

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

God With Us

PART

2

TITLE

In The Wilderness

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 19:1-13



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On the mountains and in the valleys, in our highs and in our lows, God is with us.

If you have in your hand a Bible, if you want to look with me at 1st Kings 18 and 19. We're in a series called God With Us, that we just started last week, and so, if this is your first time here, there's only one prior to this, and what we find is that when you open up the Bible, all the different stories of the Bible, from the one that we will read all the way to the birth of Christ, they all tell one central story, and that story is about God's truly committed longing within His heart to be near, and to be with His people, to be with us. To be near the Lord is to be with Him, and to be with Him is to be tied to everything that He is His, His goodness, and His mercy, and His wisdom, and His authority.

And so, we looked at that last week of how He's with us in our weakness, and every one of us, we all know this, is that, fundamentally, there's a weakness within us to resist sin that separates us from God. We know that we are weak, and that if it's simply up to us, is that we are not going to be able to perform well enough to be able to earn, or merit our way into heaven. You know that for each one of us, we have weaknesses that cause fractures in our friendships, and relationships, and families, and we are deeply in need of help, and what we looked at last week is that God in His grace loves to draw near to us in spite of our weakness. What we want to look at here in the next installment, sort of, as we look through this narrative of the Bible, is that God wants to be with us in the wilderness. It's a really challenging place to be, if you think about it, that the Bible begins, and it begins in this lush garden, an actual garden, and it ends in a city that it says is very lush and has gardens. This is heaven.

And, in the middle, what we find is this wilderness, that when we sinned against God, and broke fellowship with Him, we were thrust into a wilderness that is marked by dryness and bleakness. It's desolate, it's lonely, it's wearisome, it's depressing. God's Word goes on and begins to explain what it's like to live in a wilderness. Isaiah 27:10. He says that the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, and then, he goes, "Now, what would that be like? Let me think, oh, I know, a wilderness." When we go through those times, whether it's in our marriage, whether it's in our families, whether it's financially, whether it's just emotionally, where we feel like we are alone, when we feel like that there once was blessing, there once was people in our life, and now it just feels like we're forsaken, it's a wilderness.

And, a lot of people dealt with this, and felt this through scripture. Psalm 63:1 tells us that this Psalm was written when David was in a wilderness, then it goes on, and he starts his Psalm, and he simply says, "Look, oh Lord, oh God, you are my God. Earnestly, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water." The wilderness is not only a physical place, and so, sometimes, when it says, "And, this man got up, and he went into the wilderness." And, he's actually saying he left the city, went out to a place that was desolate, but what you also find is that the Bible uses this metaphor of the wilderness to describe life in a fallen world, with fallen hearts that feel anguish and depression.

And, this is something that's so pervasive through life when we feel anguish, and when we feel like this sense of just melancholy, this depression is a wilderness that many people know very, very well. I found this picture, because it so described sometimes what I've felt like and what other people try to describe what they're going through to me when it's sort of described, I feel numb, and yet we hurt. We feel empty and yet full of fear. We can feel as though we are absolutely stuck, like we're stuck in the mud, and yet we have free motion to move, and go, and do anything that we want. Sometimes it feels like, that the world, that the responsibilities, the burdens are just there encircling us, and it's just sometimes overwhelming. It feels gray, and this is what life is like in the wilderness, and some of us, we feel this at times so intensely. Sometimes it's just very, very subtle, and whether you feel, maybe even now, I want you to know that, that's where you're at, and some of you are, I know it's where you're at.

It's so pervasive in our culture in particular. I want you to know that you're not undone and you're not alone, because what we find here in 1st Kings is that God loves to draw near to people when they're in this wilderness. Let me pray for us. Father, I ask that you would be gracious to us. As we open your Word, would you open our hearts? Open our eyes, speak through weakness, speak through distraction, help those who are feeling alone, who are feeling numb, and empty, and stuck, whose life feels gray. God, would you move in their life? Would you move toward them? Would you help them? Would you speak to them. Even this morning, would you speak to their spirit, through your spirit. By your Word, help them to hear your voice, to be encouraged, and to be built up. We love you, and we need you, and we pray this in Christ's name, amen.

