

Walking Through the Wilderness!

by James Smith

The Christian's journey through the world is a wilderness experience, but with the Lord's presence and provision, we can navigate it by faith and reach the promised rest.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 2:7, Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 41:13, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Faith Journey", "Spiritual Dependence"

Description

James Smith preaches about the believer's journey through the world towards the promised rest, likening it to Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. He emphasizes the need to walk by faith, live in dependence on God, and be led by His wise and gracious hand through the barren, exhausting, and dangerous wilderness of the world. Smith reminds the congregation that the Lord knows their struggles, weaknesses, and needs, providing for them every step of the way, just as He did for the Israelites in the wilderness.

Transcript

"The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your walking through this vast wilderness . These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything!" Deuteronomy 2:7

Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan, very well represents and illustrates the believer's journey through the present world unto the promised rest. We have . . .

to cross a desert,

to walk through a wilderness,

to live in entire dependence on God, and

to be led by his wise and gracious hand.

We may not encroach on the property of the men of this world, nor should we desire it. The reason given Israel for not touching, or taking, any of the land of the children of Esau, is the reason that may be given us, for the Lord your God "has watched your walking through this vast wilderness!" The Lord knows where we are, what we need, and is able to supply us. He is with us, has promised to provide for us -- and therefore should be obeyed and honored by us.

THE PLACE.

"This vast wilderness." What that vast wilderness was to Israel -- the world is, or should be, to us.

It was a barren spot -- and such is the world; it yields no food for the soul; it gives no satisfaction to the mind. It was generally hot and sultry -- and here we are tried by fierce temptations, or fiery afflictions. It is an exhausting and debilitating climate, and often weakens the pilgrim along his way.

It is wearying, as well as exhausting, so that the Christian tires of everything below, and often longs to flee away to a happier climate.

It is dangerous too; here the old serpent the devil, the roaring lion, and a thousand dangerous pitfalls have to be avoided or overcome!

It is as perplexing as it is dangerous, so that unless led by a divine hand, we would never find the path, or reach the promised land.

Its difficulties are great and numerous, and seem to increase the farther we advance. It lies between the plentiful and pleasant land of Egypt, which is left behind -- and the more plentiful and pleasant land of Canaan, which is before us. It is often a long, tiresome, trying journey.

THE EXERCISE.

"Your walking through this vast wilderness." Walking, not riding. All had to walk. There was no royal road, or comfortable transportation. So we must walk, and walk by faith. We must . . .

walk every day,

walk after the Lord's example,

walk with God,

walk towards the promised rest,

walk all weathers, whether sunshine or storm, the wet season or the dry.

All had something to carry -- the luggage went with them. Just so, we are all more or less burdened. There is a cross for every one's shoulder, and a burden for every back.

We have to travel too in a mixed company. As it was with Israel, so it is with us. A mixed multitude from the land of Egypt went along with them -- and there is a mixed multitude with us. If all were true pilgrims, then it would help and encourage us; but the false-hearted ones we have to deal with, often hinder and cast us down.

Amidst snares, temptations, and discouragements, we have to press on our way, not knowing what a day may bring forth.

Yet we are not without comfort, nor have we any real reason to be discouraged, for the Lord knows our walking through this vast wilderness.

THE FACT.

The Lord knew where they were, and what they were. He knew that they were in the wilderness, for he appointed it; he led them into it, he had conducted them through it.

Just so, we are where we are by divine appointment. It was all arranged and settled in the everlasting covenant. We are not here by chance -- but by God's divine decree. The Lord by his unerring providence led us here, and by the same providence he will lead us home.

Our great comfort is, that Jesus has traveled the road before us. He knows by experience what we are now passing through. He suffered, being tempted. He was tried in all points like as we are. His eye rests upon us. He watches us every moment. He observes the difficulties of the road, and the supplies that we need. He sends us all we need, and as we need it. He is engaged to see us safely through the wilderness. He has taken charge of us. He has undertaken for us. He has made ample and suitable provision. He has helped us hitherto, and will help us through the entire journey!

The Christian's journey then is across a desert .

He must walk every step of the road.

The Lord knows all . . .

his weaknesses and his woes,

his wants and his foes,

his fears and his cares,

his faults and his follies

-- and provides for all.

What is the world to us?

A pleasant spot -- or a vast wilderness?

A desirable residence -- or a dreary desert?

What are we doing in the world?

Are we settling down in it -- or walking through it?

What is our great comfort here?

Is it that the Lord our God knows where we are, what we need, and will supply us? Beloved, our God has so provided for us, that we may not envy the children of Esau, or any of the inhabitants of the land. As Israel was forbidden to beg or steal from their neighbors, because God had blessed them -- so we should, "Keep our lives free from the love of money and be content with what we have, because God has said: Never will I

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