

# You Will Soon Come Out of the Wilderness

by Carter Conlon

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*This sermon emphasizes the journey of coming out of the wilderness, symbolizing a dry and confusing place where many find themselves spiritually. It highlights the need to return to a close relationship with God, to trust in His plan, and to live a life of service for others. The message encourages a shift from self-centered Christianity to a faith that trusts God through trials and seeks to bring others to Christ.*

**Scripture:** Luke 4:1, Luke 4:18, Isaiah 43:19, James 1:12, Psalm 23:4, 1 Peter 5:10, Matthew 16:24, Philippians 2:3, Romans 10:9, Revelation 21:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Trusting God's Plan"

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## Description

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## Transcript

If you don't have a reason to give thanks this week, I'm gonna give you one right now. And it's the title of the message the Lord's put on my heart tonight. And it's that you will soon come out of the wilderness.

I know there are many people online tonight and you find yourself in a confusing, in a dry place. You don't quite know how you got there and you don't know how to get out. You don't know what the formula is, what is the way I've got to get ahold of Jesus Christ to get in my life.

And Rachel from Birmingham, Alabama writes in and she says, heavenly Father, I have drifted away from you and I'm not really sure when it happened. Please help me to get back on the right road and thank you for your love. And Rachel is one of many who are in a similar condition tonight.

Just say, I don't know what happened. I felt so close to God for so many years of my life and I remember those early days when I loved Jesus Christ with all my heart and I knew that he loved me and I hungered for his word, I hungered for his presence and I just now, I don't know what happened. And over time, I find myself in this dry place.

It's a wilderness place that I don't see life. I know I'm a child of God, but I seem to have lost a hold of that relationship that I once had. And conversely, I'm not quite sure what my calling even is right now, but I know that if I call up to him, that he will come and get me where I am and he will bring me to where I need

to go.

So Father, I thank you tonight, God, for this sharing that you put on my heart, Lord. It's a prophetic word for many in this time that we're now living in this day of darkness that requires a new song in the church of Jesus Christ. It requires a testimony of life.

God Almighty, through the apostle Peter, you told us to be ready to give an answer to those who ask us for the reason, for the hope that we have in this crisis moment in history. But yet so many can say tonight, Pastor, I don't have that hope. I don't have a testimony.

Nobody's asking me for a reason for the hope that I have for I'm in such a dry place. But tonight, God, I'm trusting in the anointing of your Holy Spirit to break through these veils of confusion and to bring light into every darkened corner of every mind, every heart, and give us a reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving. Lord, as people sit, as we sit at your tables, and for those who have a reason and for those who don't, God, you're soon gonna bring us as your people out.

You're drawing us back to yourself again. You have a divine purpose for your bride in this last hour of time we're now living in. So God, give us thankful hearts that even if we can't see where you are, just to know that you're gonna come and you're gonna get us and you're gonna bring us to where we need to be.

And Father, we thank you for it in Jesus' name, amen. And the Lord led me this week to the Song of Solomon. Right after Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, then you have the Song of Solomon.

And I wanna read to you one half of verse five in chapter eight of the Song of Solomon. And it's a question. And it's coming to the end of this particular beautiful, it is one of the most loved stories in a sense in the entire Bible, the Song of Solomon.

The story of a bridegroom and his bride and the beautiful love that they have one for another. If you haven't read it yet, one of the most phenomenal books ever written as a commentary on the Song of Solomon is written by the missionary Hudson Taylor. He wrote a book on this book that is literally riveting.

If you can get ahold of it, I strongly recommend it. I was reading it one night and I literally couldn't put it down until I finished it. One of the most stirring expository commentaries on this entire eight chapters of the Song of Solomon, looking at it as a type of Christ in his church.

And you'll be greatly blessed if you can get ahold of it by Hudson Taylor, great, great missionary to China. Now in chapter eight and verse five, there's this one half of this verse says these words, who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved? This is an incredible picture of a bride leaning upon her bridegroom and she's been in the wilderness and whether she found him there or I would venture a guess that he found her there and she's leaning upon him, which reminds me of the fact that Jesus Christ is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He was tested in all points like we are, the scripture says yet without sin.

So we can actually boldly come to the throne of grace to find help in our time of need. He's not aloof from us, he's not indifferent to us, he's not angry with us in our struggles. But calling upon him even in a wilderness experience, we know that he will not only come and get us but he will give us the strength we need and guide us out of the place where we are to where we need to go.