Well, 1st Kings 18 and 19 speaks about a prophet named Elijah. Now, he was born just like you and I were born, and then, he grew up, and he got bigger, and then, suddenly, God came to this man. He's a man like you, and God came to him and he says, "I'm appointing you to be a prophet." And, all that simply meant was, "I'm going to give you messages, and I want you to give them to the people, no matter how harsh they are, no matter how loving they are, no matter how much conviction, or how much pain you're going to have to endure by their responses once they hear the message, this is your responsibility. I'm going to give you a word, and I want you to give it to the people." And Elijah, he grew up, and he lived, and he was a prophet during the reign of Ahab. Now, if you know anything about the kings, well, they were all a moral mess. Even the good ones, it says, they were right in the eyes of the Lord, or they actually did good things, they were still sinful.

But then, there was others that was just a devastating blow in terms of leadership, and morality, and this is what we're told about Ahab. We're told that Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. This is the gold standard of offense to God, you just think Ahab, and Ahab was married. Jezebel was her name, and she was wicked, vindictive. She was a foreigner who actually grew up worshiping idols, and was committed throughout her entire time as queen in Israel to bring idol worship to the people of Israel, even though God had formed them for His glory, and for His honor, and this is what we're told. In 1st Kings 18:19, it says this. It says that, Elijah came to Ahab, and said, "Send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

So, she's taking care of them. She's providing for 850 false prophets, "So, Ahab sent her all the people of Israel, and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel." Verse 22, "And, Elijah said to the people, 'Even, I only am left of a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it, and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire to it, and you call upon the name of your God, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.'" Well, the people say, "This sounds like a deal, let's do this." And so, the prophets of Baal, they begin, and in verse 26, it says that, "They took the bull that was offered to them."

And it says, "They prepared it, and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, 'Oh, Baal answer us.' But there was no voice, and no one answered." Well, they continued to do so, until eventually, they give up. Elijah then comes, he builds the altar, he prepares the animal, and then, he says, "So you know that there is one God in the world. I want to do something. He says, somebody go on, and get four large jars, fill them full of water." And, he comes, and he pours them all over all of his sacrifice. He goes, "Do it again." And, they do it a third time, so much so that there's so much water now, that is actually cascading off of the altar, that it fills a trench that they dug around his altar.

And then, all of a sudden we're told in verse 36, that Elijah prayed to the Lord, and he said, "Oh Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word, answer me, oh Lord, answer me that this people may know that you, oh Lord, our God, and that you have turned their hearts back, and then, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw, they fell on their faces, and said, 'The Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God.' And, Elijah said to them, seize the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape, and they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Brook, and slaughtered them there."

Chapter 19:1, "Ahab told Jezebel, all that Elijah had done, and how he killed all the prophets with the sword, and then, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, 'So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' Then he was afraid, and he rose, and ran for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there, and he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came, and he sat down under a broom tree, and he asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough now, oh Lord, take away my life for I am no better than my fathers.' And, he laid down, and slept under a broom tree, and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat.' And, he looked, and behold, there was at his head, a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate, and drank, and he laid down again, and the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and he said, 'Arise and eat for the journey is too great for you.'

And, he rose, and ate, and drank, and went in the strength of that food 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. There he came to a cave and lodged in it, and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ And, he said, ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.’ And, he said, ‘Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great, and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke in pieces, the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind and earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire, the sound of a low whisper, and when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak.”

One of the things that you need to understand as a student of the Bible, which is what you are, is that God has not always worked the same way through every era of time. In the Old Testament, there was sacrifices, a sacrificial system where you went to worship, you would bring a unblemished lamb. In the New Testament, Christ became that, and so, there was a fulfillment, so sometimes when people read these kinds of stories in the Old Testament, which really did happen, we think, “Well, why does God not work that way today?” Some of that, I don’t quite understand. Some people, in fact, even this morning, in the first service, they came up [inaudible 00:14:37], “I’m a little jealous that God just seems to speak so clearly back then.”

It’s interesting that the Bible actually says that people in the Old Testament are jealous of us because they look at us, and they said that you guys are actually recipients of the cross, and now you have the Holy Spirit living within you, and a completed Bible, so you have more direction than we have. My point is this, is that when you understand where you’re at within the story, there’s lessons for all of us, even though God may not give earthquakes, and fires in order to speak to you with a still small voice. What can we learn from this? What should we learn from this? Just a few things this morning before we take the Lord’s Supper. The first is this, it’s so important, is that wandering in a wilderness often follows victory on the mountain. Wandering in the wilderness often follows victory on the mountain.

