



DON'T WASTE YOUR WILDERNESS

Bearing God's Brand

September 3, 2023 Message Notes

TEXT: NUMBERS 1-6

Our wilderness experiences in life serve as training practicums. As we go, God helps us grow, equipping us to face the challenges. Jesus will take us through them - just like taking ancient Israel through the wilderness.

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NOTES

After joyfully reading Genesis, some are “...exhausted by Exodus, lost in Leviticus, numbed by Numbers and done in by Deuteronomy.”

Israel is encamped at Mt Sinai, preparing to enter Canaan – the Promised Land.

They will encounter war, battles and giants. They know from the Lord that they have growing to do.

“I will not drive them out in a single year because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.”

Exodus 23:29

As we go, God helps us grow, equipping us to face the challenges ahead.

Our wilderness experiences in life serve as training practicums.

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

1 Peter 4:12

“Everything written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”

Romans 15:4

“The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.”

Your full understanding of New Testament truth about atonement, blood sacrifice, holiness, election and righteousness is dependent on the Old Testament foundation.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.”

John 17:15

Believers will face enemies and encounter warfare.

Jesus' plan isn't to deliver us from it, but take us through it - just like taking ancient Israel through the wilderness.



“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Ephesians 6:10-12

“Join me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 2:3

“Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.”

1 Timothy 6:12

What can we learn from our faith ancestors to help us not waste our wilderness, not get wasted in the wilderness - but win in the midst of it?

How are the Israelites to be ready to face the wilderness?

- They need to remember WHO they are.

“Moses and Aaron...called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. The people registered their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, as the Lord commanded Moses. And so he counted them in the Desert of Sinai.”

Numbers 1:18-19

God has them take a census.

- Every person traced their lineage as an Israelite back to Father Abraham.
 - Identity
- Potential warriors were named and numbered one by one.
 - Leadership

You need to know who you are in Christ.

“In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith...”

Galatians 3:26

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.”

Galatians 3:29

“Those led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your



adoption to sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may share in his glory."

Romans 8:14-17

You've got to know that you are His. How? Receive him.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

John 1:12

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

1 John 4:4 KJV

Spiritual warriors triumph as they live in their identity in Christ.

You need to know where you belong.

"The Lord said to Moses, 'The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family.'"

Numbers 2:1-2

This organized them and helped to mobilize them in their journey - not only for community but also for service.

Each person had a place to belong and a contribution to make within their family and tribe.

The New Testament says every believer in Christ is also to be a member of his body.

"As the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ...for in fact, the body is not one member, but many."

1 Corinthians 12:12

God wants you in the body.

- Not just attending, but connecting, committing, becoming a member. God wants you serving.
- Everybody's been given a spiritual gift by which they can make a meaningful contribution to the whole.

Don't Waste Your Wilderness! Find your place in the family and do your part in the body.



How do we do that here?

- Groups – do life together, serve, grow
- Start Up – become a church member, get acquainted, connect
- Spiritual Gifts – learn what they are and use them

You need to know how to follow God's lead.

“In all the travels of the Israelites whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle they would set out, but if it did not lift they did not set out – until it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day and the fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.”

Exodus 40:36-37

All the tribes, clans and families had their dwellings around the tabernacle. They stayed in regular connection with God through worship at the tabernacle, and faced the wilderness together.

Worshiping warriors walking and working with God to move to the Promised Land.

It matters that you...

- Trust Christ as Savior and become part of God's people
- Stay connected with God's people as family in Group
- Know where to serve with your gifts
- Worship with your family every week
- Keep your eyes on God and stay in step as He moves

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”

Romans 8:14

How do you survive the wilderness?

- Worshiping warriors walking and working with God to move to Promised Land.”

Remember who you are. You are a child of God.

Remember where you belong – with God's tribe and part of a group serving and being served.

And you'll learn... It's one thing to get me out of Egypt. It's another to get Egypt out of me.



The wilderness was where Israel would find out how much Egypt they are dragging around inside of them, where they're still held captive in the way they think and speak and live, and then how to get truly free.

God wants his people wearing the brand of His name and taking His blessing into our world.

Don't waste your wilderness: Learn...

- Who you are
- Where you belong
- How to follow God's lead

Where is He leading you? What's your next step?

Go where the fire is leading you, and God will use you to help someone else.

