

# Wilderness Testing

by Art Katz

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*Wilderness testing is a necessary experience for a deeper revelation of God, stripping us of our confidence, comfort, and consolation, and bringing us to a fresh understanding of God's sovereignty and our own destitution.*

**Duration:** 44:05

**Scripture:** Job 42:5, Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah 35:3-6, Daniel 11:32, Acts 16:14-18, Acts 16:31, Acts 16:33

**Topics:** "Wilderness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of passing through difficult and perplexing situations in order to glorify God. He highlights the confidence and faith that believers should have in God's sovereignty and perfect ways, even when faced with challenges. The speaker shares personal experiences of facing hopelessness and finding transformation and growth through encounters with God. He also references the life of Jesus, pointing out that even Jesus experienced moments of being stripped of comfort and consolation as part of His journey towards glory.

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## Transcript

Can I throw in a question? Is it possible to be in the wilderness that is not a wilderness? Can God bring us to wilderness experience while we're yet in the conventional and familiar patterns of life? Or does he actually require an uplifting and a casting out? I call my time in Denmark. I lived in Denmark for a few months after I'd been kind of cast out after that unit for Christ message in Washington, D.C. and the accusation that I'd missed the mind of the Lord and the guy that kept harassing me. The Jewish mission that I was employed as a missionary and the head of the work in New York, I was invited out.

The Baptist members were offended by a Pentecostal believer in that position. So it came in conjunction and it required we actually left the country. I lived in Denmark and I called those months in Denmark my wilderness experience.

That's remarkable because Denmark is a creature comfort country. You can count on 4 o'clock coffee if the world's coming to an end. You'll have coffee, you know exactly what's going to be on the table, this cake, that cake, and that cake and there's a certain uniformity.

But those very conditions that were creature comfort were for me wilderness. I hope I don't over-enlarge. So that's good that you understand that God can take our conventional condition and turn that into

wilderness experience.

So now what constitutes then the essence of wilderness experience if it doesn't require wilderness, physical wilderness? Would you say that man's consent is not required, that the Lord will put into the wilderness whom he will? He'll do that with Israel, they certainly don't desire it. But will he do it with us? Will he wait for our willingness to be so dealt with in that harshest of all dealings and environments? Or will he just, because he's sovereignly God, just do? Is there something that he waits for, looks for, before he'll submit someone to that kind of wilderness feeling? Interesting, I'm just thinking, the King James says, Jesus was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. I can't picture that he was reluctant or dragging his feet, and yet that's the word that's used in the King James edition.

Two questions that have come to mind. What is it about wilderness that strips? Of what is a person stripped who is submitted to wilderness feeling? And why is that a necessary preliminary for the seeing of God anew? Seeing him more deeply and truly than would have been possible if the conditions of life had remained stable and unchanged. Is that making sense? What about wilderness invokes stripping? Maybe to be lost in the wilderness, as I was today, I was sharing at the dinner table.

I took the dogs for a walk when I came back from Bemidji. And I just had a little hunch to just go off the path a bit and look into a certain section of the property that I used to walk out years before. And before I knew it, I couldn't find my way back out again.

I was completely and utterly bewildered. I couldn't find any direction. All I saw was a maze of trees, of underbrush, growth, vines, thorns, broken things, and all we could do was just stagger and trap our way through.

After I breathed the prayer that there would be a way out. It's kind of a terrifying experience when there's no orientation and no direction. Wherever you look, it's totally unfamiliar and there's no indication in anything in the environment around you that could be familiar or that could point you to a place of safety or return to civilization.

It has a quality of experience that is unlike anything. So imagine being submitted to that for a period of time. What will remain of one's academic background, his degrees, his book knowledge, his self-assurance is a remarkable thing that there's something about wilderness that is calculated to strip a man to the bone.

There's nothing in the trappings that had made up his life previously that has any value in that environment. It counts for nothing. So you're reduced right to the absolute essential, the grit of what you are.

So you lose a lot and probably a lot of what is lost are notions about God, morality, ethics, the kinds of things that occupy Jews and that we could enjoy when we're sitting in our penthouse apartments. But when we're in a wilderness, that stuff goes up with a puff and then what? Where are you? Who are you? So that needs to strike our soul. So why, maybe the question answers itself, why is that a necessary preliminary to a fresh revelation of God? Will God wait for wilderness emptying before he will give the sense of himself? And is there something in the wilderness that is suggestive of God against which we're blocked when we live in conventional city circumstances and see landscapes made by man everywhere.

