

# Don't Die in Your Wilderness

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's message encourages listeners to trust in God's goodness and faithfulness during times of suffering and to lean on the arms of Jesus to come out of their wilderness experience.*

**Duration:** 58:47

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 2:14-15, Psalm 69:1-3, Psalm 69:15-17, Isaiah 40:27-28

**Topics:** "Wilderness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of holding onto God's promises in times of trouble. He reminds the congregation that God has commanded them not to fear or be discouraged, as He will go before them and fight for them. The preacher shares a powerful testimony of a mother named Katie, who found joy and strength in God after her son was tragically murdered. The sermon concludes with a call to not give up in the wilderness of life, but to trust in God's sustaining power.

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## Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. My message this morning, don't die in your wilderness.

Don't die in your wilderness. Father, thank you for this pulpit and this people, this church, its outreach, and Lord, especially its outreach here in this city. We thank you, Lord, for those who've walked into this place this morning as visitors.

They've heard about the church, perhaps, or just came out of curiosity, but I pray, Holy Spirit, you find where they live today. I pray, Lord, that the word open up our hearts and our minds, receive it as from you. My God, anoint me.

Let the unction, the anointing of the Holy Spirit be mine. Lord, I need your touch. I need quickening in my spirit.

I can't preach this out of my own strength. I totally rely upon you right now, Holy Spirit. There are people here today listening to me now, here in this auditorium and in the annex, who are in a wilderness, a wilderness experience.

Something has happened that's cast them into a time of their life of testing and a very powerful wilderness experience, and Lord, I pray that you would encourage and bless and strengthen them and bring them out of their wilderness today, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Don't die in your wilderness.

I ask, you know, we have many, many thousands on our mailing list and to help me in this book that I'm writing on the suffering of saints and how God has been faithful to people in their time of calamities. I ask people to write and tell me their stories and their testimonies, how God kept them, gave them grace in the time of suffering, and we've got hundreds of letters. In fact, Gwen and I have been reading for weeks down in Florida.

I literally have stacked this high right now that I brought home with me, and it's been some experience to read this. Let me read something that has to do with my message this morning. Lady writes, 12 years ago, my husband and I retired from our secular jobs, and God thrust us into the nations as missionary evangelists.

We've traveled to more than 30 nations over the past 12 years in missions, trips ranging from four weeks to four or five months. We have witnessed signs, wonders, miracles to these willing vessels as we have yielded to God. We have lived and ministered in very terrible circumstances, but God always kept me in divine health and graced me with supernatural strength.

But this past March, I was attacked physically by an unknown disease that was especially virulent, causing pain and swelling in the hands that had touched the multitude of people and in the feet of those who had walked in remote regions of the world. The cause of the painful swelling in my joints could not be identified and left a number of specialists just scratching their heads, but God seemed silent and the heavens were as brass during this time. And even though I cried to the Lord, I received no revelation.

I never felt his presence. It was a lonely journey of nine months through a wilderness of pain and uncertainty. God did not allow anyone to prophesy over me in this time, nor did he allow any of Job's friends to accuse me.

It was the greatest testing of my faith I've ever experienced in my entire Christian walk. By December, the pain had taken its toll on me physically and mentally. I was exhausted and losing ground spiritually.

Those were some of the darkest days of my life. I didn't know if I would see the new century, but thank God, for nine months I had hardly slept at night because of the pain. But in December, I woke up one day to bright sunshine, flooded my bedroom, and I realized I'd slept for the first time.

My first thought was, I don't have any pain. I was afraid to move or tell my husband. I kept waiting for the pain to return, but it didn't.

I realized that while I'd been sleeping, God had been at work and I had a sense that he had told the devil, enough is enough. This has been just over a year now, and I'm still free of pain and my swelling. The doctor's records have these words written on them, mystery, miracle.

I have more strength than I've ever had before. Here's what she said and what prompted my message this morning. I came out of my wilderness leaning on the arms of my beloved Jesus.

I came out of my wilderness leaning on the arms of my beloved Jesus. You know, it's been very faith-inspiring to read hundreds of letters that have been pouring in from believers who've come out of their wilderness rejoicing in God's utter faithfulness, just absolutely rejoicing. They've come through calamities, tragedies, death, the valley of death, through pain, deep suffering, times of testing.

In fact, the wilderness for some has been so long and the dark night has been so long they cried out, Lord, will this ever end? Many, many letters, Lord, will this ever end? But majority of those who've written to us kept their faith. At times they would waver and they said they were ready to faint, but suddenly they were driven to the Word of God. They allowed their testing time to drive them to the Word and drive them to their knees.