I always tell people, you should be most concerned when you’re tired, when you’re hungry, and after a spiritual victory of the strength of temptation that is about to come your way. When we are vulnerable, and one of those places where we’re vulnerable is after we have this amazing spiritual victory, where we feel like we can lower our guard, and not put on the full armor of God. Highs in life can be high, can’t they? There’s those moments in life, sometimes there’re things like a wedding, or maybe a first date, or service, worship. It could be a mission trip, it could be a vacation. There’s really are some high highs in life, but here’s the reality about life, is those highs they don’t last. You come home from vacation, once you win the championship, then all of a sudden you have to defend the championship the very next day.

You have a baby in the hospital, you come home, and you still have a stack of bills. There's highs, but then, those highs, they don't end, and here's the deal, is because of their finality, and their relative inability to fundamentally change the rest of our life, sometimes they leave us very exposed. People go on a mission trip, and they come back, and they're so surprised, because they felt such purpose in the way they were living their life, and all of a sudden I'm just like cooking food, and then, I got to clean the dishes, and there's this amazing high, and it's the difference between the highs, and just the average lows that caused the lows to feel all the worst. Like, if everything was simply low, we wouldn't maybe know as much, but once you know what life can be like, once you know what love can feel like, once you know what celebration and worship can actually be like, when it feels like that God is literally right in front of you when you're singing to Him, all of a sudden when it feel like that, it feels so low.

And, this is where Elijah's at. Literally, just hours, and days after this amazing spiritual experience. Right next to the Lord, Elijah is absolutely unglued. You notice what he does. He says that in fear he runs to Beersheba, which is still in Judah. Now, the town Beersheba is a hundred miles away from Mount Carmel, and what it says is this, is that in fear he ran, he runs a hundred miles, so he's exhausted, and then, the first thing that he does is he leaves his servant in Beersheba, and then, he himself went another day's journey into the wilderness. What I want to show you right now is what we do when we begin to enter the wilderness that actually deepens our pit. The first thing that we do when we start to feel depression is we isolate ourselves from the very gifts of God called people, and friends that are supposed to be there in order to buoy our hope, in order to point us to the Lord, and help us to find direction.

What that means is this, when you cut off your lifeline from God to help you navigate life, you become even more disoriented, and yet, isn't it true when we're depressed, we want to be alone. Sometimes when we're depressed, we look at people, and we look at the needs that people have, when we think, "Do I have the emotional strength right now to invest in someone else?" Because, we're so turned inward in order to survive, and so, now all of a sudden, not only is his life threatened, and he's afraid, but now he's alone. He's in this wilderness, and as he gets into the wilderness, he becomes more disoriented, so much so that now he's disoriented, not only from his friends, and separated from them, but he's so disoriented that he's now losing his sense, his sense of values, the sanctity of life, the beauty of being alive, things that he would say are absolutely fundamentals of his faith, and now all of a sudden, he can't find those fundamentals.

And, notice what he says, he gets out there, and he asked that he might die saying, "It is enough now, oh, Lord, take away my life." Well, if he really wants to die, he could have just stayed next to Jezebel, and she would have done the favor then. He's run all this way, and he says, "Just kill me now." And, he's so disoriented that he's forgotten that the reason that he's running is because someone wants to take his life, and now, all of a sudden what happens is this, is we start to feel this gloom. This is why he talks about, "I just want to die, I'm just tired of this, I just want to be done with this." And, this is what happens when you start feeling gloomy, and that gloom is compounded by loneliness. It moves the self-loathing. He does something that's really interesting, if you noticed.

Look what it says at the end, he says, “Take away my life for...” Because, “... I am no better than my fathers.” Now, this is interesting. When you’re depressed, you don’t want to hear this from somebody else. Like, if I walked up to Elijah and said, “Hey, Elijah, stop your belly aching. You’re not better than your fathers.” He probably would have been, “Did you see Carmel? That was me up there.” We don’t want to hear things of insult when we’re depressed, but we will sure take the perverse pleasure of insulting ourselves, and what’s amazing is when we’re insulting ourselves, we don’t ever forget of our self-righteousness, and so, notice what he says in verse 10 and 14, it’s the same speech he’s been practicing after all this running.

He’s just sitting there, when someone asks me, what are you doing here, Elijah? This is what I’m going to say, and so, he says it twice, word for word, this is it, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with a sword, and I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” Now, sometimes when you hear boasting, and when you hear self-pity, they seem like they come from different pools, but they don’t. You see pride has two sides to one coin. On one side, it looks so pathetic, I’m self-loathing, I’m terrible, I’m a horrible person, I deserve this. Self-pity is simply pride’s response to suffering.

