

# A Temporary, God Appointed Wilderness

by Carter Conlon

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*The temporary God-appointed wilderness is a place of preparation where God teaches us to trust in divine purpose and live by the promises of God.*

**Duration:** 40:26

**Scripture:** Exodus 13:17-18, Exodus 14:10-14, Exodus 15:22-26, Exodus 16:2-4, Luke 4:1-14

**Topics:** "Spiritual Formation", "Divine Calling"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the concept of a temporary God-appointed wilderness, emphasizing the purpose of challenges and trials in preparing individuals for their divine calling. It explores the examples of Jesus, Moses, David, and John the Baptist who all experienced wilderness seasons before fulfilling their destinies. The message encourages embracing the wilderness as a place of character formation, trust in God's divine purpose, and reliance on His power, leading to a transformation that empowers believers to impact their generation.

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## Transcript

I have a word from the Lord today and it's found in Luke chapter 4 and Exodus chapter 13. So if you want to start in Luke chapter 4 and then just put a marker in Exodus second book from the beginning of your Bible is Exodus chapter 13 and Luke is the third book in the New Testament. It's called a temporary God-appointed wilderness.

A temporary God-appointed wilderness. Now Father I thank you Lord with all my heart how you have spoken to me this week. Thank you Lord that you have stirred my heart.

You have stirred this message deep inside of me. I ask you Lord that you give me the grace and ability to convey it clearly, simply to every heart that's here and those who will be hearing it online in the future. So God that there would be no misunderstanding of your ways and how you teach and prepare your people for a specific moment in time for each of our lives.

I thank you for this with all my heart. I pray God that you quicken this physical body, quicken us as an audience to be able to hear this as your church, your beloved bride. Thank you for the knowledge that everything you do and everything you allow into our lives is out of a heart of love.

For you passionately love your church and you don't do anything to bring harm. Everything works together for good to those of us who love you and are called according to your purpose. Give us the grace to believe this and to understand it.

Give us understanding of your ways today and open to us Lord things that we're naturally not inclined to hear but they are there, they're evident, they're plain, clear in your word, they're not hidden. I thank you for it with all my heart. In Jesus name.

We start in Luke chapter 4. I want to speak about a temporary God-appointed wilderness. Anybody here in the wilderness? Anybody in the wilderness? Oh look at the hands. Are we going to talk about that and why you're there? The devil tries to tell you you've taken a wrong turn but that's not true.

Luke chapter 4 just verse 1 and then we'll go to verse 14. Then Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. In verse 14.

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and news of him went out throughout all the surrounding region and he taught in their synagogues being glorified of all. Now this historical account that we're reading about in Luke chapter 4 shows us Jesus Christ the Son of God at a specific time in his life. Just like you and I have specific times, specific callings, reasons why God will choose to do something.

Verse 1 describes him at this point in his ministry on the earth as filled with the Holy Spirit and just returning from Jordan. So he's empowered by God and he has publicly gone into the waters of baptism. The waters of baptism for the general populace of course meant turning from sin and turning to a life that is birthed and lived in God.

But that's not what his baptism was about. He didn't have to turn from sin. But his baptism was a public declaration that I'm dying to my own will.

Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed not my will father but thine be done. I'm dying to my own will. Don't forget he was not only fully God but he was also fully man.

He had a will like you and I have. Desires like you and I have. He was tested the scripture says in all points like as we are yet without sin.

And he went down into that water and when he went down into the water and came up and he did it publicly before the people that were gathered as a declaration. I am going to do the will of my father. I'm not going to live for my own purposes.

God has a divine purpose. God the Father has a divine purpose for my life and that purpose is I am determined that that purpose is going to be fulfilled even though everything humanity and hell can send against me will try to turn me from that purpose. I am determined to fulfill the calling of God on my life.

And there is a point in every Christian's life that we get to that place. Where we too are given the spirit of God. We become a new person in Christ Jesus.