And as they began to read the Word and as they were praying and seeking the face of God, they were coming out of their wilderness with testimonies of deliverance and the faithfulness of God. Folks, never in my, all my years of, I've had a mailing list for nearly 40 years, and never in all those years have I heard of so much suffering as I've been hearing lately. I've turned to Gwen, I said, Gwen, have you ever read anything like this? Have you ever heard anything? Almost everybody in the same, it's probably true here in this congregation this morning, almost everybody knows somebody has cancer or has a disease that's debilitating or terminal.

Almost everybody knows somebody going through a hard time now. Credit card bills that are piling up beyond their ability to pay, financial burdens, business problems and other problems, stress like we have never known or heard of before in the history of the nation. You hear it from all over the country, mental and spiritual wildernesses, depression and stress and fear, crisis mounting on all sides.

One man said, he wrote, he said, I hate to answer the phone anymore. He said, all it takes is one call. There's a letter here, for example, from a lady who got a call like that and she said, Mr. Wilkerson, this is really a letter of triumph over tragedy.

But you wouldn't have been able to tell me that four years ago. We're a strong Bible-believing family, going to church regularly. My husband, Barry, 36.

I'm 31. Three beautiful boys, age 7, 3, and little Craig, 14 months. My phone call came on Monday, August 26th, 1996.

My husband fell off of 35 foot off a roof he was replacing and he fell to the pavement. He was alert but he required surgery to fix a broken femur and elbow. The last thing he said, tell the boys I love them and I'll see you all in the morning.

Those were his final words to me because at surgery there was trouble and in the morning he was comatose. Then my faith told me he was resting and in time he would be back with us again. Thirteen days later, after many procedures, transfer to the best hospital, statewide prayer chains, the Lord took him home.

Everything seemed to be going so good for us and suddenly our world crashed down. But Brother Dave, I want you to know Jesus said there's no tribulation. He didn't say there was no tribulation for Christians, did he? No.

And raising three boys alone now has proven that. Let me just say to you, Pastor Dave, that through this my boys have a desire beyond compare for heaven. Not only do they have a father, God waiting in heaven, but they have their earthly dad there waiting and it's changed their lives.

We praise God now for taking our saved dad to heaven. It's a goal for all of us someday. His life was not in vain.

His funeral touched so many unsaved people. There are so many people in such worse sufferings than we've gone through. I've been so thankful for the presence of the Holy Spirit and your recent letters have sent my heart pounding in response to the Lord.

And she goes on to tell how the Lord sustained her through this. Well, others who don't know Jesus, where did they go? Where do they find their strength? How do they come out of their wilderness? She came out of her wilderness leaning on the arms of Jesus. I'm going to ask you now about your wilderness.

You may be in one even now. It could be that your finances are in shambles here this morning. It could be that you're facing debts that keep growing.

You may have lost your job or you have a fear this morning of losing your job. Your wilderness may be through death valley. You're facing a loved one.

Gwen and I know what that's like. And by the way, a little Tiffany, 11-year-old Tiffany, our granddaughter with a brain tumor has been removed and she's gone through chemotherapy and is now starting next week. Her radiation and so far everything has been working out.

They're surprised at the strength and good nature of this precious young lady. We appreciate your prayers. Some of you know what it's like to be in a waiting room of a hospital.

Maybe you're a husband who heard those words. Your wife has a tumor. She has cancer of the breast.

Oh, so many letters of this cancer, women's cancer of the breast spreading to the spine. And I've been there and watched in the waiting room as I've waited for a report on Tiffany and go in the room and hear the doctor say this is a very rare kind of cancer. I've heard that four times with all the women that I've talked to you about, Gwen and Debbie and Gwen.

And I know what it's like to be in that waiting room and listen to the doctor. And while I was there in the waiting room to have a doctor come out to a mother, your 15-year-old son has liver cancer and it's inoperable. He's going to have to have a transplant if we can find one.

And you watch as those who are Christians don't seem to come apart. They take the news and there are tears. Yes, I cry, they all cry, but then there's suddenly something happens.

Holy Spirit just seems to move in with strength and power in that time of wilderness. All it takes is a telephone call. I'm not trying to scare anybody.

I'm going to try to encourage you today that no matter what your wilderness is, God is there. He's greater than your wilderness and he wants to bring you through that wilderness leaning on his arms. It could be your marriage.

Maybe some even got up this morning and said, I can't take anymore, Lord. I've had it. And you can come to church and put on a smile.

Nobody know what you're going through, but down deep inside you know the hell that you've been through. You've tried, you've prayed, you fasted, and it doesn't seem that God's answering your prayer. It could be a child that's gone wrong, some of your children giving you, you're in a living hell with your children, in family crisis, situations beyond your control, nothing that you can do about it physically, and you have to cry out to God with everything in you.

