

Glory of God in Dry Places

by Carter Conlon

The glory of God is not just a feeling or experience, but a reality that is inside of us, and we must trust in God's faithfulness and provision in the wilderness.

Duration: 48:04

Scripture: Exodus 7:16, Psalm 78:19, 2 Corinthians 7:5

Topics: "Discouragement"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the common struggle that believers face when they leave the sanctuary and enter a hostile world. He emphasizes that the devil continuously bombards believers with lies and tries to undermine their confidence in God. The preacher refers to 2 Corinthians 7:5 and describes the struggles that all people face in difficult times. He also mentions Psalm 77, where the psalmist questions if God has forgotten to be gracious and if His promises have failed. However, the preacher reminds the congregation that God has shown His power and brought them out of bondage, and many can testify to experiencing His deliverance.

Transcript

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God, we praise you. We bless you, God of all comfort. We give you all honor and all glory.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, God, for your presence. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for coming and washing us with your comforting presence.

God, we bless you today. We bless you, mighty God. And we thank you in Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. Thank you. If you'll turn with your, in your Bibles, please, in the Old Testament to Psalm 63.

Psalm 63, I'm going to speak about the glory of God in dry places. The glory of God in dry places. Father, I thank you that your anointing and your presence is an abiding anointing.

I thank you, Jesus, for your power that is always evident and manifest when your word is spoken in sincerity and in truth. I ask today, Lord, for your kingdom to come in great power. Come in a way that is unexpected to many.

Come into the dry places and do something so marvelous that there will be an absolute shout of grace and glory in this house and in every heart. Father, I so thank you for your presence. I so thank you for your anointing.

I thank you for the dry places and the hard places. God, in heaven, you are so full of mercy. We thank you in Jesus' mighty name.

Psalm 63, I want to read just verses 1 and 2. The Psalm of David, when David was in the wilderness. He said, O God, thou art my God. Early will I seek thee.

My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. David is saying, God, I have seen you in such power.

I have watched your presence. I've seen your glory. And the word in the Hebrew text means, God, I want to discover in this dry place that I'm living in.

I want to see intellectually. I want to know and experience and enjoy the same glory that I have seen of you in the sanctuary. And it's the type of a person that says, Lord God, I go to church and I'm exhilarated by your presence.

And if you're here today and you are a Christian, I have no doubt that you've been exhilarated by the presence of God. You've been uplifted by his presence. And there's a sense when we get together as the body of Christ, of his glory, that is really found in few other places.

It's wonderful when we fellowship together. We hear songs of great victory. But it's the type of person that says, God, I go to church and I'm exhilarated, but it seems that I'm touching heaven and heaven is touching me.

And when I come to fellowship with the saints, my faith is so strengthened. Yet I continually come back to this dry place throughout my week. Now, why is this always happening to me? Why is your glory not being manifested in this dry place? I wish I could live in church all the rest of my life.

That would be awesome, wouldn't it? If we could just stay here and never get hungry. Well, it is coming one day when we will just be like this and more for all of eternity. But it would be awesome down here, wouldn't it? We wouldn't have to face any more trials or difficulties or tribulations.

We could just stay here. Whenever we felt down, we could say, choir, would you just sing another song? With Jesus, I can make it. But the psalmist says at the end of Psalm 63, David said, there seems to be an indication that there are lying voices after him in this place.

You see, it's in the wilderness. It's in the dry places that the devil will really come after you with everything that he's got. And he will try to undermine your confidence in God.

He said, but the king shall rejoice in God and everyone that swears by him shall glory. But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. And the apostle Paul describes the struggles that are common to every man in difficult times.

In 2nd Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 5, he says, when we were in Macedonia, our flesh had no rest. We were troubled on every side. Without were fightings and within were fears.

And Paul's describing the common struggle that all of us have to face. When we leave the sanctuary and we go out and there's fighting, we seem to walk into an environment that is almost completely hostile to everything that we hold dear in our hearts. And there are voices coming at us continuously, bombarding that very foundation of faith that God has established through his word in your heart.

