

Wandering Is Humbling

by Steve Mays

The book of Numbers teaches us about the wilderness experience and the need to move out and live by faith, trusting in God's provision and guidance.

Duration: 28:39

Scripture: Numbers 11:8

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

This sermon delves into the book of Numbers, highlighting the theme of being stuck in a wilderness of stagnation and the need to move forward in faith, relying on God's presence and provision. It emphasizes the importance of seeking God in the midst of challenges, finding sustenance in the 'manna' of His Word, drawing from the 'water of life' through the Holy Spirit, and experiencing healing and restoration symbolized by the 'serpent on the pole'. Ultimately, it points to Jesus as the 'star in the wilderness', offering hope, renewal, and a fresh passion for life.

Transcript

Shall we open our Bible today to the book of Numbers? I gotta tell you that Leviticus was a fun book because it had to deal with pastors and worship and holiness and all that stuff. But I'm thinking now that maybe Numbers might be the one I really need more than anything else. And you think well why would you say that? Well when you find out during this study you're going to realize that we probably are in the book of Numbers right now.

39 years of going nowhere. Around and around in circles and not making one inch of progress in the Lord. That probably is where most of the country is today.

We need to begin to move out. We need to begin to live by faith. We need to quit feeling sorry for ourself.

And we need to understand we're not in this thing by ourself. We have a great God that is with us. So when you say to me hey Pastor Steve I'm in the wilderness I'm going to correct you.

I'm going to say to you with God in the wilderness. You're never going to be apart from God. He's always going to be with you.

No matter where you go He's going to be there. And so you can't say I'm in the wilderness. No.

You have to say that God is with me in the wilderness. And by the way it was in that wilderness that God fed them the manna. And it was in that wilderness that God opened the Red Sea.

And God opened the seas and the waters and marsh and so on. And that God did tremendous works and they saw the pillar of fire. And they saw the cloud that covered them.

And yet they did not trust God. And that is a tragic thing. So when I look at this book I begin to realize there are two groups that we're really talking about.

The old generation that is going to perish. Those will be the old wineskins that will not understand anything. And then a whole new generation that God's beginning to rise up or raise up right now.

The generation of the kids. And we see that those are probably 20 year olds. And now we begin to understand what God's doing in our country.

Offentimes we're too old to change. Well that shouldn't be it. And we say well we're kind of used to this wilderness.

No. God can break the wilderness. And by the way the Bible says that His grace will speak to you in your wilderness.

So you might be in the wilderness. But Jeremiah said my grace is sufficient for thee in that wilderness. And then you remember the Bible says also in the book of Psalms that he'll break the cedar and he'll speak in his voice and break the wilderness completely.

In other words God can bring you out of that. But even like Shadrach Meshach and Abednego they did not want to come out of the fire. And the reason why is they saw Jesus Christ in the fire.

They went in bound and they came out loose. And the reason why was because in that fire God was there. Nebuchadnezzar threw them in and Nebuchadnezzar looked in and said we I thought we threw three in.

Why do I see fourth and he looks like the son of man. Because God was with them in that fire and God released them in that fire and they came out of that fire brand new. And sometimes a wilderness experience can really set you on fire for Jesus Christ.

It can give you a new hunger a new heart a new desire. And so you look at Leviticus you look at numbers you think man what am I going to learn. Well Timothy understood from Paul.

Paul you remember said to Timothy in second Timothy chapter 3 verse 14. But continue thou in the things which thou has learned and has been assured of knowing whom thou has learned them. And from a child thou has known the holy scripture which are able to make you wise into salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Now check it out verse 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for number one doctrine number two reprove number three correction and number four instruction in righteousness. And reason why that the man of God may be perfect or complete or absolute mature thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And so what Paul is telling Timothy is listen you need to stay in the word and you need to know that every single book every single word is God's witness to us that God is speaking to man. So when you look at Leviticus and says I'm going to pass over don't because God will speak to you even in that book in the book of numbers the very same way. And one of the great verses I think in Romans chapter 15 verse 4 it says for whatsoever things were written aforetime.

In other words what was written back then the history were written for my learning that through patience and comfort of the scripture we might find hope. That's a great verse. It says that the things that were written before time were written so I would learn that through my patience and the comfort of the Holy Scripture that God is going to give me hope.

And that's where we need we need a hope right now where we are and I can look to situations I can go with emotion but I need God to heal my heart. And so the book of numbers is really not a good name. It's an English name but the Hebrew name is in the wilderness.

So it talks about you being in the wilderness for thirty nine years. The book of Leviticus it was one month. The whole book was only one month long.

Now we're into here once again the wilderness and it kind of does make sense in Genesis to Deuteronomy. We know them to be the penitudes and they were written by Moses. So Genesis would be in the beginning or the creation of God where God elected you and God has predestined you and then we come to the book of Exodus which is really the book of Jesus Christ about God's redemption that through the blood of Jesus Christ he will bring you into that promised life and the book of Leviticus is really the work of the Holy Spirit.