You see, we all end up at times in a wilderness experience, not once, twice, but many times in our lifetime. I look back and I could write a book just on the wildernesses I've been cast into in testing times. God doesn't just permissively just try to throw you into a testing time.

God always has a reason for that. Next Sunday I'm going to be preaching, Lord willing, on the pruning process and I want to show you how wonderful and marvelous it is that, in fact, when God prunes according to the Greek and also the Hebrew, when He prunes, He dances with joy. Now, He can't be dancing with joy just because there's sickness or disease.

He doesn't dance at that. That's not what the pruning is all about. But I want you to know that He is always there and the testimonies that pour in of God's grace, that's been a great encouragement to me.

But how is it that you're handling, how are you handling your crisis experience, your wilderness? And how are you walking through it? How are you going to come out of it? I can assure you every wilderness is going to change you. Every wilderness experience is going to have an effect on you. It's either for the good or for the bad and you're going to come out of it one way or the other.

And I'm asking you this morning if you are in a wilderness. I'm not preaching just this congregation. I'm preaching far beyond it to all the tapes, video and audio that go around the world.

And I'm preaching to you right now. You are in a wilderness and how are you reacting? What's it doing to you? Is your faith increasing? Are you turning more to prayer and seeking God? Or is there some kind of a root of bitterness coming in and these questions that are all natural and God puts up with the initial why and why me and why at this time and what have I done? The questions is this God's judgment? Have I done something wrong? Is God judging something from the past that's in my life? That's not what it's all about folks. That's not what the wilderness is all about.

The many are the afflictions of the righteous the scripture says. You tell me you have faith. You say Pastor Wilkson I'm coming through it with faith in my heart.

All right I'm going to ask you the question where and how did you get your faith? Upon what foundation is it built? You see a lot of people don't want to hear what I'm about to tell you but I'm going to take in your word now if you tell me that you're getting your faith from the Bible. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. Now if all you've been hearing you've been saying well I hear all the good things but I want to tell you what the scripture says clearly.

There are some people for example would like to rip the of Job right out of their Bibles and I'm going to tell you you don't have faith you know nothing about faith until you can look Job right in the eye. You have got to understand that God permitted all of these problems in his life. He permitted the taking of his children.

He permitted the loss of his health. You've got to look Job in the eye on an ash heap and listen to his pain and his cries that God would take his very life. You've got to listen to a wife who's mocking him.

You've got to look at the loss of his reputation and everything in life. You've got to see him sitting on an ash heap, his clothes torn and agony and his voice saying God why? Not understanding that God loved him through it all, that he was never more precious to God than when he was suffering. You've got to look that all in the eye and say God was in it and if you can't believe that you don't even begin to know what faith is because it was in that battle, it was in that struggle with Job that he came out with an indomitable faith that was able to say though he slay me yet will I trust him.

And if you can't face Job, tear it out of your Bible and don't talk about faith. You don't have faith, you're a presumption. You don't have faith.

I want you to go with me to Psalm 69 if you will please. Psalm 69. I'll take you through a few scriptures and I want to tell you if faith comes by hearing the Word of God then it's going to come by hearing these words in particular.

Psalms begin with Psalm 69. Let's go through the first three verses if you will. Save me O God for the waters are coming unto my soul.

I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. Now folks, this doesn't jive with what I heard a preacher tell a congregation recently. He says I have outlawed suffering in my life.

He said I read my Bible and I have a faith that immunizes me against sickness. I don't allow sickness, I don't allow poverty, I refuse to have it and you people who are putting up with it don't have faith. I tell you that man's headed for a wilderness.

God bless his heart. Then how do you, how does that jive, how do you fit this into his theology and others who say that Christians don't suffer. Verse 2, I sink in deep mire where there's no standing.

I'm come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I'm weary of my crying, my throat is dried, my eyes fail while I wait for God. Look at verses 15 to 17.

Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me O Lord, thy loving kindness is good. Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies and hide not thy face from thy servant for I'm in what? I'm in trouble.

Hear me speedily. Go back to Psalm 66 a few pages back. Psalm 66 verses 10 through 12.

For thou, O God, hast proved us, thou'st tried us as silver is tried, thou broughtest us into the net. Who brought us into the net? You brought me into the net. You laid affliction upon our loins.

Who laid it? You laid affliction upon our loins. Thou has caused men to ride over our heads. We went through, what did we go through? Fire and water and thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

Turn to Psalm 119 if you will please. Psalm 119. Go to verse 67 if you will please.

Verse 67, before I was afflicted, what I do? I went astray but now I have kept thy word. And verse 71, it is good for me, what? Why? Psalm 116. Turn to 116 if you will please.