Everything attests to man. The building you're in, the street below, the street, the lights, there's man. And well, if I can be biographical, I turned 17 on the high seas.

I became a merchant seaman as a high school dropout. And there was a 1946, the year after the war's end, but there was still sunken ships and harbors and we had to watch for floating mines. So part of my duty was to be on the bow with binoculars, looking for floating mines still a danger and calling up into the wheelhouse to say there's an object that's such and such a clock, two o'clock.

But I was, I would often stretch out on that bow plate and just myself and the sea. Have you ever been out in the sea where there's no sign of shore at all? No land, nothing of man, just the vastness of creation itself, sea and sky. And you're floating on a little clock.

I can't describe what that feels like. I was an atheist, but I would say the Lord employed something to come, seep into my soul. Brooklyn boy who grew up in the bricks and the asphalt, now away from those familiar man-made things and confronting God's creation.

And the sea can be terrifying. There were times when the storms and the waves were so high that we took in water through our smokestack. So you learn the terrifying aspect of nature and creation and the vastness of it and I wouldn't say that an atheist will necessarily therefore think of God, but he will be disposed to think of things that are beyond his own ability to consider that there's a vastness here that from which he was shielded so long as he was in a familiar structure.

So long as he saw the buildings, the streets, the fire escapes, the cars, the apartment, there's a security. But when that's removed then you see only the vastness of nature, either a dense undergrowth of forest or a vast distance of sea. It opens up new kinds of sensibility and consideration.

So I would say that modern people are insulated against God. That civilization itself contends against God. I don't say that it's a conscious design.

Maybe it's more conscious than we know for the principalities and powers. But we need to recognize that the amenities, you know that word? The things that make a comfortable living that are made by man and that surround man completely will block out any consideration of God and blur any apprehension of creation itself. You've got to come out from the things that are made of man and see the vastness of creation itself to begin to be disposed to think in another way.

I would say of all people in the world, Jews as a class are urban and love the city life, the amenities, the comforts. That's why they'll live in New York. When I was in New York we thought anyone who lived outside New York was lost soul.

They were knocking about nowhere. New York was it. It had all this, the museums and places of interest.

So we need to consider why God will bring an entire people out into the wilderness. But what you're considering is why is it necessary for the church to be brought out and in and through a wilderness before they're coming. Do we need it? Are we insulated from God? Are we also affected by the amenities and the things around us that we need somehow to be stripped and reduced and face ultimate and elemental considerations of the deepest kind? I was driving through Arizona and we came to a long stretch of wilderness.

I thought to myself, I can just see sophisticated Jews in that environment day after day, plotting their way through and seeing vast embankments, granite mountains, hills, just untouched nature and how shall they be in that environment day after day and not be moved Godward, not begin to be disposed to consider that from which they had been up until then shielded. Most sailors are very crude from my experience, rough characters. I was this poetic kid from Brooklyn and so I had a different disposition but for those guys, it was a job and they would just as soon throw you overboard as look at you, especially if you're Jewish.

I don't think that they would have these kinds of contemplations seeing the vastness of the sea. It was just the kind of environment that I needed at that time and that Jews need. When men will reach a place where they're so hardened that they cannot be affected by the vastness of the sea and the elements and sense something of a God, dimension beyond the things that are known, they're almost down and out.

They've lost all sensibility. Their consciences are seared. I'm thinking for some reason of the book of Job.

Remember that God in his conversation with Satan says, can you find such a one in the earth? A man who eschews evil and loves God, fears God. Can you find such a one? Then Satan is released to begin to torment this remarkable saint who is the Hyperion of sainthood that even when he has boils from the top of his head, soles of his feet, his wife says, why don't you curse God and die? Never. God gives.

God takes away. I've received. Shall he not? The whole remarkable book is the dealing of this already remarkable saint that God himself cites as being outstanding, but he has still not come to a knowledge of God, of that for which these sufferings are preparation, his wilderness.

And how does he come to the final knowledge? The Lord says something like, have you seen the beast that I have created? Where will you set your hook? How will you engage it? God brings Job to an end of himself by describing things that will be found in creation that eclipses anything that he has known humanly. And he sees the magnitude of God in creation. And then he says, I've heard of you with the hearing of my ear, but now my eye sees.

Talk about seeing. Now my eye sees. He was already a superior saint, but now my eye sees.

