **Proverbs 13:8.** Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.
      - d. **Proverbs 13:24.** Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.
      - e. **Proverbs 19:18.** Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

f. **Hebrews 12:11.** No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

3. STORY - parenting - if you won't discipline yourself, then I have to - this discipline is painful, but not as painful as later if you don't learn self-control

c. The wilderness is a journey.

i. Through the wall

ii. Through a dark night

iii. STORY - My journey through the wall - trust God for my "success" - see people's hurts and appreciate their gifts

d. The wilderness is a necessary pathway - even for Jesus!

i. For blessing - so we know we can live without things - contentment

ii. For relationships - so we connect deeply with others

1. Connecting below the surface is a richer place

a. War generation bonded in the trenches

2. Common struggle is key to real community

a. Loneliness

b. Fear

iii. For faith - so we learn to trust God

### 3. What do you believe about your blessings (7-9, 12-14, 17-18)?

a. Does your prosperity come from your power and ability?

b. Who gave you that power and ability?

### 4. What do you believe about eternity (19-20)?

a. There is a heaven and a hell - not a popular notion, but it's what Scripture, and Jesus teach

b. **Luke 12:4-5.** "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

### 5. What do you practice (1-2a, 6, 10-11)?

a. CSB:

i. Be careful to keep God's commands (1-10)

ii. Be careful not to fail to keep God's commands (11-20)

b. NIV:

i. Follow & Live (1),

1. Remember (2-5),

- a. **Observe (6-9),**
    - 2. Praise (10-18),
  - ii. Forget & Perish (19-20)
- c. Practices:
- i. Be careful to remember how God has led you (2).
    - 1. Tell your spiritual story to others - many conversations
    - 2. Notice miracles - clothing didn't wear out, feet didn't swell (4)
  - ii. Be careful to observe God's commands (NIV) (6).
    - 1. Walk in his ways -
      - a. **Micah 6:8.** He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly  
and to love mercy and to walk humbly<sup>[a]</sup> with your God.
    - 2. Fear him - be concerned with what he thinks, not others
  - iii. Be careful to praise God for the good things (NIV) (10,12-13).
    - 1. Praise God every time
      - a. You eat and are full
      - b. You walk in your house
      - c. Your kids grow!
      - d. You get paid
      - e. Your investments increase