We get we're given a new mind, a new heart, a new spirit. The old things are passing away and all things are becoming new. We make a determination in our heart that we have our Jordan moment where we say God I want to live on this earth for what you want me to live for.

Now we don't fully understand that but we do know there's a divine purpose for each life. We're not created just to be counted in a church. Each one of us has a purpose and nobody else can do what we're called to do and nobody can do it in the way we're called to do it.

We are each very very unique in that respect. And you would think at this point being filled with the spirit publicly acknowledging I'm going to live for the will of my father that you'd be immediately brought into the temple. Immediately would start teaching.

Immediately would become an instructor of ways of righteousness. But that's not the way it went. Coming out of the Jordan filled with the Holy Spirit the scripture says he was led by the spirit into the wilderness.

Now it's not a wilderness of unbelief. There is a wilderness people can go into because they choose not to believe God. And unbelief has a wilderness that I don't wish on anybody here.

It's a dry, barren, hopeless, powerless place that people can live their whole life there. They can know God. They can have the knowledge of scripture.

They can even know what should have been theirs but unbelief caused them not to go into it. And they end up dwelling in this desert place and they run to try to get out of it but they can't find the exit. No it's not a wilderness of unbelief but it's rather a temporary God-appointed wilderness that comes to each of us because we have chosen the way of faith.

It's something that God appoints. It's something that he does. It's not our choice and it's got nothing to do with unbelief.

It's a wilderness that you will experience because you've chosen to walk with God. Remember that God's ways are not our ways. We wouldn't do it this way.

If we were God we'd promote ourselves to the top of the company right away. We were God we'd look at our own resume and say what an incredibly loyal servant filled with the Holy Ghost baptized in the Jordan. Man you're CEO material and we would just we would promote ourselves.

Right away we'd be standing before crowds of thousands and telling them all how to live the Christian life. But that's not the way it is with God. Even his own son had to be led into a wilderness.

The wilderness is a place where decisions are made. It's a place where character is formed and character is set. It's a place where God begins that initial work in our lives that will give us the courage to finish our journey and to finish it well.

And to do it the way that God prescribes it to be done. Not the way we think it should be done. Think about throughout scriptural history.

Moses for example was made ready for his true calling by having his own wilderness experience. His lasted for 40 years. And when God came to him and finally called him to what he always knew he was called to do.

He was not only in the desert. The scripture says he was in the back of the desert. The deepest part of the desert.

The farthest away part of the desert. As far back in the wilderness as you can get that's where he was. He was 80 years old and in the natural you would say his time fulfilling the call of God on his life is over.

But because of the wilderness it had actually just begun. David the sweet psalmist of Israel was accused of having no battle ability because his only experience had been in the wilderness. Remember his older brother said to him in 1st Samuel 17 28 with who have you left those few sheep in the wilderness.

What they failed to realize is that he had received and learned about the true strength of God in the wilderness. Something they had not learned yet. With all their military training.

With all of their repetitious battle strategies and all the things that they thought they knew that none of them had any courage to fight the giant. But in the wilderness David had found the courage of God. He found the battle plan of God and he found the strength of God.

John the Baptist in Luke chapter 3 and verse 2 says the Word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. It was in the wilderness that John received a revelation that his generation didn't have. It was coming out of the wilderness that John could say behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

How could he have known that except God had given it to him and God chose to give it to him in the wilderness. Not in a palace, not in a hammock, not in luxury, not listening to his favorite CD of his favorite worship but he was in the wilderness. Now the wilderness is a place that seems to be barren.

The wilderness is a place that in our hearts we say what possible good could come from me being here. Have you ever said that? Have you ever gone in your prayer closet and said God what good could come from this? I'm in such a barren place. It's a place where there's nothing appealing to the natural eye.

I don't like it here. You ever prayed that way? I don't like it here. I'm not going to lie to you God.

I'm not going to fancy it up with King James language. I don't like this place. I don't like where I am.