Isaiah was already an established prophet, but now he sees the Lord higher lifted up. But I'm just thinking that it's through God raising up the images of what he has created that are awesome, that brings Job to the end of himself. And knows that this is another category beyond anything that he's previously understood.

So that's an expression of wilderness. Have you seen these beasts that I've just made to play, like Denmark? I didn't know that there was going to be a wilderness experience, but it was. And so it's a wilderness experience calculated for me.

I would have been more comfortable in some rugged physical environment than to live in a country of consistent creature comfort. That wherever you look, it's materialism. It's what you eat.

It's what you drink. It's what you wear. It's how you decorate your house.

I couldn't stand it. It brought me to a place of breaking to be continually in that environment. For me it was a wilderness testing time.

So let's put it this way. God who knows our frames will thrust us in an environment that is totally contrary to what we are naturally. And therefore exacerbate and bring to the place of ultimate breaking those things that are peculiar to ourselves.

For me, that's how Denmark was wilderness. For someone else, it could be just the opposite. But evidently, if Job required this kind of dealing, how are we to be fitted to be to Israel a comfort in the wilderness and to say to them, your God will come.

If you haven't seen Isaiah 35, you need to make a point of that. Because it says, the wilderness will be glad for them. I believe that's the way that chapter begins.

When it sees these staggering Jews near death coming through the most primitive conditions. As I went with a precious brother into Mexico in his four wheel vehicle to show me a segment of the route of flight that the Lord had given him to develop. I did not know that we would come out alive.

I had never seen a more rugged wilderness in my life. 20 foot, 30 foot cacti. Is that the plural for cactuses? And no water and heat and burning sun and just primitive.

I can just imagine Jews who have never even taken a walk in Central Park having to come through a rugged environment like that. That's what Isaiah 35 describes. And they're ready to perish.

Not just from physical exhaustion, hunger and thirst, but from hopelessness, sense of futility, no out, no light at the end of the tunnel, no direction. And that's when God says, say to them, your God will come. Give them a word of encouragement, though there's no evidence that God will come.

Nothing to be seen that could support such a hope, but your word alone constitutes the hope. Your word itself is the event of hope. And when they hear that, the lame leap in the blind sea and water breaks forth out of dry ground.

That's a remarkable text. But who can be in the wilderness in those very same conditions and not himself despair? And say with confidence to others who have no hope in God that your God will come and he'll save you out of this distress. Except those who have been tested in that place and for whom God has come.

And that they can with confidence then share a word that is more than just hypothetical. Their word is the event that saves those who would otherwise die in their fear and hopelessness. This is where the stripping comes in.

That's where it came in for me 40 years ago. That I could hear the still small voice. Why? My own mouth was shut.

I had nothing more or other to say. I had come to the end of myself. My own arrogance, my own presumption, my own theories, my philosophy, ideologies finished.

I was mute and staggering over the earth as a man without answer. And then when God put the New Testament in my hand or called me by name, I could hear then what previously I was unable even to consider or hear. You know, you mentioned the Lord in this context.

Was he himself, we know he passed about 40 days in the wilderness. But is there any other expression in the testimony of the life of Jesus in which he is utterly stripped of any confidence, any comfort, any

consolation as part of the necessary thing through which he must pass before he ascends up to his glory, before he comes to an exaltation? What is in fact the last thing that he cries out that shows an absolute destitution of any comfort that he of all sons should more rightly expect? My God, my God, why hast thou? So, wilderness is forsakenness. There's no one to help you, no one to direct you, no sense of God's presence.

You're alone with the elements and they're threatening and frightening. So, Jesus himself was required to come to an absolute destitution of soul. It's not just that he found an occasion to quote Psalm 20, but that there was something through which he must pass of even the forsakenness of the Father.

And if that was necessary for Jesus and Israel itself being the national expression of what Jesus is in himself as a person and they will come to that forsakenness, to what degree must we face it? Have we faced it? Have you come to and will we come to that requirement of that absolute destitution where even God is not present? He's present, but he's not allowing himself to be known or recognized as present. And all you know is complete aloneness. That almost contradicts the testimony of Richard von Braun and his wife.

He was 13 years solitary confinement in Romania and he talks about he was a seminary graduate, multilingual, he could quote Greek and Hebrew, but in his confinement he came to a place where he could not remember anything of the formidable knowledge that he had as a man of God when he was living in conventional circumstances in Budapest. He was stripped even of that knowledge. Could not find comfort by dredging up the theological knowledge of the past or even quoting Scripture.