Psalm 116 verses 1 through 4. I love the Lord because he heard my voice and my supplication, because he has inclined his ear unto me. Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me or surrounded me.

The pains of hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.

O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Verse 6, the Lord preserveth us if I was brought low and he helped me. Folks, look at me please.

It is all through the Word. You cannot deny it. That there is suffering, there are wilderness experiences for all the faithful.

These are godly people. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God but it comes by hearing exactly what I read to you this morning that we've just now concluded. The scriptures loudly declare that the path of faith is through fire and waters.

Listen to what the scripture says, thy way is in the sea and thy path is in great waters. Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life. He said but the way goes through deep waters, it goes through fire, it goes through testing.

Isaiah 43 19, behold I will do a new thing. Now it shall be springing forth. Shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Where is the way? The way is in the wilderness. It's in overflowing waters. I'll make a path through flowing waters.

When you pass through the waters I will be with you and through the rivers they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I the Lord thy God will hold your right hand saying to you, fear not I am here to help you.

Yes there are tests, there are trials, there is a wilderness. There's a wilderness. I don't ask God why Tiffany had brain cancer at 11.

I don't ask my wife had it five times. I'm not asked why my daughters have had cancer. I don't ask that anymore.

I don't say God where were you? God why didn't you answer my cry? I've been faithful to you. I've been seeking you and praying. I've been living in the righteousness of Jesus by faith and these things happen.

One wilderness after another. But folks it's been every wilderness experience where I've found the way. I found the truth and I found the life and I found his hand all-sufficient.

His hand was always there. He said when you're in the fire and your water, that's where you're going to find my hand. You're going to find your path.

You're going to find it in your hard times. Who gets his hand? Those that are in the waters then who need it. Those who are self-sufficient don't need it.

There's a dear sister Esther Hunter who's on my mailing list and she has written this book Joy in the Morning, M-O-U-R-I-N, when she, because of morning, Joy in the Morning, a very powerful book. And she

wrote me a letter this past week. She and her husband flew, they were in Arkansas, they flew into Hilbry, Manitoba, Canada to bury 90 year old dad who was a preacher.

Wonderful man of God. 12 children. All 12 children came to the funeral to honor this great pastor's father.

They had just been to the funeral parlor and ministered to the Lord and they were going on to, we would call it a wake, where people bring in food in somebody's home. And they were five, all the families piled into five cars and headed toward the home and a terrible blizzard struck. And the blizzard just blocked out everything, it was a whiteout.

And the cars were separated and somehow the second car that Esther was in, she had a premonition to the Lord that there was an accident ahead. A four-wheeler was trying to pass a truck on a two-lane road and hit the first car head-on. That car was one of their five cars and she was a nurse and she came on the scene and immediately her nurse instincts kicked in.

She pulled out of the car her little nephew, I think it was five or six years old, bleeding. Pulled out her sister. Her sister died in her arms on the cold road.

Couldn't pull out two brothers who evidently died on impact. It was a horrible, bloody scene. Little Christopher lived but her sister Faye died and her two brothers.

Now remember this is at a funeral for a father and her mother with Alzheimer's who didn't know anything that was going on. And shortly after that the homestead burned down. Of course there was a wilderness of two years for Esther.

Her husband's sister committed suicide or someone close to her committed suicide and a lot of what-ifs and why for two years the dark wilderness. One day she went down by the poolside by a river, pulled out a stone and wrote on that stone, I can't carry this load. She said, I forgive myself, I'm not blaming myself anymore.

Threw the stone in the river and God lifted it and she has written a marvelous book of God's healing power to those who go through it and she shudders every time she hears somebody say, if you had faith it would have never happened. Wonderful testimony, books like this that go all over the world, a picture of the whole family here and Esther's a testimony of the grace of God and of faithfulness because she said she walked out of her wilderness with joy in her morning. She came out of her wilderness.

Some come out of their wilderness bitter and hard against the Lord. Zion said the Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me, Isaiah 49 14. You know, I've seen Christians that have gone through great suffering and I've seen how it has hardened them.

I've seen how bitter they've gotten against the Lord. They have turned completely against God. One preacher who was going through deep suffering couldn't understand why death came into his family because he thought he had figured out faith to such an extent that that these things just possibly couldn't happen in his family and when it happened it just threw him.

It just devastated him. He turned against the Lord. Finally when Christians who once knew him visited him were shocked because his first words, I don't ever want to hear the name of Jesus mentioned again in my presence.

A man who once preached the gospel. And folks, you can come out of your wilderness hard. You can come out with unbelief.