And the devil is there to lie continuously and trying to get you to doubt the very presence and the provision of God. Fightings on the outside, fears beginning to develop on the inside. Friday night is always a hard night here at Times Square Church.

I don't know how many here come Friday night. Now, sometimes there's an outbreak of glory, but often it's hard. I see all the people come in who've lived in the dry places from Monday to Friday.

And I don't even know if it's coming to church because they want to or because you have to on Friday night. People's heads are down. They're staring at their shoes, trying to raise their hands to worship God.

It's been such a hard week. And I sense the ache in so many hearts. Oh, God, why does it have to be so hard? Why do I have to go home to such a hard place? Why do I have to go back to such a hard working environment, such a difficult neighborhood, or maybe just something inside of you that you have to go back to? It seems that when I come into the sanctuary, I can escape it.

I have a revelation of your power. I have an instantaneous understanding of who you are and how great you are. Why do I seem to lose it at the door? Why does it escape me by Monday afternoon? By Tuesday, I'm almost unbearable.

By Wednesday, I either go to church or nobody can live with me anymore. Psalm 77. The psalmist describes some of the arguments that the enemy will bring against the child of God in these dry places.

Psalm 77, verse 7. He says, Will the Lord cast off forever? Will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Does his promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Now, here's the psalmist who's obviously in a difficult time, and perhaps he's describing his own people also being in a difficult time. But he is now putting to paper the very questions that are in the hearts of many in times of difficulty. The very questions that you and I have to face, and of course the very accusations that the devil will bring against the faithfulness of God in these dry places.

Does God cast you off? Has he forgotten to be favorable to you? Is his mercy gone forever? Do his promises fail? Has he forgotten? Is he just too occupied to be gracious to you in your time of need? Or is he angry at you for some reason that you may not be aware of? And because of that anger, has he shut up his tender mercies? You see, beloved, I want to tell you something. The wilderness is a place where we all have to go outside of church. And now church, I'm describing as where we meet together as a body of believers.

We all have to go there. Every one of us. And personally speaking, I thank God for the wilderness places in my life.

I thank God for the places where I've had no one to turn to but him. Because in the wilderness places I have, there has been something imparted into my spirit of God that cannot be found anywhere else. There's something that God has worked into my heart and continues to work into my heart.

Now I'm not part of the God hit-me-beat-me club that you sometimes find in the church of Jesus Christ. But I don't despise the hard places. I don't despise the wilderness because there's now an inward understanding that all things work together for good to those who love God.

And are the called according to his purpose. Sometimes we have to go through these places seemingly just dragged by the very power of God. There's almost nothing in us to take another step.

But yet in these places we fail to realize there is something of the character of God being worked into us that cannot be worked anywhere else. There's something of God's nature that's being imparted to us. And the hard places is where we will always find that nature of God predominantly being formed in our own lives.

It is a place where we all have to go. We have to go home. We have to go to work.

We have to go back out into these streets. We can't live in the sanctuary. I know that everyone here would like to take the choir, our pastors and elders and 7,000 believers with us on our daily journey.

I think it would be awesome. Wouldn't it be great? Would it be easier during the day and would the night bring you more comfort? I'm absolutely sure of it. You see, wouldn't it be wonderful when your boss comes and chews you out because you have a poor work performance that previous month that you just say, Warren, would you have the choir sing now with Jesus, I can make it? The choir steps out of the back room, goes with Jesus, I can make it.

And it would be awesome. It would be wonderful. But you see, ultimately, if that were the case, you and I would never have to learn to trust God, would we? We'd never have to learn that it's not about what we experience in the sanctuary.

It's about who we are worshipping when we come together. The same glory is still there. It's just in a way that to many, until you really know God, is unfamiliar.

It's the same glory, the same Christ, the same power. Everything is there. The glory of God is in you.

The glory is not something like the Old Testament, where they came and just watched an outward manifestation of glory that had no inward relationship with them. No, in the New Testament church, since the day of Pentecost, the glory is now inside of us. Paul said, it's Christ in you, that's the hope of glory.