I don't like what you're doing in my life. Whatever it is that you're doing I don't like what you're doing. I know I'm supposed to trust it but I don't like it.

In the wilderness there are no familiar landmarks. There's nothing that there's nothing that gives you a sense of bearing of where you are. It seems to be a strange place because in the in the wilderness the boundaries just can't seem to be found and there's there's you can wander around there's nothing there that tells you I've been here before.

In the wilderness is completely unappealing to our senses. It doesn't smell good, doesn't taste good, doesn't look good, doesn't sound good, just this howling wind all the time. There's nothing about it.

It's a place that nobody is rushing to get into and everybody is rushing to get out and yet for some reason God takes us there and the question is why would he do that? Why would he? Now I have been in the wilderness so many times I can do tours now. I know a little bit about this. The wilderness is sent to prepare us for the divine purpose for our lives.

You see because we will be opposed when we begin to do what God's called us to do we'll be opposed. We'll be opposed by an enemy that is subtle. We'll be opposed by an enemy that is not subtle sometimes.

We'll be opposed with words. We'll be opposed with circumstances. We'll be opposed with strategies.

We'll be opposed by hell itself sometimes and if we're not prepared for the opposition that's going to come our way we will turn back in the day of battle and God knows it. Now in Exodus chapter 13 and verse 17 here are God's own people they're coming out of captivity and they're going into the promised land. Now you and I know from the testimony of the book of Acts you remember Philip the evangelist he met the Ethiopian eunuch in the chariot and he took him to the water baptized him and then the scripture says he was he was taken away.

He just disappeared when they come out of the water and he was found at Azotus another place he was he was translated. Now God could have done that. God could have the moment his own people left the borders of Egypt they could have been immediately in the promised land.

There's nothing prohibiting God from doing that but he chose not to do it that way. In Exodus 13 verses 17 and 18 we see why it says then it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go that God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines although that was near for God said lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt. So God led the people around by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea lest they change their minds.

They can't go into battle too quickly because they're not prepared and that's thank God thank God that he doesn't take us in our youth and our zeal and put us in that place which is the ultimate fulfillment of what he has for each of our lives because we wouldn't be able to stand there. There has to be some kind of a preparation of character that God begins to work inside each of our hearts. We would like it to be in spiritual warfare class 101.

We'd like to read a chapter in a book and just come out super Christian. You know the devil just simply can never triumph over me. It would be nice if we could just do it with learning but it doesn't work that way because there's some things you can't learn.

There's some things have to be learned through experience. There are some things that God himself has to work within us and when the children of Israel if you go to Exodus again let me just make sure I got the the right verses here. Exodus chapter 14 verse 10 it says when Pharaoh drew near the children of Israel lifted their eyes and behold the Egyptians marched after them so they were very afraid and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord and they said to Moses because there were no graves in Egypt you taking us away to die in the wilderness? I remember one time being out on a gravel road if you know my testimony and I just shouted at God is this how you treat your friends? That really did happen folks.

Is this what you do to those who serve you? In my youth I didn't understand why the wilderness experience is necessary in people's lives. Why have you so dealt with us to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt saying let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians for it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians that we should die in the wilderness and Moses said to the people do not be afraid stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which will he will accomplish for you today for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall see again no more forever the Lord will fight for you and you will hold your peace. Now the wilderness is a place that you will learn when your old enemies pursue you and you have nowhere to hide and you have no natural strength to defend yourself you will learn in the wilderness stand still be quiet God is going to fight for you let God fight for you.

Again in Exodus 15 verse 22 so Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea and they went out into the wilderness of shore and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water when they came to Mara they could not drink the waters of Mara for they were bitter therefore the name of it was called Mara and the people complained against Moses saying what shall we drink so he cried to the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree when he cast it into the waters the waters were made sweet and there he made them a statute and an ordinance for them and there he tested them and said if you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes I will put none of these diseases on you which I brought on the Egyptians for I am the Lord who heals you.

