

PREMISE #1

Study the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, from Adam and Eve in the garden to John on the Isle of Patmos, almost without exception all of God's men and women have had at least one wilderness experience.

1. Every man and woman in this room has either been in the wilderness, is in the wilderness, or will be in the wilderness.
2. The wilderness takes many different forms:
 - Hardship, loss, Sickness, death
 - Misunderstanding and conflict among family or friends
 - Poverty: People who lack the resources that are necessary to live the abundant life Jesus promised (material, spiritual, relational, physical, mental, emotional)
 - COVID- Henry Cloud Normally 15-17% suffer mentally. Post covid: over 40%
 - "In this world you will have tribulation"
3. The Judean wilderness was a place of
 - Distress
 - Depravation
 - Despair
 - Doom

PREMISE #2

God is the Author of the wilderness! (Two Extremes)

1. Backslidden Israel: Hosea 2:14 *"Therefore, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness."*
2. Jesus: Luke 4:1 *"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."*

A. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WILDERNESS**1. King David: DISCIPLINE**

- a. Psalm 119:65,67 *"You have dealt well with Your servant O Lord, according to Your word. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word."*
- b. Heb. 12:5-6 *My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him, for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son who He receives."*

2. Job: REFINE

- a. Job 1:1 *"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."*
- b. God put a bull's eye on Job's back. 1:7 *And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"*
- c. Job experiences a 4-fold disaster:
 - his wealth-
 - his children-
 - his health-
 - his wife
- d. 23:10 *But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.*

3. Joseph: POSITION- Genesis 45:7,8 50:20 *God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

4. Jesus STRENGTHEN / MATURE

- a. Luke 4:2 *"Being tempted (tried, tested) for forty days by the devil."*
- b. Heb. 5:8 *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"*

B. WHAT CAN I EXPECT IN THE WILDERNESS? Lessons from Hosea Hosea 2:2-15

First: God's accusations: Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband.

- She has played the harlot
- She has behaved shamefully
- She said, "I will go after my lovers"
- She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, and went after her lovers.
- "But Me she forgot" says the Lord

Second: God's actions: *Therefore, behold,*

- *I will allure her.*
- *Will bring her into the wilderness,*

1. And speak comfort to her. v.14 (friendly, kindly, soothingly) This refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There in the **Distress** of the wilderness God promises the **Comfort** of His presence.

a. Isa. 41:10 *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God.*

- *I will strengthen you,*
- *Yes, I will help you,*
- *I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

b. Isa. 43:1-3 *But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for*

- *1 I have redeemed you;*
- *2 I have called you by your name;*
- *3 You are Mine.*
- *4 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.*
- *5 When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.*

For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

2. In the place of **Depravation** God promises **Provision.** v.15a *"I will give her vineyards from there."*

a. Vineyards don't grow in the Judean wilderness.

b. Psalms 23

3. In the place of **Despair** God offers **Hope** v.15b *And the valley of Achor as a door of hope.*

a. Achor means trouble. The valley of Achor was where Achan and his family were stoned to death.

b. In the wilderness, (Death Valley), God throws us a life line of hope

c. Example of Rahab: Two Hebrew words which can be translated line, cord, or rope. Joshua 2:14,15,17,18

- **Tigva (a cord or line, with the expectation of hope)**
- **Chebel (a cord or a line with the of expectation of sorrow, pain and travail)**

- *And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.” ¹⁵ Then she let them down by a rope (chebel) through the window, for her house was on the city wall.*
 - *We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, ¹⁸ unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord (tigva) in the window through which you let us down*
- d. In the midst of the wilderness God has given us a life line of hope
- e. Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*
4. In the place of great **Doom & Gloom** God promises **Joy** v.15b *She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.* This refers to the song of Miriam after crossing the red sea:
- a. Ex. 15:20-21 *Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbral in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tumbrels and with dances. ²¹ And Miriam answered them: “Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!”*
- b. In the midst of the wilderness God wants to restore the Joy of our salvation.
- c. Isa. 51:3 *For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*
- d. Psalms 30:5 *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*
- e. 1 Peter 1:3-6 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*

C. GOD’S GOAL Intimacy. v.16,19-20 *“And it shall be, in that day,” Says the LORD, “That you will call Me My Husband, and no longer call Me My Master. I will betroth you to Me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD.”*

1. Know (Hebrew: *Yada* to know, to be acquainted with intimately)
2. Gen. 4:1 *"Now Adam knew (yada) Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain."*
3. Phil. 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*
 - Know (Greek: *Genosko* to know, to be acquainted with intimately.) **"(Joseph) did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."**

Conclusion:

1. For many years I saw most of the OT prophetic books as the accusations of an angry God, and His judgements against us.
 2. The book of Hosea along with the other OT prophets is not so much about an angry God pronouncing judgment upon an unfaithful people, but rather an open invitation to all who will respond to experience His love, His Mercy, His Grace.
- 6:1-3 *Come, and let us return to the LORD;*
- *For He has torn, but He will heal us;*
 - *He has stricken, but He will bind us up.*
 - *After two days He will revive us;*
 - *On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight.*
 - *Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD.*
 - *His going forth is established as the morning;*
 - *He will come to us like the rain,*
 - *Like the latter and former rain to the earth.*

From Genesis to Revelation there is an open invitation to come and to be intimately acquainted with Him.

- a. Genesis 3:9 *Then the Lord called to Adam....."*
- b. Matt. 11:28 *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
- c. Revelation 22:16 ***And the Spirit and the bride say come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***