It's an amazing thing. When you leave the sanctuary, you're not leaving God behind. He's going with you.

He's going to walk with you on the street. He goes home with you. He goes to the office.

Everywhere you are, Christ is. It's an incredible thing when you begin to realize it. Now, the wilderness is where we're left alone with our struggles, our conflicts, and our fears, within and without.

And where we have to sometimes live in an environment that is completely hostile to the greatest desire of our hearts. David spoke that desire in Psalm 63. We read it in verse 2. He said, O God, that I may see your power and your glory as I've seen you in the sanctuary.

Now, in these wilderness places, it's the devil's plan to convince us that unreality is real and reality is fiction. It's the devil's job to turn everything around, to convince the believer that what you see is reality and what you've been told by God is not real. That's his job.

He does this by accusing the faithfulness of God. Remember that Christ's temptation was in the wilderness. He was taken out from all of the, perhaps the familiar or that which may comfort him.

He was taken into the wilderness and it was in this place that the devil came with temptations. Will God really provide for you here? If you are the son of God, then command this stone to be made bread. Will God really provide? Can you trust him? Or do you have to set your own hand to somehow procure your own provision? Took him to the pinnacle of the temple and tempted him again and said, will God really protect you? If you are the son of God, throw yourself off.

And then coached him the word of God. But the inference is that God won't be faithful to his promise. Jesus responds by saying, you will not tempt the Lord your God.

You will not put God to a foolish and useless test. Comes to him again and says, well, if you are the son of God, shouldn't you be reigning now? Look at all the kingdoms of the world. Look at all the glory.

Shouldn't you be reigning now? Should the son of God be living in the wilderness? You see, that's exactly what the devil will tempt the church with today. If you really are a child of God, why are you in this dry place? Why are you in this wilderness? Why aren't you reigning and ruling? Why do you seemingly have such difficulty in your life throughout the day? You see such glory when you come to church. Why is that glory not coming with you into the workplace? Why is it not following you into the home? Wherever it is you live or whatever situation you find yourself in.

You see, when the devil succeeds in planting those seeds of doubt in the hearts of God's children, he robs the people of God of the victory and rest that only comes when we trust in God in the deep inner core of our being. The devil is always after the trust in your heart. Now, the chiefest sin of Israel, if you go to Psalm 78, when we think of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, the chiefest sin, we would perhaps want to categorize it as well when they made a golden calf, or when they became immoral and began to cast off moral restraint and commit all kinds of sexual immorality, or when they stood and rebelled, 250 men of renown against the appointed leadership of God over Israel.

And we can think of numerous times that we would say, well, if there is a sin that should lead them into the wilderness, obviously that's the one. But there was another sin much greater than all of these. You see, God had clearly shown his people his power.

He had made a clear revelation of who he was. He had parted the sea. He had brought them through the sea into a wonderful place.

They had seen the judgments of God come on all of their enemies that had tried to hold them and oppress them in bondage. And many who are here today, this is your testimony. You can honestly say that.

Yes, it's true, Pastor, it's true. When I came to Christ, I was tormented in my mind. I was suicidal.

I was completely hooked on substance abuse, or whatever the situation was. And I called out to Christ. And yes, I know his power.

He came to me. He set me free. That's the testimony of many here today.

And you have known the power of God. You have seen his hand move against your enemies. And you have been brought here by grace.

Folks, I venture to say, were it not for the grace of God, there'd be dozens in hell this very moment as I'm preaching the gospel. But you are here because of God's grace and his power. Your enemies pursued you after you came to Christ, but they couldn't catch you.

They couldn't catch you as close as they got. All they could do was raise up a lot of dust, but they couldn't catch you because the hand of God was on your life. Now, the Lord had led them out of bondage, and he had brought them through some very difficult places.

But in Psalm 78, verse 19, it says, Yea, they spake against God, and they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? There's the greatest sin of Israel of all. Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? They came out of bondage. They went through some miraculous deliverances, and all of a sudden they found themselves in a very dry place.