In the wilderness it's a place where you and I will learn to trust in divine purpose we learn to trust in God and in the wilderness even the bitter things become sweet I believe that tree was a type of the cross of Jesus Christ when life takes a bitter turn when the Word of God is not bringing comfort when there's nothing to be found around in this wilderness place suddenly the tree appears the cross of Jesus Christ and God says you trust me you trust me there's a divine purpose to your life and if you begin to understand that all things do work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose even the bitter places will become sweet you'll not be circumstance driven anymore your faith will not be up and down like a roller coaster you walk on an even

keel and you say I will trust in God though the mountains shake and be cast into the sea though the seas roar and overflow their borders I will not be moved by these things for I've learned to trust in God he is my stay he's my tower he's my shield he's my hope and he promises that none of the plagues that touch the minds of the unsaved who are driven by the winds and their sense of well-being is determined by the height of the stock market and the depth of their depravity none of these things will affect me as a child of God I'll be able to stand in the midst of the sea and though it may drown others I'm going to believe that God's going to make a path for me for all things do work together for good because I do love God with all my heart Exodus 16 chapter 16 verse 2 it says then the

whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and the children of Israel said to them oh that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full you know they leave out when our backs were whipped till they were bleeding and we had no hope for the future for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger then the Lord said to Moses behold I'll rain bread from heaven for you and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not the wilderness is a place where even when the old ways begin to look better than where you are the promises of God have the power in

your heart to keep you from turning back it's a place where you and I begin to live by the promises of God we don't live by our circumstance we don't live are we don't sing we don't worship because we feel good we worship because we've learned to trust in God in Luke chapter 4 again the scripture says the devil came to Jesus and said if you're the Son of God commend these this stone to become bread and Jesus answered him saying it is written man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God you see the devil came to tempt him to test him and say command this difficult place to become something more satisfying and familiar but Jesus said no that's not how men are going to live we're not going to live by searching out softness in this life we're not going to live by trying to

command our difficult places to become easy we're going to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God and I may stand here and I may be hungry and this may be a wilderness and it might be an

unpleasant moment in my life but I'm not going to use the faith that God has given me for my own good I am called to live for others I'm going to trust God in this wilderness and I'm going to be sustained not by bread but I'm going to be sustained by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God and there is no way that you can learn that apart from being in the wilderness again in verse five says the devil took him up on a high mountain showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and the devil said to him all this authority will I give you and the glory for this has

been delivered to me and I give it to whomever I wish therefore if you will worship before me all will be yours and Jesus answered and said get behind me Satan it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve in the wilderness it's a place where you and I learned that if success should accompany our mission in life if the praises of man for a season should become our portion that we will not let pride and self-satisfaction become our worship in our story we will remember who we serve and who we worship we will remember that without him we have no story in the wilderness we learn that if God does not sustain me I'm not going to be sustained if God does not lead me I'm not going to be led if God doesn't get me out of here I'm not getting out of here if God

doesn't put words in my mouth I'll have nothing to say if God doesn't give me power I will never change and so if God should raise me up if God should raise you up if we should have the privilege of standing and speaking for him if his glory should come upon our lives he is the only one that will get the praise and get the glory and get the worship because it's in the wilderness that we learn what we are we are powerless without him we are directionless without him we are hopeless without him we are mindless without him we have no strength we have no power we have nothing without him but because of him we are given all things and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us but if God should use your life for his glory if God should use this church pray with me that the

testimony of this church will always and only ever just be about one name the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God lastly Luke chapter 4 verse 9 says then he brought him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him if you are the Son of God throw yourself down from here for it is written he shall give his angels charge over you to keep you and in their hands they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone and Jesus answered and said to him it has been said you shall not tempt the Lord your God in the wilderness we learned that if ministry leads us to a fearful place and we're in we're coming into a fearful place I've shared with you before that in this country we are midway between persecution and prosecution and you're now starting to realize that