He was so stripped. There he could say, my God, my God, why has not forsaken me? But in that strippedness there God came in a depth and reality that he had never before known that required even the loss of the comfort of the legitimate knowledge of God that he had enjoyed before he was imprisoned. His wife also, an equally remarkable saint, talks about being put into a casket that was lined with spikes.

People who were submitted to that went insane in the claustrophobic dark congestion of having a lid closed on you and feeling the points of these spikes right up against your body that if you move in any way you're going to be jabbed and pierced. And she said, in that terrifying darkness and suffocation and claustrophobia and pain, panic and hysteria, she could not think of any Scripture or quote anything for her comfort and what saved her was she broke out in other tongues. Something out of the very deep of God's investment in the deeps of her spirit came forth in tongues and she said, it's saved by sanity.

So it is remarkable how we can be reduced to the point where even our knowledge which is legitimate will flee from us and brings us to yet a deeper place in God. In fact, Job was exactly the case in point. He was a man who sacrificed, he prayed for his children, he lived an exemplary life, he was godly and yet he had to be stripped of all that virtue.

It was not vice that was dealt with, it was his virtue. His knowledge, the things that God even lauded and could say to Satan, can you find such a one on the earth? When he was stripped of that and then God faces him and said, you don't know as you ought to know and that's what he says, I've heard, hearing of me but now my eyes cease and I abhor myself. The same kind of reaction of Isaiah in chapter 6, I am undone, I'm a man of unclean lips.

Job says, I abhor myself. How is it that the deepest revelations of God invariably bring about a statement and a recognition of the condition of the person himself in a way in which he despises himself and sees

himself as destitute and lacking in anything? In both cases, that's the result. Where's that statement from the truth that lies too deep for words? Did I make that up? I got it from somewhere.

There's a truth or the knowledge of God is a better way to put it, that lies too deep for words. There's a substratum of reality of the knowledge of God as God that is sewn into you, that is in your inward parts, that is beyond words, vocabulary, scripture knowledge, doctrine or any such thing. Those things will flee but that inward sense of God as God that lies too deep for words, that is the sustaining reality.

Are you agreeing with me about that? How does one obtain that? That's the question. I won't take a poll to say how many of us feel that we have some measure of that now, but I think I can safely say it takes a history with God, it takes a lifetime. God gives it in increments through trials, through the experiences and dealings to which we pass.

Something is in wrought and also the communion that I've commended to you guys. Even though it seems like the heavens are as brass, nothing is happening, you're not feeling any presence and you have every temptation to quit because it doesn't seem to be productive and there are much better things you can think to do with your time. To remain before the Lord in a posture of devotion when you're not receiving any measurable benefit, something I believe is a part of God himself and it's cumulative and we're not aware of it, we can't put in the dipstick and measure to see how much is in the crankcase, but I think that something is being established and wrought as the residue of those times with God and in the crisis moment that will be a saving grace.

I'm thinking of that familiar verse, they that know their God shall do great exploits. Well, okay, that's true. How about a little play on that? They that know their God shall maintain their calm.

They that know their God shall not subscribe to panic. They will not hit the panic button. They that know their God will have an inward confidence in his sovereignty even things that will come astonishingly and with surprise that seem even to contradict the character of God.

That's where we'll be tested. If you look at the front page of the Holocaust book, I quote Oswald Chambers, something where he says, when you can consider the darkest, blackest thing of God, the things that are inexplicable and defy your understanding and seem to contradict what you think God to be and even seem to be a reversal of his nature and yet not be offended, then you've come to a true place. So there will be massive disillusionment, but much of it will be about what people thought God to be who did not know him as they ought and have probably shunned the fellowship of suffering and wilderness conditions by which that kind of knowledge alone could be obtained.

They lived in vast, what do they call it, like a nursery, ideal hothouse conditions and they had faith that could believe for Cadillacs and all that kind of thing, the faith prosperity period which I'm just using as a metaphor, but when the conditions changed and changed abruptly, they were found wanting. They had not an elemental knowledge of God that could sustain them not just by the severity of conditions, but by God seeming to be contradicted as God or to be absent when he should be present or allowing things that you would say, where's his kindness, where's his mercy, where you are more moral than God, where you would say in a situation like this, I would not allow such and such. My morality would make way for mercy, but where's God? He's silent, absent.