You can come out with bitterness if it does not drive you to his face. If it doesn't drive you to your knees and to the Word to find comfort. If you don't turn to this book in the time of trouble and believe what it says, you can become bitter and hard.

And I'm telling you, this is the point of my message. There are some who literally die in their wilderness. Now they get bitter, they die in the wilderness.

And that's exactly what happened to the children of Israel. The whole adult generation that came out of Egypt died, wasted in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb. They died miserable lives full of grief and agony and pain because they refused to lay hold of God's precious promises to hold them and keep them in their time of trouble.

The Lord had told them, fear not, neither be discouraged. Dread not, neither be afraid. The Lord your God will go before you.

He shall fight for you. This is the end of side one. You may now turn the tape over to side two.

The Lord says, I bore you up as a man doth his son in my arms. He said, I went before you to show you a place, to show you the way to go. I want you to go to Deuteronomy, second chapter, and let me show you what happened to these people with all these promises.

Second chapter of Deuteronomy. Second chapter of Deuteronomy, starting at verse 14, and the space in which we came from until we came over the book to Zadred was thirty and eight years until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host as the Lord swore unto them. For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them from among the host until they were consumed.

So it came to pass when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among them the people. So it came to pass when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people that then the Lord spake unto me saying. The Lord didn't even speak until they were done.

He didn't move until all of these who were in the wilderness because of their unbelief, because of their bitterness toward the Lord, because they refused to hear his word and his promises. They would not be comforted. They refused the comfort of God in his spirit and every one of them died wasted in this wilderness.

Every single one. Think of it, a whole generation was lost because of their unbelief. There are two things that I see that caused these people to die in their wilderness.

The same two causes I believe that caused Christians to die in their wildernesses today. First of all, I want you to listen very closely. They never did believe or accept God's love for them.

They never did believe. God tried and tried to convey to them his great love for them, but they cannot accept it or believe that. They could not believe that because of their trials and because of the testings that they were in, that they were really loved of God.

In fact, they said, they hid it over and over. God is angry at us. Why would he bring us out here and try to kill us? Why would God allow this in my life? If he loved me, why would he allow me to go through such trial, financial problems, testing in the families, marriage, and all of these testings that I have to go through? If God loved me, if God loves his children, why the suffering? And they could not comprehend or believe that everything that came to them came from the hand of a loving father.

Everything. I'm telling you now, Saint, if you love Jesus with all your heart, there is absolutely nothing that happens in your life except that which comes from the loving hands of the Father. The tender loving hand of God.

He knows exactly what he's doing. He knows exactly what he's after. I believe this is the root cause of all doubt and unbelief, an unwillingness to believe and rest in God's love for his own people.

You know what God said of me? He said, I chose you because I loved your fathers. It wasn't because anything special about you, but I loved you because I loved your fathers and I made a covenant with your fathers. The Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a special people to himself.

The Lord did not set his love upon you nor choose you because you were more or mighty than anyone else. You were the fewest of all. But I chose you, saith the Lord, because I loved you.

Read that in Deuteronomy 7, 7 and 8. Remember when Balaam came against Israel to try to curse it? Why didn't God obey? Why didn't God answer Balaam? The Lord thy God would not hearken to Balaam, but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee because the Lord thy God loved you. Over and over again said, I have loved you. God said, I have loved you.

He took them to the brink of the Red Sea and tested them to see if they would answer to that love. God put them there to see if they would, if they would just say, I know I, we have a loving God. We have a loving father who would not abandon us.

We have a loving father who will not turn us over to the enemy. We have a father who will see us even though it looks dark and hopeless. He said he loved us, and a loving father, if he be God, he cannot make a mistake, and if he is God, he's going to deliver us one way or another.

But they could not accept the love of God for them. Why the bitterness at the waters of Mar, God again testing them, would they believe that a loving father would not let them, let them die of thirst in a wilderness? God was saying, what kind of a father do they picture me to be? And he brings them to the bitter waters so that he could just extract from them some manifestation, some essence of love that they could just lean on him. God wants to be loved.

He wants us to know that he loves us, but in turn we, we love him because he first loved us, the scripture says. There has to be confidence in his promise. God loved me, and I tell you, Saint, no matter what you're going through today, I don't care if it's the valley in the shadow of death.

God is doing something out of love. You've got to believe that he loves you, that he's going to see you through, even though you've messed it up. You've made mistakes.

Maybe you're in debt because of foolishness. Maybe you've had it because of covetousness. All right, then repent and get a hold of God and say, Lord, this is bigger than me, but I know you love me.

I'm your child, and you'll not fail me. I drink in his love daily. Every trial that comes to my life now, I begin to drink in his love.

I acknowledge to him his divine love. Father, I don't know anything about this. I don't know how it's happened, why it's happening, but I know that you love me, and out of this is going to come something to glorify your name.