And the question that arose in their heart, the temptation was, Can God furnish a table? Can he provide for me here? The glory that I have seen bringing me out of captivity, the glory that I've seen resting on the tabernacle, can that same glory provide for me in this wilderness time? And then, of course, they reached a conclusion. In verse 41, Psalm 78, it says, Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. There's the chiefest sin of Israel.

They limited him. They made a choice in their hearts that what they saw, the unreality around them was greater than the reality of every promise God had made to them. And the wilderness, which should have deepened their faith in God, which should have deepened their trust, because you see, in the wilderness, nobody but God can provide for you.

Nobody but God can sustain you. And he wanted, once and for all, to make that known to his people. But they looked at their circumstances.

And they said, Obviously, the glory that we've seen in other places doesn't apply here. And they turned back in their hearts, and then limited God. I think this is a tragedy in the church of Jesus Christ.

I think of the number of people that could do marvelous exploits in the name of Jesus Christ in our generation, and in past generations. I think of multitudes of church people that are sitting, hearing the wonderful promises of God, but they've turned back long ago in their hearts. They made a choice.

They said, They've looked in the mirror, and they've seen the wilderness. They've seen the bankruptcy of their own lives, their own heart. They've looked at their circumstances, and come to the conclusion that God can't provide.

God can't change this situation. And in their heart, they've turned back, and they have limited the Holy One of Israel. And because much of the church of Jesus Christ has limited the Holy One of Israel, multitudes are perishing in sin now.

Multitudes that don't have to go to an eternal hell are dying, because so many of God's people have made that choice in their hearts. And God forbid we should do that in this house. God forbid that you and I should hear such wonderful truths, and just go out the door into the wilderness, and limit the Holy One of Israel.

Limit what God can do in us. Limit what God can do through us. The most blessed child of God in the church today is the man or woman who comes to the conclusion, in their heart, God, you can do anything you want to do through my life.

You can take me to any dry place, even the valley of the shadow of death. And I will not fear. Your rod and your staff comfort me.

God, you can use me for your glory. You made me. You can put words in my mouth.

You made my mind. You can give me intelligence I don't possess. You made my heart.

You can put the passion of heaven in it, God. You can change me. You can use me for your glory.

I can wash feet. I can do anything, oh God, that you called me to do. They turned and they died in the wilderness.

There's so many of God's people today die with the question why on their lips. Why? The Lord led them into places where they could have glorified Him. Where He could have become the source of their strength.

Where they could have lifted up their hands in the midst of hellish adversity. And declared to an entire generation that lives in darkness no greater than circumstance that sustains a man or woman of God. God said, I ordained you.

I called you to trust in me. To lift up your hearts and your hands to me that I may sustain you and provide for you and make you a testimony of praise to my name in the earth. That is the church of Jesus Christ.

We have to remember that the call of God to His people was to serve Him in the wilderness. Exodus 7, 16, Moses stood before Pharaoh speaking on God's behalf. And he said, the Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to thee saying, let my people go that they may serve me in the wilderness.

You see, before you and I could ever enter the promised land there's going to have to be a wilderness where we trust God. You see, the promises, the Old Testament is a type of the new. The promises are of no effect until we trust Him in the wilderness.

The promises are no good to people who are just simply looking always for an easy way out. That Christianity is just a ticket to forever peace and happiness. Yes, it is.

But there are wilderness experiences on this earth that you and I have to go through. Hard times come to every house, folks, Christian and unchristian. Difficulties knock on every door.

The difference is that those who know God are not triumphed over by the powers of evil. They need to learn to serve Him in the wilderness. Satan's false presumption is always that the wilderness will entrap the people of God.

God led them out of Egypt and took them to the borders of a sea. An impossible place. And that's exactly where you and I will have to go.

I've been there and by God's grace I go there again from time to time. Impossible places. There's no human possibility of getting through this or going where God's calling me to go or becoming what God is asking me to be.

There's a sea of impossibility before me. Stuck in the wilderness and looking at the impossibility before. And then Pharaoh is a type of Satan that says the wilderness has shut them in.

They're entangled in the land. And that's always the devil's design for the church of Jesus Christ. To entangle you in your circumstances and shut you in in whatever wilderness you might be experiencing so that you go no further.