prosecution is beginning it's starting in the outer circle but it's going to come right into the church it won't be very long now and we'll be given a choice but if ministry leads to a fearful place that you and I will not doubt the faithfulness of God nor look for a quick and easy way out standing on the pinnacle of the temple would be a fearful place it's a long way to fall down it's a place where Satan is trying to instill fear and doubt in the heart of the Son of God that God's words to him will actually be true that God will actually sustain him that there will ultimately be a divine purpose in this fearful place if you're the Son of God jump down that same voice was at Calvary that same devil speaking through the religious crowd if you're the Son of God come down from the cross and

we will believe you same voice same temptation but you see he'd been through it in the wilderness and because he'd been through it in the wilderness when it came to him on the cross when it came to him at the moment in his life that it mattered the most he was not tempted to give in to that temptation and use his power to get out of trouble many people have never been tested in the wilderness they're going to take

the easy way out in the days ahead you mark my word churches are going to compromise and begin doing things explicitly against the Word of God because they've not been in the wilderness have not been proven they've not been tested they've shunned this classroom of Christ ah but verse 14 says then Jesus returned in power he came out of the wilderness with power of the Spirit to

Galilee and the news of him went out throughout all the surrounding region and he taught in the synagogues being glorified of all oh yes he came out of the wilderness and he came out different than he went in and he came out with a word and he began to teach the people and the people said we've never heard it like this I mean our our scribes tell us similar words our Pharisees quote similar scriptures but we've never heard it like this his word was with power his word was clear his word was with determination authority ability it instilled faith in the hearts of those who hear it it says they he taught in the synagogues and was glorified of all today you and I are living at a time when society thinks that we are shut in remember Farrell said the wilderness has shut them in let's go

conquer them that we are non players in our present society and our future society the church has been marginalized relegated to obscurity and now looked upon as easy prey to conquer not so fast devil not so fast not so fast not so fast the testimony of the church is about to change in my heart I know one thing that one more time one more time one more time when people think that they've been able to conquer the testimony of Christ one more time there's going to be a sudden awakening and society itself is going to say who is this coming up out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved who is this who are these 120 people coming out of an upper room where we sealed them up and told them your cause is lost you're hoping to save you is useless who are these people coming out of this

wilderness place that we placed them in who is it that they're leaning on where did they get such power why does their speech seemingly have the power to go right through us why is our religion demolished in their presence why do we feel undone why do we feel the presence of God I thought we were rid of him my God they said what must we do to have what they have you can see their beads in their phylacteries in their years of religious pride simply falling through their fingers to the ground there their venomous hatred of Jesus Christ is no longer on their lips they're now saying what must we do to have what they have who is it and how did they get this power they got it when they ran from the garden they got it when they realized what they really were without God they got it when in

simple obedience they just simply went into a place where they knew only God could get them out and they came out in the power of God's Holy Spirit and overthrew the spiritually godless society that was trying to swallow them up one more time one more time I love it because the devil always overplays his hand if he was smart he would stop right now where he is but he can't for some reason and he will overplay his hand when he overplays his hand he's going to wake up a sleeping giant in America yes we're in the wilderness and yes we're going to learn our lessons there but by God's grace you and I arm-in-arm leaning on our Savior are coming out and we're coming out in the power of God the wilderness is only temporary and it's appointed by God and we learn our lessons there and huge lessons

are being learned right now so don't despise where you are learn to thank God for it Oh thank God for the wilderness thank God thank God thank God that he doesn't do things our way thank God that he takes us to where strength is healing is power really is thank God that the ways of his are foolishness to those who don't know God as a matter of fact it's so foolish to them they don't even see it coming it's like people standing on a railway track denying that a train is coming their way but I'm telling you a train is coming thank God my father I thank you Lord for giving me this ability to speak your heart if ever I've known I've

spoken from heaven I have this morning so Jesus give us the courage to embrace your full will for each of our lives right where we are and right in the place