My part is to say, I love you, Lord, no matter what. Till you slay me, I will love you, I will trust you. Twelve spies go into the land.

They bring back an evil report. Giants and impregnable walls and fortresses and obstacles, and they cry out, we're not able to go up against this people, for they're stronger than we are. You know what they're saying? My situation is greater than the love of God for me.

They have so belittled the love of God, so rejected the very thought of God's love for them in their trials, that every obstacle clouds out the love of God in their lives. What's going on here with Israel? Why all of this turning back in their hearts to Egypt? They're accusing a loving father of abandoning them and leaving them to their own devices. I don't know what you're going through this morning.

God has not left you to your own devices. In fact, He loves cleaning up our messes. Folks, I'm telling you, I wouldn't be here this morning if I didn't believe God cleaned up all my messes.

I have more messes than you've ever made. I have made messes, financial messes, and things. Now, I'm not talking about morality, but I'm talking about things, stupid, dumb mistakes that got me in trouble.

I said, Lord, how am I ever going to get out of this? And the Lord said, Repent, David. Quit trying to be your own God and start trusting me and leaning on my love. Boy, I thank God He's a God of messes.

He cleans them up. Fear, doubt, unbelief, they're all the same in God's eyes, and it all springs from an unwillingness to believe and accept His love for us. You know, if I really believe that God loves me, then I don't ever have to fear that He's gonna let me be deceived.

He's not gonna let me fall. He's not gonna let my debtors take over my life. If I really believe that He loves me and cares for me, if I'm repentant and I turn to Him by faith, if I'm in business, I'm gonna believe He's gonna unravel all of my business problems, whatever they may be.

God's gonna unravel it, make a way. I don't see how. I don't know how it can happen.

It'll take a miracle, but He's a God of miracles, and this God of love can perform miracle after miracle in my behalf if I just trust and love Him. Hallelujah. Secondly and finally, they died in their wilderness because not only they could not accept God's love, but they couldn't, they missed more than anything else, the one truth that could have brought them out of their wilderness.

God not only loved them, but He delighted in them. Oh folks, get this in your mind. He loves, He not only loves you, He delights.

This hit me so hard this past week. I'm a father of four children and 11 grandchildren, and little granddaughters that get on the telephone, and they call, and Gwen lights up like a Christmas tree. I'll tell her who's on the phone.

If I told her the president was on the phone, she'd shrug her shoulders, but when she says it's Alyssa, granddaughter, or Tiffany, she'll jump over a bed to get to that phone. The delight, and an hour, I'll leave and come back an hour later, and she's still sitting there just jabbering away, saying nothing. And the little girl said, don't hang up grandma, don't hang up yet, it's only been an hour.

And I'm thinking of how I delight in my children. I call them on the phone, they call me, and the sharing, and the delight I have in my children. How can I accuse God of delighting, that I should delight more in my children than He should delight in me, and His children.

He delights in us. In our hardships, even in our trials, there is a delight in the heart of God for His people. This is unexplainable.

Israel's this whole thing, because remember what Joshua said when the children of Israel want to go back to Egypt, said we can't go in, they're bigger than us, they're stronger than us. Here's the word of Joshua, if the Lord delight in us, then He'll bring us out, and bring us in. If the Lord delights in us, what are you saying, look folks, God delights in us.

We're in a hard place, but we are the delight of God's heart, and because He delights in us, all the walls come down, all the giants will be vanquished, because He delights in doing these things for us. We are His delight. Proverbs 11 20, the upright are His delight.

Proverbs 15 8, the prayer of the upright is His delight. I'll tell you what, if you don't believe it, go with me, go back to Psalms 18. I know you believe me, but let me nail it down.

Who would I be to accuse anybody of unbelief? Psalms 18, let's start verse 16, He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters, He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me, for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my stay. Verse 19, if you have King James, read it aloud with me, please.

He brought me forth also into a large place, He delivered me, because He delighted in me. Why did He deliver you? This is what the children of Israel missed, and folks, you will never come out of your wilderness. You can live a wasted life and die spiritually, and you can die in that hard place of that wilderness, bitter against God, unless you can bring your soul by the power of the Holy Ghost now to say, I am loved by God my Father.

I preached it last time I was here. He, the Father, has taken you out of a wild tree and He's grafted you, He's grafted you, He's planted you into Jesus Christ, and the life of Christ flows through you. And I want you to know, He stands back and looks at His handiwork, and He loves it, and He delights in what He has done.

He delights in the grafting of you into Christ His own Son. He delights in you morning and night. When you're asleep, God's delighting in you.