Song of Solomon is a beautiful story of a bride and she describes in a sense that this incredible relationship she's had with her bridegroom, similar in a sense I suppose to many of us when we first came to Christ and you remember those days when you found out that he died for your sins and you opened your heart, you gave him your life and nothing else mattered but him. I don't know if anybody here can remember that but I remember the days when I first came to church as a new believer in Christ and I used to wonder why so many of God's people were so dull in his presence. Did they not have the same salvation that I had? Did they not understand what God had given them? Were they not filled with joy at this love relationship with God? I mean just the concept of it was just absolutely amazing to me that God loved me.

I remember I would stand and Pastor Teresa and I would usually go into the balcony in the church where we were first saved and discipled and I would open the hymn book and sing and tears would come down my face as I read words I guess that many people there were really familiar with but I wasn't, I wasn't raised singing these songs and every one was theologically correct and it so stirred my heart. Songs like It Is Well With My Soul and When I Surveyed the Wondrous Cross and at Calvary, there were just so many songs that I used to sing and I would stand there and I would cry because it was all washing over my heart and over my spirit and I just remember those days and that's what this book is about. And then one day, something, she just, maybe this bride recognizes something has happened.

He's missing, her bridegroom is missing. She feels that he's near but she can't see him and she heads out to find him and searches throughout the city and there are some people there that tried to take away her sense of being desired by him and her loveliness but eventually, she finds him and he comes to actually get her. This is my belief in the wilderness.

She leans upon him and says, who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved? Now, a lot more of God's people are in the wilderness than actually realize that they are there. Now let me explain what I mean by this. In the book of Luke, Jesus Christ at the age of 30 began his public ministry that was going to take him to a cross and for the ministry that God the father had given him, God's Holy Spirit had to come upon him.

He had to walk in obedience to the will of his father and in Luke chapter three in verse 21, the scripture says, it came to pass that Jesus was baptized and while he prayed, heaven was open. The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon him and a voice came from heaven which said, you are my beloved son. Remember, who is this coming out of the wilderness leaning on who? On her beloved.

The voice from heaven said, you are my beloved son and in you, I am well pleased. Now, you would think honestly, Jesus would have left that baptism of John and gone straight to the temple and opened the book of the prophet Isaiah where he read, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the recovery of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Then he closed the book, he gave it to the attendant and he said, today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. Now, being the son of God, we would assume that naturally, we would assume if we were in charge of the script that he would come out of the waters of baptism. The Holy Spirit has come in bodily form upon him.

His father has just vocally said, you are my beloved son and I'm well pleased. If you and I were writing the script, we would go right from there, right into the temple, open the scroll and declare, I've been sent by God for the spirit of the Lord is upon me for this reason. Now, in between the river of John and Luke chapter 418, there is a wilderness.

And the scripture says in chapter four and verse one, then Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan where he had just been baptized and was led by the spirit, not by the devil, led by the spirit into the wilderness. Now, Jesus said of his cross, if anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Now, I spoke on this a few weeks back as well, a similar theme to this, that it is reasonable to conclude that if we are going to follow in the footsteps of the one who went to a cross and bring that incredible message of salvation to this world, if we're gonna take up our cross and follow Christ, there is going to be a wilderness moment for us as well.

We are going to be tested. He was taken by the spirit into the wilderness to test him, to test him in a sense to see if he was going to fulfill. It was going to be tested to see if he was willing to fulfill the ministry that God actually had given him.

And don't forget, it was a ministry of suffering. And he knew it was a ministry of suffering. It was a ministry where he was going to be given for the needs of others.

It was going to be a pouring out of his life. It was going to be a pouring out of his last drop of strength, even to his last drops of blood and water that came out of his side when he was pierced by the spear of a soldier. It was going to be a difficult ministry.

Remember, and also to us, Jesus Christ told us as the church in this world, you shall have tribulation. You will have trouble. You're not going to escape trouble.

Trouble is going to be difficult. It's going to be a part of this journey. But be of good cheer, he says, for I have overcome.