where we'd rather not be and help us to understand that all things are working together for good because we do love you and we are called according to your divine purpose thank you for the example not only of others in Scripture but of the Son of God himself if anybody should have qualified not to have to go into the wilderness it should have been Jesus but he showed us the way and he walked the pathway that we have to walk we're called to consider him and so we do thank you Lord God Almighty that you are touched with the feelings of our weaknesses and you tell us now to come boldly to your throne of grace to find help in our time of need thank you that you're preparing a people in the testimony for this generation that our society will not go down without a fight from God himself for a

people that he has prepared I thank you for this with all my heart oh Jesus Christ thank you God Almighty thank you for those men and women who are going to come out of the wilderness leaning on their beloved those are going to affect this generation they're going to have courage they're going to stand they're not going to flee when it gets hard they're not going to trust in their own strength they're going to stand still and see your salvation they're not going to use their authority with you to try to escape the difficult places and they will not run when it gets fearful I thank you for this with all my heart all through history Lord your kingdom has advanced while your people have been persecuted marginalized put in jail laughed at it even martyred but all that's happened through all

of it is the testimony of your name has gotten stronger from age to age in generation to generation and now here we are near the end and I believe Lord with all my heart did you save the best wine for the end of the banquet I believe with everything in me that the glory of the latter house is greater than the former I believe it with every fiber in my being and so I stand at your throne and not trembling Oh God I stand with boldness and I thank you for who you are and what you do and I thank you that you've not left your name without a testimony in this generation I thank you Lord God that you have been preparing a people all along we just have not understood it fully what you're doing Oh God I praise you Lord for a day comes when Moses gets the call a day comes when David walks in the

camp a day comes Oh God a day comes Lord a day comes when John comes out of the wilderness and says behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world Jesus Son of God give us power give us speech Lord God the weight of eternity on it give us determination in our hearts form our characters Oh God deep within us let your kingdom come and let your will be done in us as it is in heaven father we thank you for these things Oh God Almighty and this day we make the choice to say thank you for being faithful to us thank you God that you are faithful hallelujah to the Lamb of God glory to your holy name glory to your holy name Oh God glory to your holy name thank you Lord Jesus Christ God Almighty you're going to awake in our city we thank you for mercy God we thank you from the depths

of our being for mercy to this generation we bless you we praise you and we give you glory hallelujah to the Lamb of God thank you Lord Jesus Christ thank you God I'm giving an altar call it's a little unusual but here goes for those that are sitting here that is saying I'm in the wilderness but by God's grace I'm coming out and I'm gonna lean on my beloved and my life is going to make a difference and I thank you God for what you're doing I don't understand it but I thank you for it I trust it I believe it God you are working something into my character you might like will make a difference in my family my neighborhood my school my business my even wherever I am my life is going to make a difference let's believe that together we're going into this storm folks but we're going in with the

power of God thank God for that and if that's your heart today I'm coming out I don't get it but I'm gonna lead on my beloved and somebody somewhere someday is gonna look at me and say who's this who is this coming out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved hallelujah to the Lamb of God this is the Church of Jesus Christ that's who she is let's all stand if you want to come down we're gonna pray together you go ahead and do that but thank God his truth is marching on it will not be stopped I praise God for that with all my heart just lift up your hands and just say thank you to God tell him why you're thankful right now just tell him why we've heard your word Lord and God we recognize that you're faithful to us and so we just thank you Lord but you've not left us as orphans and

we're not somehow in a place we shouldn't be but it's all in faith it's your faithful you can't be anything other than what you are God everything everything is on schedule just as you had planned it thank you Lord God for delivering us from the lies of the enemy delivering us from the frailty of our own hearts and giving us understanding for your word says sing praises with understanding so God we can lift our hands in the wilderness we can give thanks to you we can say thank you we can declare you to be faithful even when we don't see we don't fully understand you are still being faithful to us you're guiding us and leading us Lord we thank you for it God with all of our hearts in Jesus mighty name hallelujah to the Lamb of God thank you

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