You flip the coin though, and here he is, “I’m the only one. I’m the only one who’s been faithful, I’m the only one who’s left. It’s I, and I only, I’m the only one. I don’t deserve this.” What you find here is self exaltation is simply pride’s response to success. In other words, whether we’re suffering, or whether we’re succeeding, pride finds a way in the door, and so, here he is. He wouldn’t receive this from anyone else, but in one breath, he’s saying, “I’m a terrible person.” On the other hand, he’s going, “I am the only one I know who’s as faithful as I am, so how could this wilderness experience fall upon me?” Really is a remarkable fingers, “A man he is.” He’s just stood down 850 false prophets in the power of God, and now he is spiraling in despair as if there’s no God at all.

And, do you know who he Elijah sounds like? He sounds like you and me. You say, “That’s insulting.” We’ll think about it for a second. Maybe I haven’t heard it, but you probably have. Have you ever felt so low that you didn’t want to be around people? Felt so low that you started to insult yourself, and found some perverse pleasure in saying it? You would never allow somebody to say those things to you except you, and at the same time, you’re so convinced of your own worth and merit that you’re so surprised that any hardship or calamity has come your way to begin with, because he’s only describing us. This is what it’s like when you come off that mountain side, and you’re broadsided.

Let me encourage us to guard our heart when we’re on the mountain. It’s not saying don’t be on the mountain. When it happens, it happens, and when it happens, it’s good, so enjoy it. Enjoy your wedding, enjoy your honeymoon, enjoy your date, enjoy the completion of your finals, enjoy friendship, enjoy worship, next weekend at that Christmas concert, enjoy it, enjoy it. If it’s a high, if you have that moment where you’re just like, “Man, this is just what life’s supposed to be like, why can’t it always be like this?” Enjoy it and give thanks for it, but then, prepare yourself. Prepare yourself, because when you walk out those doors after an amazing

worship experience, yes, sometimes your car doesn't start right out there, and somebody cuts you off. It's hard to live in a broken world.

You see, nobody gets to live on peaks, even though we want to. You remember what happened? Christ, He takes three men, Peter, James and John, and He goes up on the mountain, and suddenly, without any warning, He is transfigured, is what it says. His glory suit just literally just overwhelmed His earth suit, and the glory of the Lord was upon Him. It says that He just shone like He was white, and all of a sudden, two people from heaven come in, or they're on the mountaintop. One of them is the guy we looked at last week. His name was Moses, and the other one is Elijah. These two superheroes of the Old Testament are showing up, so now there's six on the mountain, Jesus, Elijah, Moses, and then, three normal men, and in this glorious experience, Peter goes, "I have a word that can contribute to this event. We should stay here. This is better than down there, so let's build some tents, some structures, and let's live here."

Three of them. "Like there's three of you, three of us. We can room up, and it'll be fantastic. We'll, just live up here." And suddenly, and this is my paraphrase, "Voice from heaven, God, the father, He goes, 'Peter, listen to my son, listen to Him.'" And suddenly, it's just the four of them again, and do you know what verse nine says? It says that Jesus says, "All right, let's go. We have to go back down." "Why? Why can't we just stay up here? Why can't we live on the peaks?" Jesus is, "Because the people I came to seek and save are down there, and so, we have to go back down there." Good news is, the day is coming when we will stay on that peak forever, it's called heaven, for those of us who have trusted Christ, and so, let me encourage you, be careful. When you're in the highs, enjoy them. Thank God for them, but prepare, and guard your heart because the discrepancy from that high to a low can come fast, and it can be very harsh.

The second thing I want you to see here is that God draws near to comfort us when we wander in the wilderness. He draws near to comfort us. You notice that God's comfort to Elijah, it actually came in three distinct ways. First is physical. You notice that God helped him to eat a good meal, or at least a meal, and to get some rest, and have some water. He gives him physical refreshment, and isn't this exactly what Psalm 23 says that the Lord does for us. He says, "The Lord is my shepherd." Isn't that Psalm which is typically read at a funeral? What He actually does in this, this is the way that I shepherd you in one of those, or there's two of them, and just notice one of them is, He makes me lie down in green pastures. You know what that means? He helps me get a nap, because sleep is good, and not only that, but you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

Jezebel was still alive, and yet, here he is, you know what? You need some food. I just love how God's plan to revive Elijah's hope began with food for his belly, and rest for his body. Listen, you may need more than a meal, and sleep to wrestle down your depression, but you won't need less. Our body is in need, and so God says, "We're going to deal with this need." But, that wasn't the only need. There was also an emotional need, and so, you notice that with the strength of that food, it says that he travels 40 days and 40 nights, and he gets to a city, it's called Horeb, Horeb, and it says the mount of God, and what that means is this, is that Horeb is

another name for Mount Sinai, and Mount Sinai was so critically important to the people of Israel and to Elijah, and the reason is because Sinai was a place of holy memories.