His character seems to be contradicted. To believe then in situations that are inexplicable and how about going through feelings like that in your own life? I wish I could count on the fingers not of one hand, but

two hands. Brothers I know or sisters whose spouses have freaked out completely and freaked out virtually overnight.

The most moral women have gone haywire and become whores or go running after or leave their husbands, leave their children. The most inexplicable thing that comes and comes suddenly and sweeps the believing spouse off their feet to ask where is God? And the remarkable thing is there's no immediate answer. He's not there to give explanation and he'll allow the victim to languish in a situation in which there's no evident answer.

Could you see that? That's wilderness dealing. That's wilderness testing. If people protect themselves and will not allow God to shake, though he says he'll shake the most difficult things that can be shaken, when the shaking comes they'll collapse with it.

So I'm making a case for the knowledge of God that is too deep for words, beyond words, beyond doctrine, beyond what we know to be true. I'm not disparaging that truth, but I'm encouraging an apprehension of God that is more elemental, that can only come in the secret place, in the hidden time, in the dealings that he elects and that we will allow. And that will not only save us, it will save them.

They will be panic stricken. These sophisticated Jews who have degrees and are the men of the year, they will come completely unraveled overnight and they're not prepared for such a devastation. And they're the ones that have to be counseled, led by the hand, directed by people who are calm in the midst of inexplicable perplexity.

So I would say a lot of the history of Ben Israel has been a history of perplexity, of falling failings, of collapse, of contradiction, of issues rising where you spit out your guts or you come into a meeting of a community discussion over a certain crisis and you abandon hope. You stop breathing when you enter that door. You don't expect to come out alive.

But the remarkable thing is you come out alive and you come out better than when you walked in. Something was transacted with God in that seeming hopelessness but to hold your breath and enter it is a form of dying. Community is a wilderness that we ourselves generate for each other.

Not because we're malicious but just it's the nature of the thing. The intricacy of life, the intensity of it, the frequency, the same people in situations that God raises, produces a wilderness environment. Confrontation, stupefying things that cannot be answered, trusted brothers who freak out or, and the worst part is your own failure.

The revelation of your own failure where you're freaking out and become the object of disappointment to others and to yourself. Talk about stripping. Okay.

I think you'll find in Isaiah 35 and other places that speak of this, the phrase, the highway of holiness and the fool and I wish Reggie was here. He would just quote this like that. The fool and the will not walk in it.

No lion, wild beast will be hunted. It's a highway of holiness but it's a highway through prevail and destitution but the end is Zion. One of my favorite texts is Acts 16.

Paul being obedient to the heavenly vision of a Macedonian beseeching him come help us leaves the successful mission field in Asia and for the first time comes to Europe, comes to Philippi, the capital city, goes out from the city to the riverside where some women are disposed to pray and that's where Lydia

attends to the things that Paul speaks and is baptized. And then the next episode a woman pursues Paul and Barnabas and says, these men in this cracked hysterical demonic voice because she was an object of use by men who made their money by her by telling fortunes. So she was demon filled and cried out, these men, she knew this by the spirit, are the servants of the most high God.

And Paul being grieved turned and commanded the spirit to come out of her and when she was delivered the master seeing that their gain was lost bring Paul and Silas to the marketplace where they're stripped and beaten to a pulp 39 stripes with the metal in the bone and glass that cuts right through to the bone and then they're put into the inner dungeon and their feet are made faster than the stocks. And then they're on the road to when your wounds become corrupt what do you call that? Gangrene Gangrene and death and they're there with stink. There's no toilet facility.

It's not like modern prisons with weight lifting and other amenities for men behind bars. This is unbelievable stench filth and hopelessness dark and then the wonderful verse I think it's chapter 16 verse 25 at midnight why at midnight? Darkest hour. Midnight is the darkest before the commencement of dusk and the rising of dawn.

At midnight with their backs hanging in strips of flesh bound and unable even to change their position listening to the moaning and groaning of prisoners it says Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises and I often say as an atheist if I was walking and my head was down because of the crushing perplexities of my own life that no man can solve without God and I found a scrap of scripture on the floor or someone tore it out of the Bible Acts 16 and I read this one verse at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God I would have become a believer on the spot. That is the ultimate testimony of the reality of God where men can sing in the depth of their despair and their suffering. How could they? Now we're coming to the real thing.