When God's people in history were being triumphed over by their enemies the Lord looked to the armies of Israel. There was nobody there that had any courage. The soldiers with all their muscles and training and might were trembling on the hillside.

Saul, their king, had lost heart. A fearful king leading a fearful people. The giant was standing and defying the armies of God daily and striking fear with his lying voice into the hearts of all that could hear him.

And it's interesting and tragic that the eye of God, the scripture says, does search throughout the world looking to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are right towards him. I can see the eye of God looking and scanning the armies of Israel and finding nobody that had the courage to fight. And so he looks beyond the established camp and he looks beyond and quite often folks the church gets to that place.

The church aides get to that place. The entire denomination sometimes will get to that place. The entire country will get to that place where the eye of God scans his house and there's nobody there who really understands.

And he has to go one more time beyond the established order and goes into the wilderness and in the wilderness he found a young man. And when he walked into the camp his father sending him to encourage his brothers he heard the voice of the enemy. And he said he criticized Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God.

In other words, who dares stand against God and God's people and God's testimony God's plan, God's purpose. Who is this? And of course those who were in the army got upset with him. His own brothers accused him.

You know what they said to him? He said, with whom has thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? See God looked in the wilderness and in the wilderness found just a boy. Our high schoolers and

teenagers in this generation. Folks on Friday night this altar was filled and down both aisles into the rotunda.

There were hundreds of young people came to Christ. Incredible. Young people that I personally believe have been trained and will be trained in the wilderness.

They will stand for God in impossible places. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

And God went to David and brought a marvelous victory for his namesake. But then God's not finished with David. It seems like he's taken out of this first wilderness experience and transposed into the king's court.

Seemingly having found all kinds of favor and winning marvelous victories. But God says, no, the work is not done yet. You've got to learn to serve me in the wilderness if you're going to reign.

Hear me on this. If you're going to reign with Christ you're going to learn to serve He's going to teach you. He's going to draw you.

You're going to go places you don't want to go. He said it to Peter, when you're young, you dressed yourself, you went whenever you wanted to go. But as you're growing older, somebody else is going to gird you.

And you're going to be taken into places that you don't want to go. But it's in these places that the character of God will be formed in your life. Now, the wilderness was God's proving ground for David.

He took him into the wilderness. 1 Samuel 26.3 says David abode in the wilderness. And he saw that Saul came after him in the wilderness.

Saul, being a type of the devil, came after him where God led him. 1 Samuel 23.14 says David abode in the wilderness in strongholds. The word in the Hebrew means places of protection from ambush.

In other words, in the wilderness, God provided a place to prove something to him that would make him a king. Incredible. Everybody wants to rule and reign today in the church, and nobody wants to learn how to fight.

So few want to go to the places where the real character of God is formed. They spend all day praying for protection from everything that could form the character of Christ in them. Amazing.

And he went into the strongholds and remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. What do you think God was teaching him in the wilderness? He was showing him, David, when you are overwhelmed, when you are outnumbered, even when you don't personally have a plan of action, just listen to my voice, and in your deepest wilderness I will take you into strongholds where no power of hell can prosper against your life.

And then God makes a promise in Psalm 72. I want you to see this. Psalm 72.

Now remember, David is hiding in the mountains. And the mountains have strongholds, or caves, which were protection from the ambush of the enemy. Psalm 72, verse 3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people in the little hills by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the people. He shall save the children of the needy. He shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and the moon endure throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish.

Now this, of course, is about Christ. And the abundance of peace so long as the moon endures. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him. Now, this is not talking about the righteous. Because it's a cowering bowing.

If you look in the original text. Those who's dwelling. Those who dominate the wilderness.

Those who try to captivate the children of God will bow before God. And his enemies shall lick the dust. You see that? Is that in your Bible? Your enemies, God said in the wilderness, if you trust in me, are going to lick the dust.

Remember the curse. Remember the judgment that was brought upon Satan. In the garden after he had tempted Adam and Eve.