Hallelujah. He delighted in Job all through his experience, and He's delighting in you through your hard times. He delights in you.

Why sayest thou, and why do you speak, O Israel, that my way is hid from the Lord, and my cause is passed over from my God? He's saying, why is it that you tell yourself that God hasn't heard your cry? Why is it that you question my love? Why is it that you say, where is God in my problem? I tell you folks,

it's absolutely imperative, and I'm going to close in just a moment, it's absolutely imperative for you to come to the place that this mother came. She wrote it in huge, typed it in huge letters. Her name is Katie.

So I just have to tell you how Jesus has sustained me through the murder of my son. He was in a 7-Eleven store, and he was shot by three people who came in. They thought it was a joke, but when it was all over, her son lay dead.

She said, having a child die is the worst thing that can happen to you, and even though I wept all night, God has filled my heart with joy. The scripture said, weeping may endure all night, but joy comes in the morning. When they told me he was dead, my first thought, well, Lord, I know he's safe.

He is safe. Then the Lord revealed to her that the Lord had to take her son, and lest a grain of bread run and dies, it bides alone, it dies, it brings forth much fruit. But she said he was taken because of the days of evil ahead that he could not stand.

God made her to understand why. Not for a while, but it finally came. And folks, I have been hearing it from all over the United States and around the world, the absolute faithfulness of God.

And that's what God wants. You can come to this church, and you can stand and sing and shout and talk in tongues. Thank God for that.

You can boast how much you believe in God, how much faith you have. You can witness to others about the saving power of Jesus Christ, that you have got to come to the place where you are so convinced that even in your moral failure, that battle that you fight in your flesh, that sin that you so hate, God does not turn his back on you during your battle and your struggle. He delights in you even in your struggle.

And it's why he sends the Holy Ghost, and through the power of the Holy Ghost, he mortifies those deeds of the flesh. There are times I've gone through the dry spells we've heard spoken about from this pulpit, and there are times that I would feel down because I felt, well, Lord, this week I didn't pray as much as I should, I didn't read my Bible as much as I should, and I didn't witness this week. And I began to think of all the things I didn't do that I should have done.

And then there's a tendency of the enemy to bring in guilt and condemnation. But the only cure for that, folks, the only cure are for you to sit back and rest in the loving arms of Jesus and say, Lord, there's no good thing in me anyhow. You know my heart, and you know I love you.

And I ask you, Lord, to draw me closer to you. Forgive me, Lord, for thinking that it's been my prayers, it's been my fasting, it's been my Bible reading that's merited any good thing from you. That's worse than unbelief.

The thing is to lay back in the arms of Jesus and say, Lord, just draw me now, and I know you love me, I know you care about me, and even though I'm not where I think I ought to be, and sometimes I can feel condemned, I condemn myself. Lord, can you still say, Lord, I know you love me, and I know you delight in me? I know some of my children have failed me at times. They've said things, really, that I thought shouldn't have been said, and done things that I thought were contrary to everything I taught them.

But never once did I stop delighting in them. Not once did I stop loving them. Even when one of my children did something that was drastically sinful, that was when I reached out.

I never forget taking that child in my arm when that child thought that I was going to turn against them and give them nothing but rebuke. And that child saw the tears in my eyes and felt the warmth of my hug, and it melted their hearts, melted the heart. And if I can do that as a human being, how much more does he care about you this morning in your hard place? Now, folks, I don't know why God laid this message on my heart today, but I honestly believe that some of you that are here are in a wilderness and trying to understand it.

You don't have to understand your afflictions. You've got grace, you've got his loving arms under you, and you've got a God who delights in you. Don't look at your bills.

Don't look at the future. Just look up and say, Jesus, I'm only one day at a time in your love, and I just thank you that you delight in me. I'm not very good, Lord, but you delight in me.

I'm not the best, but you delight in me. I may have failed you, but I know you delight in me. You're going to bring me through.

Hallelujah. I'm going to come out victorious, leaning on the arms of Jesus. Will you stand, please? Hallelujah.

Would you lift your hands and just thank Jesus for loving you right now? Thank Jesus for delighting in you. Would you thank him, Lord? I thank you for loving me. Lord, I'm going through a hard time.

I'm facing difficulty, but one thing I have to be sure of is that I know you love me, that I know you care about me, and I cast my cares upon you, and that you truly do love me. Hallelujah. Lord, you're going to see me through.

You're going to see us through. You're not going to let us fail or fall. Hallelujah.

I'm going to give an invitation. Now, the problem is that some of you that are in this auditorium and in the annex, you say, that's not how I've been seeing it, Brother David, feeling that maybe God is trying to chasten me, because whom the Lord loves, doesn't he chasten? Yes, some of you may be chastened. Folks, I want you to know that the moment you respond to his loving chastening, the moment you say, yes, Jesus, he lifts his hand.