I've given you the victory already. I've already made a way for you to come through, not in your strength, but in my strength that's going to be resident in you as the Holy Spirit was resident, of course, in Christ as well from the moment of the, well, from his conception really, but particularly for his ministry when he was, again, touched by the spirit of God and confirmed by the father of God in the baptism of Jordan. Now, he was led by the spirit into the wilderness just as I believe, now this is my opinion so you can take it for what it's worth, but this is, in reading this and in looking at the trajectory of the church of Jesus Christ and what often befalls her, I see a pattern here.

So I'm going to look at the scripture as a pattern. He was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tested in the wilderness. Now, the first test that came to him, the devil said, if you're the son of God, command this stone to become bread.

Now, I want you to picture the church of Jesus Christ going through the same wilderness testing. The devil comes and he comes with a, he comes with a, it's a theological test in a sense. If you are in proximity to God, if God is your father, if God loves you, if God cares for you, then command this stone to be made bread.

In other words, use your proximity to the father, use your relationship with God for yourself. Use it to satisfy your own hunger. Use it to turn, another type could be, use it to turn every hard place in your life

into a soft place.

And many, many, many of God's people have fallen into this theological trap. They settle in churches where you know it, I know it, the theology is just you name it and claim it, it's all yours. You turn every hard place into soft places and use the power of God to fill your belly.

God, and the whole purpose of God is to make you bigger and better and stronger and nicer and wiser and all of these things, it's all just, remember the ministry of Jesus was about others. His ministry was to be given for others. It was for the poor, it was for the addicted, it was for the imprisoned.

It was to go and to be poured out as our lives are also to be. But the temptation of the devil was use your relationship with God for yourself. Remember the parable of the prodigal son, he took the inheritance that his father had given him and he went far away from the heart of his father and spent this inheritance that his father had given him on himself.

That's what the scripture is, it's on self-consumption. One of the translations actually says it that way. It was on his own self.

This is the temptation of the devil. Now, people who fall into this theological trap of using a relationship with God just for oneself actually think they're in the promised land but in reality, they're in the wilderness. They've stopped, they're in between this place of new relationship with God or calling of God and the actual beginning of the fulfillment of the ministry, they're stuck in this place and are constantly trying to convince themselves that they're in the promised land but they're not.

They're in the wilderness. And there's a strange dryness that comes over. There's an entire country right now that has been in touch with us and some of the leaders of that country are asking if we would go there and talk to the leaders, the spiritual leaders of the country and on the theme of returning to biblical Christianity because they fell into this wilderness trap of trying to turn every stone into bread and because of it, the church is weak and impotent and the society is becoming more militantly godless and they seemingly have no power to push this darkness back and the leaders, even the political leaders of the nation at this time know this.

The second temptation is where the devil took him and showed him to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and he said, I will give all this to you and it's given to me and I give it to whomever I wish. If you will worship me, all will be yours. In other words, if you'll just do it my way.

There's a quicker way, you can have the kingdom now, may I put it that way. You don't have to go through suffering. You don't have to be rejected.

You don't have to go to a cross. You don't have to trust that your father's gonna raise you from the dead. You don't have to be given or poured out for people.

You can have it all now. Remember Paul, the apostle, wrote to the Corinthian church and he said, you're all reigning now. Remember that? You're all kings and he said, I wish indeed you were reigning and I would reign with you but suddenly you're in this place of, in your own minds, you're in this place of majesty and you're sitting and ruling and reigning and you're all in authority but he said, we the apostles are like the offscarring of the earth.

He said, we are buffeted, we are struggling, we have to scrape in a sense for the strength to go forward but you're all reigning and you're all rich and you're all socially accepted now and he says, but this is not who we are and this is not where we are. And this is another temptation is that we can just skip the hardship and go right to the victory and just live in this constant victory state, this constant mountaintop that we try to convince ourselves that this place is actually the promised land but it is in fact the wilderness. It is a temptation that many people have fallen into and they spend their whole existence coming to church to just tell me I'm a priest and I'm a king and I'm ruling and I'm reigning and I'm all this stuff.

There's nothing really in it about sacrifice and about giving and about suffering and about yielding and about whatever it is that God has for my life for the sake of others. It's all about me, it's about my authority. The first one's about my bread, it's about my belly being full.

The second one's about my power and influence over other people. And then the third thing is he brought him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said, if you're the son of God, throw yourself down for it's written he'll give his angels charge over you to keep you and in their hands they'll 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.

And I see this as a group of people who gather in the name of Christ and deep down, right at the core of their heart, they have a difficulty believing that God is. A difficulty believing that God is faithful, that God speaks the truth, that he cannot lie, that his word can be trusted and they're always needing a sign to believe. They have to have dust in the air when they worship.