And, what's happening here is this, He's bringing him to a place where He has moved in such power before in order to inspire him, and encourage him that, "I am with you as I was with them." At Sinai is where they received the law, at Sinai is where they received water and food, holy water, miracle bread from the Lord, and Sinai is where God reminded them over and over, "I want to be with you." I wonder if you have a place? Sometimes it can be a physical place, other times it can simply be a time when you sit down, where you recount the ways that God has been faithful to you. In this case, he went to a city. You may have a place. There may be a place, a physical place, somewhere on this globe, where you go to, and when you get there, it feels like a reminder of God's faithfulness.

One of those places, maybe one that really stands very tall to me is the farm down in Georgia. This is where my wife grew up, and so, 23 years I've had the opportunity to go down to this farm, and it's amazing what happens. Over the years there's been so many times where we have retreated to the farm when we were really tired, when we needed a break, or when we needed fun, and we would go there, and it's amazing how many times though the Lord would speak in that place. He would open up His Word in such vivid ways. It would be a place where you could exhale, you could play, you could run, you could rest, you could be quiet.

It's interesting how many times that I've gone there, and when I get there now, I have 23 years of holy memories, where I can look back, and I can remember His faithfulness over, and over, and over again. Well, Horeb was like that for Elijah, and this is where He brought him, and once He gets him there, now he comes in, and wants to pass before him and speak to him, and what you find here, this is a remarkable thing. He says, "Look, I want you to go out." He goes, "You made it here to Horeb." And, he goes, "The Lord is going to pass by." And then, suddenly three amazing things take place. First of all, there was a wind, a strong wind, so strong that actually broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, and it says this, so important, "But, the Lord was not in the wind."

And then, he goes on, and he says, "And, after the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire." What's happening here?" God's presence was not in, and Elijah's heart was not moved by the dramatic. We just assume when it says, "And, the Lord passed..." Like, if you found that from the Lord, He's going to say, "Hey, I want you to stand here. I'm going to pass by." And, there's an earthquake, a fire, and a wind. Most of us are going to go, "That was Him." The Bible says, "No, it wasn't, it wasn't Him." Notice that Elijah, he's not moved. There's an earthquake, a fire and a wind, and he's unfazed. There's no fall on his face, there's no fear, there's no trembling, nothing, but then, notice what happens next.

“And, after the fire, the sound of a low whisper, a gentle whisper, and when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak, overwhelmed that he had heard the voice of God.” I want you to know something, wandering hearts most need a word from God. For those of you who are struggling, if you get a good nap, and if you get a good meal, you surround yourself with a bunch of friends, and you remind yourself of good things in your past, but you do not hear a word from God, it will not be enough. All of those other gifts, they’re all there. Listen, you may need more than Jesus to fight this battle. You may need a nap, you may need food, you need friends, you may need medicine, you may need a lot of things, but you do not need less than Jesus, and to hear from him, where His spirit speaks His Word into your spirit.

It’s amazing what happens next. God comes to him again, and He says, “What are you doing here?” And, he gives a speech again in verse 14, and then, all of a sudden, God says, “All right, now, listen to me.” Watch this, “Then He gives him some instructions. He says, ‘You shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu, I want you to anoint to be king over Israel, Elisha, you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.’” This is amazing what he does, and this is why it’s so important for us, is that when we like Elijah are despairing our future, God reminds us that He’s planning for it.

He says, “There is a king I want you to appoint, and anoint in Syria that will actually bring discipline to my people, and then, I want you to go, and I want you to anoint a new king in Israel that will purify the land, and then, I want you to anoint a new prophet that will speak to the people words in your place when you are no longer here, and then, there will be a remnant of faithful ones, that 7,000 [inaudible 00:35:20] that will prove to you and to everyone else that you are not the only faithful one in the world.” He draws near to comfort us when we wander in the wilderness. Let me encourage you with just a few things here. First, let’s thank holistically as we wander in the wilderness. God’s therapy to Elijah shows that our mind, and body, and soul are interconnected. The causes of our darkness are as wide as the spectrum of severity is high.