He's accomplished his purpose, so there's nothing to be afraid of. His words to you this morning are, fear not, for I'm with you. Fear not.

Now, I could open these altars for all those who are going through hard times and be filled and jammed and all the way back, but I don't want to do that. I'm asking for those right now that came into this building this morning, you're saying, Brother Wilkinson, I reached a point this week or even today, I've reached a point where I said, I can't take any more. I've come to the end of my rope.

You're in a wilderness of your lifetime and you need prayer. You just need the love and prayer and strength of a pastor and staff and friends. Up in the balcony, in the main floor, you can just step out and I'll join you in prayer that the Lord help you to lean on Jesus now and that he make a way through your wilderness and take you by the hand this morning.

Maybe you've got word of sickness, cancer, disease. Maybe you've got a bad word from the doctor and your family. They'd like us to join you, but if you're not right with God, if you've been running from the Lord,

you especially need to step out.

Say, Pastor David, I am not where I should be with Jesus. I have felt so unloved. In fact, I felt God's mad at me because I've been running from him.

Well, run back to him. It's that simple. Just come back to him.

His arms are wide open up in the balcony. Just go the stairs on either side and come down in the aisle. And you that are in the annex, if you just step forward in between the screens.

Don't go before the screen and block the screen. Just step forward. That's just a step toward Jesus saying, Lord, I want this morning, I want to sense your love for me.

I want to know that you're glad over me and I want to be glad over you, Jesus. I want gladness in my heart. Boy, some of you had so much sadness lately.

You've carried a burden of sadness and gloom. God wants to lift that from you today. I'm going to pray for you in here in the main auditorium.

As I pray, I want you to open your heart and receive from the Lord what you hear in prayer. Scripture said, if two or three agree together concerning anything on earth, it shall be done of the Father in heaven. And you will walk out of this place comforted by the Holy Spirit, reassured of the love of Jesus for you, and confident that he delights in you no matter what your struggle may be.

Of course, you know, I'm telling you, that all depends on your loving him and walking in repentance before him, humbling yourself, believing God's Word and trusting in him. Lord, I speak against the spirit of fear, condemnation, and guilt, and Lord, the sense of being unloved. Lord, sometimes we feel unloved by people, even those close to us, but oh God, we dare not accuse you of not loving us.

God, we strike against by faith, we strike against that terrible unbelief, that terrible fear that God may not love us, or that God is angry, or God is mad at us. Lord, there is a wrath in you, but that's against the sinner who has turned against all the light and has refused any hope of light, will not allow anything of Christ enter their hearts. But those, Lord, of us who've come repentant and broken before you, what a joy it is to your heart, what a delight it is to you this morning.

I come against that in Christ's name. We take authority in Jesus' name for all those in the annex standing at attention before you, Lord. Right now, Holy Spirit, in this auditorium and in the overflow rooms, may the Spirit of the Living God fall.

May the Spirit of the Living God remind every hungry heart, I will deliver you because I delight in you. I will deliver you because I love you, because I delight in you. I will deliver you.

Hallelujah. I want everybody who came forward to pray this prayer right out loud from the depths of your heart. Dear Jesus, lift this gloom from my heart.

Lift this despair from my spirit. I know you love me. You wouldn't have died for me if you hadn't loved me so.

And I accept your word that you will deliver me from all my troubles and bring me out of my wilderness because you delight in me. And I delight in you, Jesus. I thank you for your love.

I refuse, in Jesus' name, to live in fear and guilt and condemnation by faith in the Word of God. I am free. Lift your hands and thank Him for that right now.

Just lift your hands and thank Him for that. Lord, I am free. I am free.

I am free. Would you sing this glorious song, I am free, as we depart this service this morning? Our visitors in the main auditorium and upstairs here in the main auditorium and in the balcony, if you'll come down the stairs, go through exit 8 and 9. And those in the annex, just slip into room 204. We have a book and a tape and some refreshments and some New Yorkers who'd like to just visit with you, answer your questions.

Now, look, if you want someone to pray for you, you want someone to minister to you right now, this is important. Listen, if you mean business, you will follow through. No one will have to force you.

The test of the Holy Ghost doing a work in you is that you want to go forward. Go up, go to the back, anyone with a white coat and ask for directions to room 206, go there. We've got people waiting for you right now just to take you by hand and pray for you, just to minister to you.

You don't join anything, we don't want any money from you, we want to love you. Amen. God bless you.

I want you to turn around, shake hands with at least 15 people and say, God love you. God bless you, as we sing it as we depart. This is the conclusion of the message.

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