

THE WILDERNESS

- A time in a person's life when his or her **SOUL** is parched or dry
- When **LIFE** 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 you for **BLESSING** and **BATTLE**

→ **THE KEY: Don't WASTE your wilderness!**

Life, according to the Bible, is all about RELATIONSHIPS

With **OTHERS**

With **GOD**

"Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ."
EPHESIANS 5:2

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." JOHN 13:25

The ONLY WAY to walk through the wilderness is by FAITH

→ It's important to distinguish between faith and **FEELINGS**

- Lie: We think if we feel **CLOSE** to God, He must be close; if we feel **DISTANT**, He must be distant
- Truth: Our feelings have **NOTHING** to do with whether God is with us or not
- Our feelings are important, but they can be a bad **INDICATOR** of where we really are
- If we listen to our feelings, we will often fail to move forward with **GOD**

"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." HEBREWS 13:5
[From Deuteronomy 31:6, 8]

1. By faith, we trust in God's PROMISES

- Faith is a decision we make **EVEN IF** we don't have all the **ANSWERS**

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." ROMANS 8:28

- Faith is a decision we make often **IN SPITE OF** our feelings

"For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." PHILIPPIANS 4:13

- Faith is a decision we make to **RISE ABOVE** our fears

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!" HABAKKUK 3:17-18

- Faith is a decision to trust in the **TRUTHFULNESS** of God's Word

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." ISAIAH 41:10

2. By faith, we walk in God's PRESENCE

- Sometimes the presence of God comes upon us **SUDDENLY** and **UNEXPECTEDLY**

[Jesus] *"And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* MATTHEW 28:20

- Other times we must **PURPOSEFULLY** seek God and his presence

"Sometimes seeking and experiencing God's presence requires more than just setting aside a time and place to be alone with Him [while that is important]; it requires us to work diligently to clear our hearts and minds of all the attitudes and emotions that impede us from experiencing His presence."