It seemed that God had betrayed them they had obeyed the heavenly vision they left the successful mission field to go in a new direction there was very little fruit only one woman had been saved Lydia and one woman had been delivered and for that the whole apostolic career of Paul was about to come to an end in a stinking prison where he could not have access to a cell phone and call his comrades and ask for their prayer let alone for his deliverance. He was finished with gangrene and suffering and death in the lower dungeon and without any visible sign of deliverance no word from the Lord to say well done faithful servant hang on there the reinforcements are coming God is silent.

At midnight in that silence Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them and I'm expecting to meet every one of those prisoners in heaven because to hear that praise is to be saved and the prison keeper thinking that the prison because the doors burst open the manacles were loose everything that was constrictive and confining broke because where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty especially where the spirit of the Lord is in men who are suffering for his namesake being obedient to the heavenly vision and that rejoicing under that congested and fierce condition nothing could constrain freedom the Lord is in the praises of his people and where the Lord is there is liberty and the prison keeper thinking that they had fled was ready to take his life

Paul says do yourself no harm we're still here so what saved Wurmbrandt and his wife saved Paul and the question is how can a man rejoice when he's sitting in immeasurable pain his wounds unattended a victim, a candidate for gangrene and death and obscure and lost and no contact with the church or the knowledge of where he is and the end of a apostolic career while it is hardly just begun it began in Acts 13,

it's going to be over in Acts 16 so how do you figure that that he was able to praise God it's not a feigned praise and that they both prayed and sang praises unto God they were encouraging their hearts they had a knowledge of God that could believe that even though they were in desperate hopeless condition God not only knew of it but his sovereignty had prepared for it that it was

something through which they must pass and that it would glorify God though it's not explained and God is not there quick to give answer and explanation they bore it in a confidence that God is utterly sovereign and he does all things well is perfect in all his ways how do you come to that kind of confidence and faith that you can sing God's praises at midnight that the prisoners can hear that praise and that the prison keeper himself a statement of the world can call for light and come trembling and bow down before them and say what must I do to be saved how do I come to the freedom that you have how do I come to the joy that you have I'm the guy with the keys I'm outside and you're in this filthy stinking place and you're singing this transcends anything that I could ever have known

about religion, ethics, morality the deeper life what must I do to be saved and they told him he and his whole house were baptized and then they washed Paul's wounds can you believe that the same God who has visibly blessed you and comforted you in other circumstances is equally the same God now in the prison cell that this is the expression of the same perfection of will and you can receive the one as readily as the other you can receive the suffering part as readily as the blessing part and know that it comes from the hand of the same God that whatever comes from that hand is blessed and we're privileged to bear it whether it comes as an enjoyment a visible blessing or it comes as an inexplicable suffering they that know their God shall do great exploits that was a great exploit in that

cell that was the ministry to which they were called not the occasional women praise God for them but the prisoners heard them and the prison keeper heard them and that I believe was the nucleus of the church at Philippi to which Paul wrote his epistle the letter of the to the Philippians bars do not a prison make and to be free in Christ is to be free indeed these men were not in a cell they were in Christ the bars are incidental God can saw and cut through bars in a moment he released Peter though he was guarded by Romans and even chained to them and in a cell the angel brought him out so to be free in Christ is a remarkable condition of being irrespective of any circumstance and I think as Margaret said you don't come to that in a day it's not something you're going to find in a crisis

moment if you have not consistently been coming to that kind of reality through all your moments a man whose wife may have betrayed him fornicated broken his heart there's no pain deeper than that kind of betrayal and it's the one ground for divorce that even the Lord himself permits adultery but the fact that he permits it doesn't mean that a man has to appropriate it imagine the freedom of not taking an out from a tragic fallen situation and willing yet to remain in the humiliation of it trusting for the grace of God to alter it though you have a legal and biblical grounds to extricate yourself can you see what I'm saying I pray that you'll never have to know a circumstance like that but I think that there may be occasions where we can choose to bear something that the Lord would have

not have rebuked us if we forsook it if we took a legitimate way out to avoid a humiliation or a death of one kind the Lord would not have censured us for doing that but when we freely choose to bear that trusting that even that episode in that condition is not unknown to God and that God is even in some remarkable mysterious way in it and remain in it because the issue is not your relief but his glory that will be obtained through the final resolution of it that is the making of a saint understand what I'm saying this is over your heads you guys are too young for considerations of this kind thank you Lord so that suggests that there is

a degree of freedom of how far we will allow the Lord's dealings

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