He said, yes, you're going to bruise his heel. But he's going to bruise your head. In other words, you're going to reach up and you're going to try to hurt the church of Jesus Christ.

But those that know the power of God are going to step on you. And you are going to lick the dust. Hallelujah.

Isaiah chapter 43, if you'll turn there with me please. Isaiah 43, 19. He says, behold, I will do a new thing now, shall it spring forth and shall you not know it.

I'll even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the owls, because I give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen. God said, you will not lack in this place of difficulty.

I will get to you. I will bring you water and I will give you drink in this place. You see, this people, he says, I've formed for myself and they shall show forth my praise.

God said, I formed you, I called you, I redeemed you, I will feed you, I will protect you, I will provide for you. Your enemies will surround you on every side. I will break through their ranks and I will bring to you living water.

I will touch you in such a way that you're going to be able to praise me in the midst of your most darkest difficult times. Hallelujah. Lastly, just go back to Isaiah chapter 40.

The question was, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Oh God, can I see your glory like I've seen you in the sanctuary? Can you bring it here to where I live in the difficulty that I'm in now? Isaiah says, comfort you, verse 1, comfort my people. Saith your God, speak comfortably to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord and make

straight in the desert a highway for our God.

This is an incredible verse. I want to just share with you what the Holy Spirit spoke to me from it. Just a personal thing to my heart.

You see, when we talk about a highway in the Old Testament, we always see the highway as something God prepares to bring his people out. But I see this as a different highway because he says, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. This is not a highway.

It will eventually be a highway out, but God says, I'm bringing such a supply to you that I need a highway to get it in. Hallelujah. I just, when I read it, I saw it.

It's a highway for God. He says, God says, I see where you are. I want to show you something.

I'm bringing such a supply. You see, heaven's catering isn't just one little old rinky truck with an old sandwich on it. He says, no, I'm sending something to you that's going to require a highway to get it in.

Hallelujah. Not just a table. He doesn't just furnish a table.

He provides a feast. A feast. An incredible feast to the heart that learns to trust him.

An incredible banquet. You could be sitting at your desk at work and all hell is breaking out on every side. You don't know if you're going to have a job tomorrow.

Everyone's cutting everybody else's throat. But you're sitting at your desk and there's a feast at your desk. A feast comes to the heart that learns to trust in God.

Comes to the heart that is pressed beyond measure. Comes to the heart that has to cast off all natural ability to even bring about deliverance. And has the sense of death in itself, but trusts in the living God who raised Christ from the dead.

And God comes when you least expect it. There's a knock on the door of your heart. The heaven's caterer is here.

Hallelujah. And begins to unload truckloads. Truckloads of provision on your desk.

Nobody else around you can see it. All they can see is the wilderness. All they can see is the difficulty.

But there is a feast. There's a continual feast going on in your heart. Hallelujah.

David said, you prepare a table for me in the presence of mine enemies. He doesn't say, you take me away from my enemies and then take me to a banquet. He says, no, right in the middle of it all.

You prepare a table. You anoint my head with oil. And my cup runs over.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Jesus.

Hallelujah. My cup runs over. I haven't even got time to drink it and they're pouring into it again.

A continual feast. Hallelujah. That's what Jesus Christ is to you and I. That's who the Holy Spirit is to us.

That's what the promises of God are. That's why you've got to know the Word of God. That's why the Word of God has got to know you.

That's why you've got to ask God every day to make this Word a living reality in your heart. Because this is the feast of God. Hallelujah.

I don't live by what I see. I live by what I know. Thanks be to God.

Thanks be to God. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Friday night, the devil really tried to sit on my shoulders on Thursday and Friday. Come and speak to a full house of inner city kids here in New York City and others. And the devil said, Who are you? You're so white, first of all.

You're almost 50, you're not pooled. You're going to walk out there, they're going to look at you and say, What is this, a low-budget production? I'm just kidding you. But you see, it's not about us.

The Holy Spirit told me, He said, You see, it's a mistake to think that young people come here to see people that are trying to be like them. They don't like who they are. They're looking to see people that they'd like to be like.

