

ABATT
Through the Wilderness
 Christian Life Assembly
 Jim Hoffman

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Through the Wilderness

- Deuteronomy 8:1 “Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. 2 **Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.** 3 **Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna,** a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. **He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.** 4 For all these forty years your clothes didn’t wear out, and your feet didn’t blister or swell. 5 **Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good.**

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Through the Wilderness

- God had a place He wanted His people to get to, but they would have none of it because of fear and complacency. (also known as disobedience)
- He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, a picture of salvation, and then His plan was to bring them to the land He had prepared for them.
- They could have gone right from Egypt to Canaan, but they would not – now in Deuteronomy we see that God is graciously given them, and us, a second chance.

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Through the Wilderness

• Deuteronomy 5:32 "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 **You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you,** and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess." NKJV

• Please notice that God demands obedience from us, and ultimately **for Him and us.**

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Through the Wilderness

• Deuteronomy 6:18 "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, **that it may be well with you,** and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the Lord swore to your fathers." NKJV

• Notice again that God demands obedience so that it may be well with the obedient!

• God has a plan and He even incentivizes us to participate by having our obedience lead us to a place of joy.

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Through the Wilderness

• Deuteronomy 7:12 "Then it shall come to pass, **because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them,** that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. 13 **And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. 14 You shall be blessed above all peoples;**" NKJV

• Obedience brings blessing to the believer, and glory to God.

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• Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. NKJV

• It would be no overstatement to say that God places a high priority on our being conformed to the image of Jesus. (spiritual formation)

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• Deuteronomy 8:2 “Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, **and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.**”

• The timing of God often exasperates us – what we look at as a long period of time seems like nothing at all to God.

• If you are old enough to roll your memory back 40 years - where were you? What were you doing? And can you imagine being tested from then until now? (God can)

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Through the Wilderness

- The fact that God will not allow His people to stay in a place that is not best for them speaks volumes about His love for us.
- He knows and wants what is best for us and He will not allow things like pain, suffering, 40 years, and wandering around in circles to deter Him.
- There is a place he wants us to get to, and He is going to exert the necessary pressure to move us to that place.

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- Phil 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.** NKJV
- Remember the goal – **that we should become mirror images of Christ.**
- We are told above that we are to “work” and that God will “work” with us to move us along to maturity.

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Through the Wilderness

- Why does Paul say, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”?
- If God loves me and has already saved me, why should I be fearful and tremble? Aren’t I supposed to be assured of my salvation?
- The point of Paul’s words is not that we should be worried about whether we are saved or not, **but that we should worry about whether we have pleased Him or not.**

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- For the true believer it is not enough to say, "I prayed, I am saved, and I am good to go".
- The child of God understands that he is saved by grace alone through faith alone, but he also wants his life to matter and to please God.
- So "work out" your salvation means what you think it means – that we are saved unto good works and we had better have some "good works" to point to.

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- There was a place God wanted His people to get to, and He would see to it that they were properly motivated to arrive in the promised land.
- Think of the "Promised Land" as a metaphor for the victorious Christian life – and think of yourself as one for whom God has plans because He does!
- He is going to see to it that we are all properly motivated to arrive where He wants us to be.

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- Deuteronomy 8:3 Yes, **he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna**, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. NKJV
- Notice the method of teaching His people – He let them go hungry, and then gave them something to eat that they could not even identify, manna. (what is it?)

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Through the Wilderness

- God humbled His people so that they would cooperate with His program and learn to obey Him. Do not say, "unfair", say "thank you"!
- He deprived them of about as basic a need as you can imagine; food.
- They were in the wilderness, there was no food to be had, and God was going to demonstrate just how dependent on Him they really were.

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- Let's go back to Romans 8:28 for a moment – "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."
- Now – have you ever been in the "wilderness" where you did not know what God was doing, or how long it would last?
- If so, then I refer you back to the truth of Romans 8:28.

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Through the Wilderness

- Deuteronomy 8:5 Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good.
- Israel could have gone from Egypt to the promised land in 40 days – instead, because of their unbelief it took them 40 years and cost them more than a million lives.
- If that doesn't say something about how serious God is about His plans, I do not know what does.

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- Hebrews 12:7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. NKJV
- When a parent ignores a child and just allows them to do whatever they want, they really do not love that child.
- God chastens us because He loves us and wants to move us to that "promised land" He has for us.

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Through the Wilderness

- 1st Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. NKJV
- According to Peter there are actually good reasons to rejoice in trials because God's end game for all of us is "causing all things to shape us into Christ".

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Through the Wilderness

- Ezekiel 22:17 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 18 **“Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out My fury on you.’”** NKJV

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New Beginnings by Kevin Smead

<p>The World is darkened so by sin And I have done my part; So weak and selfish have I been, So hard has been my heart.</p> <p>At first when still in unbelief I sinned with a high hand. And when in Christ I found relief, I failed to take a stand.</p> <p>But now as I look on my past, I'm filled with shame and fear. The days and years are flying fast, The end of all is near.</p>	<p>I want my time spend on this earth, To be a force for good. To fill the purpose of new birth, I dearly wish I could.</p> <p>Though sin has left its nasty scars, And weakened what remains; Still God can break these prison bars, And wash away the stains.</p> <p>He can restore regretted years, He can renew a heart; He can still make the vision clear, And give me a new start.</p>
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Through the Wilderness

- How do you get your bearings in the “wilderness”?
- How are we to respond when we are in the “wilderness”?
- What encouragement can you offer to someone else who is in the “wilderness”?

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Questions

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