

THE WILDERNESS

- A time in a person’s life when his or her **SOUL** is parched or dry
- When **TODAY** is hard
- When the **FUTURE** seems barren
- When as far as you can see, there is nothing but **DEVASTATION**
- When you wonder if there’s any **WAY OUT**
- And you may even feel the **ABSENCE** of God’s presence
- That God can use to prepare us for **BLESSING** and **BATTLE**

THE KEY: Don’t WASTE your wilderness!

IN THE BIBLE

- The wilderness happened to the **UNAITHFUL**
- The wilderness happened to the **FAITHFUL**

Elijah – Our Example

- 1 Kings 18 = Elijah’s on top of the **WORLD**
- 1 Kings 19 = Elijah’s face down in the **WILDERNESS**
- There’s no **PREDICTING** exactly when the wilderness will occur
- There’s only the **CERTAINTY** that it will

ENTRY POINTS TO THE WILDERNESS1. Our own **DECISIONS** and **ACTIONS**

- We choose **OUR** way instead of **GOD’S** way
- We make **MORAL** mistakes
- We’re **UNFAITHFUL** in our marriage
- We’re **UNETHICAL** at work
- We **WRONGLY HANDLE** the stress of life

2. The actions of **OTHERS**

- Can bring us **PAIN** and **DEVASTATION**
- Sometimes we’re not only **IN** the wilderness, but the wilderness is **IN US**
- It can make us feel more **ALONE** than we really are
“I say this with the utmost sensitivity and gentleness... While you may have entered a wilderness because of what has been done to you, you remain there because of the choices you make.” – Rob Renfroe

3. The natural flow of **LIFE**

- Our company downsizes
- A loved one becomes ill
- Transitional season of life (ex. teenage years, empty nest, getting married, retirement, middle age, etc.)
- How we **NAVIGATE** through life determines our **DESTINATION**

4. The plan of **GOD**

- **SOMETIMES** a wilderness experience can be God’s plan for us
- Almost all the great saints of the church went through an experience that is referred to as “the dark night of the soul”
- While God’s plan for us is much better than we could ever imagine, it often involves **PAIN, STRUGGLES, and SUFFERING**

NO MATTER THE CAUSE... Wilderness experiences have the capacity to **RE-FORM** us to be used by God [Rom. 8:28]

“God uses broken people, people who have come to the end of themselves and who trust solely in the strength and goodness of God.” – Rob Renfroe