There needs to be lights. There needs to be all kinds of distractions. They need a sensory experience to believe that God is in their midst.

They're always testing. Every time a trial comes, they don't believe. They believe on Sunday.

They don't believe on Monday. They can't go through difficulty. They're always doubting the word of God and always wanting to put God to a test to prove that he can be trusted.

But Jesus said it this way. You don't tempt or test God when he speaks, he speaks the truth. What he says he does and what he says he means.

What he says he will do, he will do. He's not to be tested. You don't need to test God.

You remember the temptation was throw yourself down to prove that he'll catch you. And you remember just shortly after that, Jesus resists this, goes into the temple and he declares himself in a sense to be the Messiah, the fulfillment of the promise of God to come to his people. And the moment he does, what did they try to do? They tried to throw him off the crest of the hill.

But the scripture says he walked through the midst of them. Why did he walk through the midst of them? Because it says he will give his angels charge over you to keep you and in their hands they'll bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone. I can just see angels coming into the crowd and parting the people and Jesus just walks right through the midst of them.

Because the word of God is true. The word of God can be trusted. The word of God, we do not have to test or tempt God to prove that he is and he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

And so some people think that because they've got this incredible sensory experience, they're always proving God that somehow they're in the promised land. But the reality is that they're in the wilderness still. When he came out of the wilderness, that is when Jesus, it says he came out of the wilderness by the Spirit, then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and news of him went all throughout the surrounding regions.

He began then to teach in their synagogues, being glorified of all and this is when he came in to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, found the place in the book of Isaiah and began to read the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Now put it this way, if I could paraphrase it, Jesus would say, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because I've been anointed to go to the cross.

And in going to the cross and in yielding my life as an atonement for sin, the poor will have the treasure of heaven open to them, the brokenhearted will be healed, the liberty, the captives will be set free, the blind will see a way forward, the oppressed will be given new freedom and new life and everyone will know that this is the day of their salvation. This is the day they can be free. And so the point that I'm trying to make tonight is that many, many of God's people are in the wilderness.

Many of God's people are in these places of trying to confess away the hard places or use the gospel to fill their own bellies. Many are in this place of wanting to rule and reign now and not wanting the road of suffering. Others are in the place of never really trusting or believing in God and their whole worship of God has to be, if he didn't prove himself again this week, you can't worship him on Sunday because they need this continual proof that God can be trusted.

And this is all the church in the wilderness and the mercy of God. Remember in the parable of the prodigal son, the scripture says a famine came into that land and there was nowhere where he could find comfort and I'm feeling in my heart that there are many people listening to me tonight and who'll be listening in the future that there's a sudden hunger as with the bride in the Song of Solomon. There's a sudden yearning for that relationship.

There's a longing, there's a knowledge that something is missing. There's more for me than what I'm living. I don't wanna live with just a memory of what it was in the past.

I don't want to live with just a shadow of his presence, no tangible presence of the bridegroom. I don't want to live my life trying to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing when God has already decreed a plan for my life that is greater than anything that I will ever know or understand. A plan that was decreed for me from the moment I was conceived in my mother's womb.

God knows what I'm supposed to be doing and where I'm supposed to be going. I'm tired, I don't want to live this Christian life just to preserve my own comfort. Remember she left her bed, this bridegroom, and went out into the streets.

I'm gonna find him and I don't care what it takes. I'm gonna go where he is. And it was that yearning in her heart.

It's that yearning in the hearts of the bride, the true bride of Jesus Christ. This is why this young lady that rode in from Alabama, I have drifted away, Heavenly Father, and I'm not really sure when it happened, but

please help me to get back on the right road and thank you for your love. He's coming to you.

I'm telling you tonight, Rachel, he's coming to you. He's coming to get you and he's gonna take you by the hand and you're gonna lean on him. And in this generation, you're gonna come out of the wilderness.

Not just you, but many others are gonna come with you. Many who just say, I'm not living in this dry place. I'm tired of pretending like I'm raining when I'm not.

I'm tired of not trusting God. I want to trust you, Lord. I want to trust you whether it's in pleasure or in pain.

Whether my life, whether you lead me in places of great joy or you walk me through the valley of the shadow of death, God, I don't care. I'm going with you. I'm going where you're going.