You see, in your workplace, in your home, God says, I just want you to be who I'm making you into. And you don't try to be anybody else. You let me work something in you.

And you learn to praise me when you don't have the strength. You learn to trust me when you don't have the resources. You learn to allow me to take you through the difficult times.

And ultimately, all that matters anymore is that Christ is glorified. That Christ is honored. That Christ is heard.

That Christ is understood. That Christ's kingdom advances. That people are saved from the fires of hell and brought into an everlasting kingdom.

Song of Solomon is one of my favorite books, I think, in the Old Testament. I never understood that book when I got saved. I used to wonder why it was in the Bible.

Until you see it as a love relationship between Christ and his church, then it all of a sudden begins to unfold. There are two key questions asked in the Song of Solomon. And one is, I'm just going to read it to you.

It's found in chapter 3, verse 6. The writer, the Holy Spirit, says, Who is this that comes out of the wilderness? Who is this that comes out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke and perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant? Now, myrrh is a death spice or a burial spice. And frankincense is the perfume that was used in the tabernacle, the Old Testament tabernacle. It's a perfume of holiness.

It signifies royalty and also worship and divinity. And the question that is being asked before the event even happens is, Who is this that's coming out of the wilderness? Remember that Christ was tempted in the wilderness. The Bible says that he was tempted in every way like as you and I are, yet without sin.

And it enabled him even to a greater extent, if it were possible, to be a faithful high priest who was touched with the feelings of our struggles, our weaknesses. And he says, Come and I will give you the strength and the grace that you need. Lean on me, not circumstance.

Don't try to live just to get to your next church experience or your worship experience. Lean on me now where you are, in your wilderness. The writer says, Who is this that comes out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke? Now, you remember that when God led his people out of Egypt, there was a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

And he's perfumed in a sense. He's triumphed over the wilderness, but he's anointed both with death and the fragrance of God. But who is this that comes out of the wilderness that has both this anointing of death and divinity on him? Now, who could it be but Christ, who was anointed to die and then rose from the dead and has the perfume of God upon him? Who is this that comes out of the wilderness? What an incredible thing when Solomon is penning these words and the Holy Spirit is stirring his heart as much as I suppose he could be at that time, but the Holy Spirit is stirring his heart and he's asking a question, Who is this? He may not have known, but today you and I know who it is.

We know who came through the wilderness. We know who did battle with all that this world can throw against the children of God. We know who triumphed over the devil.

We know who came out a victor over death, who made an open display and spoil of all the powers and principalities of darkness. We know who rose on the third day and sits now at the right hand of God, anointed with death and anointed with the fragrance of God. We know who it is.

But then the writer asks the second question in chapter 8, verse 5. He says, And who is this that comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon her beloved? Think these questions through. Who is this that comes up, anointed to die and rose again with the fragrance of God? And who is this leaning on Him? Also coming out of the wilderness. Also unable to be triumphed over by the powers of hell and circumstance.

Who is this? I'll tell you who it is. It's you and it's me. It's every person that trusts in God.

Because God will never fail you. He will never fail you. He didn't die for you on Calvary to let you be triumphed over by the powers of hell.

He didn't die for you to let you be triumphed over in your wilderness. He will come to you in your time of difficulty with the same glory that you see here in Times Square Church. Don't ever let the devil lie to you.

In your home, your job, wherever your situation, don't let the devil lie to you. Christ is just as real there as He is here. Say, Lord God, it's me.

This is who comes out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved. I'm leaning in His everlasting arms. I'm not afraid to trust in Him and declare in my heart I need Him.

Hallelujah. I want you this week to have a picture in your heart of heaven's highway. God says, you lean on me and I'm sending heaven's caterers right to where you are.

There's a convoy from heaven coming your way. It's so much I have to build a highway to get it in. Hallelujah.

A convoy of grace, a convoy of love, a convoy of long suffering, a convoy of hope in the midst of difficulty, a convoy of wisdom in the midst of confusion, a convoy of power in the midst of weakness. He says, I'm bringing it all into you. Hallelujah.