Sometimes it can be physical, sometimes it can be emotional, sometimes it can be spiritual, and that’s why rest, and food, and medicine, and friendship, and truth, they’re all applications of grace, so let’s be wise enough to recognize they’re all applications of grace. Second thing is, let’s wander this wilderness with an open Bible. You know that I tell you, encourage you, plead with you to read your Bible frequently, and the reason I do so is because a wandering heart most needs a word from God. His whisper can still be heard, and it’s when you read this book, a recent survey that I just read said that, I believe, it was 64% of confessing Christians in America no longer read the Bible. When this thing is shut, you know what happens? Nothing. You can’t hear it, and so, you got a whole generation of people right now who are devastated by depression, and they are seeking solutions in food, and rest, and medicine, and friendship, and everything else, and yet what we need in addition to those things, but even more so is a word from God.

The whisper doesn't come, and the reason is because this is closed. I beg you to learn to read your Bible. What you find is this, is that when His spirit confirms in your spirit, His whisper, what you find is this, is that these words become louder than all the rest, but most of us, that's not the case. In fact, I would tell you this, is that if you're simply listening for life advice to the loudest voice, it's probably never going to be the Lord, because He doesn't yell. It's right here. Can you devote time in your life for this, for your good, for the good of your family, for the good of your heart, your soul. This will not entirely keep you away from seasons of wilderness, but it will help navigate through. The last thing I want to encourage you with is let's refuse to wander alone. We all need people, so don't engage from people.

For those of you who are friends with somebody who is frequently discouraged or depressed, I would simply admit to you that it requires a tremendous amount of patience, endurance, and wisdom to be a friend to somebody who's discouraged. I would encourage you to be gracious with the words of those who are embattled. Job 6:26 says, "The speech of a despairing man is wind." I can't tell you how many times on a Sunday night, I don't know why, it's probably because it's a high day, and suddenly I get to Sunday, and it's just very low, very, very tired on Sunday night late. I can't tell you how many times Tabitha has heard me say, "I think we should move to Montana." And, she just, "Yeah, yeah. Well, we'll start packing tomorrow." What people say when they're down and depressed, isn't the purest form of their faith, or what they love.

All of us, we have problems in our life, and we simply think of other places that seem to be furthest away from those problems, and so, if you have friends who are discouraged and embattled be patient with them, even when they're talking, because oftentimes, what they're saying isn't the clearest reflection of the deepest parts of what they believe. The third truth, and the last, as we come to the supper, is that Jesus came to our wilderness to meet our greatest need. This is not a tack on to the end of the sermon. It's actually the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament, that Jesus would come, He would live His life, and He would die for our sin. He left a lush city in heaven in order to wander in our wilderness to save us.

He did so because Matthew 1:23 says that His name is Emmanuel, which means God with us. The account of His time on the earth was filled with pain, and loneliness, and rejection, and crucifixion. In the end, He was buried, and three days later, He rose from the dead, and He did so to meet our greatest need, which was to forgive us of our sin. My question is, have you ever trusted Him? I urge you this morning, would you trust Christ as your savior, to acknowledge before Him that you cannot save yourself, to acknowledge before Him that you believe in Him, that He's the fulfilled Christ. He is the one who fulfilled all the promises. Confess Him as Lord, because that's what you confess to the person who's defeated the grave.

I invite you to do that now. For those of you who have, we're going to take the Lord's Supper. If you haven't yet trusted Christ, and the Bible actually says that these elements pass, to be thinking during this time, but to let them pass, because to take them is to treasure them. I'm going to pray, and then, I'm going to invite you while our team sings a song over us to confess your sin to the Lord, so that you can take with a clear conscience. Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we need you, we love you, we thank you for your amazing kindness to

us, and pray now that as we search our heart, we ask that you would search our heart, that you would forgive us, and cleanse us of all of our sin. We thank you, Jesus, for coming to this wilderness in order to rescue us.

We thank you that your solution to us in order to resuscitate our hope is so deep and wide. We're so thankful that you speak to us, and so, would you use this song now even to speak to our hearts, and we pray this in Christ's name, amen.



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