I want to be doing what you're doing. You are the bridegroom and I am the bride and I don't want to be apart from you. I don't want to be living in some other place.

I don't want to be stuck in the wilderness when you are in the synagogue opening the word of God and making the definitive declaration of the ministry that the Father has placed upon you by the Holy Spirit. I want to walk with you where you're walking and I want to be doing what you're doing. I want to be part of that bride that comes out of the wilderness in this last hour of time leaning upon her beloved.

And the good news that I have, for many who are listening to me online tonight, is Jesus is coming to get you. He's coming. You are only required to lean upon him.

You let him take you by the hand and you let him guide you. He will guide you through the pages of this book, the Bible, he will show you truth, he will lead you into righteousness and he will lead you into what the purpose and plan is that he has for your life in the future. And he will do the miracles that he said he will do as you begin to walk with him.

You don't have to prove him and you don't have to worry about what to fill your belly and don't worry about ruling and reigning. You will be doing that one day in the not too distant future with God himself. You will be sitting with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus forever and ever and ever.

Until that day, God calls you and God calls me to be willing to be poured out for the sake of others. We teach that here at our Bible school, Summit International School of Ministry in Grantville, Pennsylvania. That the truest expression of Christianity is found in living for the benefit of others.

That's where the life of God is, not living for ourselves, not looking to be king and lorded over other people, not constantly testing and proving God so that we can believe him and worship him, but trusting him through flood, through fire, through trial, through difficulty, through joy, through sorrow, whatever it is. We live our lives for the sake of others that they may find Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is the ministry of God.

This is the work of God. This is why we are still on this earth. We are called to call people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We're not called to live for ourselves or fill our bellies. As good as those things might seem or as attractive as they might be, there's a higher calling on every life than all of these things. So there is a bride that's going to come out of the wilderness.

There's a bride that's going to leave the name it and claim it churches. There's a bride that's gonna come out of the places of just sensory worship with almost nothing of the word of God. There's a bride that's gonna stop trying to rule and reign over everybody and start serving because Jesus said the greatest among you shall be the servant of all.

This is the bride of Jesus Christ that is going to come out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved. And yes, my friend, it's you that God's talking about. It's you.

Sir, it's you, ma'am. It's you, young person. You are the one that God is coming to get because he's going to have a bride in this last hour of time.

He's going to have a victorious church. He's going to have a testimony on the earth. Prophet Isaiah talked about in the midst of the fires that are going to come to this world, there's going to be a songs of praise and glory to the righteous one.

There is going to be a victorious church in this last hour of time, a church that is given for the sake of other people, a church that is willing to follow in the footsteps of her bridegroom, a church that's not gonna live to preserve herself any longer, but is gonna live for the sake of others, finding Christ as Lord and Savior. By God's grace, the church is soon coming out of the wilderness. May God give you grace, my friend.

May God give you strength. This Thanksgiving, would you just say these words? Jesus Christ, thank you for coming to get me. Thank you for going to a cross for me.

If you wouldn't have gone to the cross, I would have no hope tonight. I would have no salvation. Thank you for paying the price for my sin so that I can be forgiven and know that I'm not only in right relationship with God, but that when I die, heaven will be my eternal home.

Thank you for giving me this confession on my lips. I don't have to beg my way into heaven. I don't have to plea bargain with God.

I don't have to make a list of the good things I've done versus the bad things. I can just say Jesus died for me, and because he paid the price for my sin, heaven is my home, and thank you, Father God, for the forgiveness that you've given to me. This is my confession.

This is your confession. This is your story. It's what it's going to be for not only time, but for all of eternity.

In a moment, I'm gonna ask you to pray a prayer with me just to admit that you need a savior, to believe that Jesus Christ died for you, to pay the price for your sins, and to confess with your mouth and to believe in your heart that he is the son of God, that God raised him from the dead, and because of his sacrifice, your sins are forgiven, and heaven will be your eternal home. Let's pray this simple prayer together tonight. Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for loving me.

Thank you for dying for me and paying the price for the wrong things that I have done. Thank you for loving me when I've gone down a wrong road or done things I shouldn't have done. I embraced things I shouldn't embrace.

Thank you that you've never stopped loving me and you're coming to get me and you're gonna draw me near to you and you're gonna lead me in the way that I should go and in the plans that you have for my life. Thank you for giving me a new heart, a new mind.

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