I just ask you to lean on me. Psalm 63, let's close with it. Hallelujah.

Oh God, you are my God and early will I seek you. My soul thirsts for thee, my flesh longs for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory so as I've seen thee in the sanctuary.

Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Here's the beginning of finding Him in your wilderness. Choose to praise Him.

Choose to trust Him. God, my lips shall... How do you praise Him without knowing His promises? Just begin to declare His promises. I will not be triumphed over by any power of evil.

Every tongue that rises against me in judgment, I condemn it. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. Thus will I bless thee while I live.

I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

That's during the day. When I remember thee upon my bed and meditate on thee in the night watches. Remember the Bible says thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind has stayed on thee.

Because you've been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. In other words, I'm going to lean on you. My soul follows hard after thee and thy right hand upholds me.

But those that seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword. Now the sword is the word of God for you and I. And they shall be a portion for foxes.

In other words, they're going to die in the wilderness. Every one of my enemies that tries to swallow my confidence in Christ will die. And ravenous beasts will devour them.

But the king shall rejoice in God. And everyone that swears by him shall glory. But the mouth of them that speaks lies shall be stopped.

Now everyone that swears by him shall glory. The word in Hebrew is halal. Shall glory.

And it means everyone that swears by him shall be made bright. Shall be caused to shine. Shall be made splendid.

Shall become famous and shall be caused to shine. It is the derivative from which we get the word hallelujah. Glory to God.

God will make you shine. God will lift up upon you his countenance and give you a reputation for strength in the midst of your most difficult time. God will cause, because of his own brightness that comes to you, people who live in darkness around to come and ask you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

They will ask because they will see something that every man or woman without God knows they don't have. Hallelujah. And it will all happen in the wilderness.

Sorry folks, it just doesn't happen in church. You may have noticed your neighbors are not here. Your boss isn't here.

Your fellow workers are not here. The kids that push drugs in the corner are not here. But you see, God has a plan for them and you are the plan.

He said, I'm going to send you into the wilderness and you're going to serve me there. I'm going to cause you to shine. I'm going to lift up a report because I will give you strength.

And not only you, but those around you will give glory to God. The glory of God will be found in your wilderness. Hallelujah.

Jesus, thank you. Jesus, thank you. God, we thank you.

God, we praise you. God, we bless you. Now, I want to give an altar call, Education Annex Main Sanctuary, for everyone here who is just in the wilderness time of your life.

I say, God, you just want to say, Lord, just thank you. Or if you need to ask for forgiveness, you can for something. Your back's slidden, you can come home.

But it's particularly for those who just say, God, I'm in the driest time of my entire life. Lead me now. Thank you for this dry time.

Thank you for this wilderness experience because I'm going to learn something of you here that I won't learn anywhere else. Lord, we just thank you today. God, we praise you.

Jesus, we praise you. We bless you, Lord. We bless you, God.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. God, thank you. Pray with me now.

Lord Jesus, thank you that in my darkest time and in my driest place, you are my constant source of life and supply. Thank you that right where I live, I can know your glory just as I'm feeling you and I'm knowing you here in this sanctuary. Jesus, you are my sanctuary.

You are my comfort. You are my strength. Your promises to me are more real than anything I see around me.

Thank you that you will care for me. You will provide for me. You will protect me all the days of my life.

You will lead me, teach me, and bring me home to glory. I thank you right now that in my dry time, I see the paving company building Heaven's Highway for all the source of supply that you are sending into my life. Thank you, Lord, that not only do you furnish a table, but you give me a continual feast in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Hallelujah. Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God. Mighty God, thank you. Mighty God.

We ask you today to send us from this sanctuary with the blessing of your life and your strength and your peace. Bless our coming in and bless our going out. Jesus, thank you that you are a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

You'll never leave. You'll never forsake us. Lord, not only that, but you will give us reputation for being a people who know their God.

Father, we thank you for it from the very depths of our heart. Thank you for strength, forgiveness, and empowerment. We give you all the praise and the glory in Jesus' name.

This is the conclusion of the message. This is the conclusion of the message.

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