He will make you holy and he'll sanctify you and then you come to the book of numbers and it has to do with what man numbering men and what is the issue of that failure all the time. So you have God the father in the book of Genesis creating you have the son who's dying for the sins of the world. You have the Holy Spirit that is sanctifying and redeeming and then you have us man who is a typical failure because we will not look to God and what was to be 11 days through the wilderness ended up being 39 years.

Why because 10 spies came back with an evil report. All they could see is the giants they couldn't see really what God said Caleb and Joshua said hey we can do it but everyone else said no there are giants in the land.

Well tell you what there are giants in our land and there are walls that we have to conquer and there's Jericho's that we need to bring down but God has to do it and if God says do it we need to go and yet we realize I think I'll say right where I'm at and that's the wilderness experience we've been in this place too long we've been going around and around too long it's time to change the marriage it's time to change the relationship with the kids it's time to grow up and begin to realize what God's doing and that means a step of faith and that means coming out of that danger area and so the name of the book they numbered the people twice the theme of the book is just murmuring and complaining and sadness I know that's not us but it's in Chapter 11 people are complaining about the food

foods no good this and that I mean in the third world they have no food but boy I tell you what if we're not happy with it what do we do we complain big time and Aaron and Miriam they were complaining about Moses getting married and who gave you the authority in Chapter 12 and so guess what God dealt with those two so I know that we don't criticize or we don't judge authority and we don't think people can do the

right thing all the time that's okay and then Korah and the company you remember they attacked Moses they came after Moses and they came against Moses and of course they died and we don't do that we don't come against people we don't gossip you know not us and we're not doubting and we're not disobeying but I tell you what we're definitely wondering in humility what in the world

is going on in our life this is a great book because I think that we can learn something very powerfully in this book they numbered the people twice at the very beginning and the very end and they came up with 605,000 soldiers between the age of 20 and 50 that were willing to fight so they were now becoming a very strong army Moses is the author and the date is around 1405 and the audience two groups I've mentioned to you and really that's probably all we really need to know but four things I want to show you four incredible truths to show you what can happen in your wilderness well Steve I'm right there I'm kind of dry kind of empty not hearing from God I'm emotionally wrapped up I have a great word for you this morning number one manna in the wilderness he is the bread of life turn with

me to numbers chapter 11 verse 8 and 9 numbers chapter 11 verse 8 and 9 Jesus is that bread of life and that's what Moses said he said here in numbers 11 verse 8 and 9 and the people went about and gathered it and that would be manna and ground it in mill and beat it into mortar baked it in the pan make cakes of it and it tasted was as the taste of fresh oil and when the dew fell upon the camp in the night the manna fell upon it and so that's what happened God provided for people in the wilderness so number one God is providing for you doesn't make a difference where you're at God's going to provide God's doing a work God's blessing and yet the people have changed the taste of it they had the taste of a sweetness it was like honey until they complained and then God turned the taste into

oil it was kind of yeah and I think sometimes because we challenge God we fight with God we hassle with God we complain so much when we finally get ready to do what we have to do we do it it's obedient but it's not sweet there's not a sweetness in our Christian walk we just do what we have to do because we don't want to go to hell well that's a terrible way to live you should be as sweet as honey the things of your life should be really sweet there should be a joy in your marriage a sweetness in your marriage not because you have to not because you're married to the bum but because you actually love the bum and you understand the bum I mean he's a bum but you're a bum too you're a bum he's a bum you're all a bum you're all saved under grace of God and because of that you're thinking

thank God there's not another bum I gotta live with I've worked with this guy long enough he's okay and so he can become sweet and it's fun and you can kind of understand each other he does one thing you do another and that's the way it is and so you want to feed the ducks he wants to shoot the ducks you want to have a dog and she wants a little midget yeah I don't you know that's the way marriage is God does God just does it God makes one strong one weak one doesn't cry one cries all the time God puts them together to balance things out so you can grow and I can grow and she can grow and things begin to become very sweet in a relationship and when the sweetness is gone it's over and I know I'm in that wilderness of life so number one I realized the manna was given but notice what John

said in John chapter 6 verse 57 as the living father has sent me and I live by the father's so he that eats me even he shall live by me this is the bread which came down from heaven not as your father did eat manna and are dead he that eats the bread shall live forever these things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum do you catch it he's saying I'm the bread of life I came down if you eat of me you're gonna live now check it out you're in a wilderness no one understands what you're going through God is speaking but you're not hearing it God's word is there but you're not listening and sometimes we say God

you don't care God does care he'll never leave you nor forsake you cast your burdens upon him he's going to minister to your heart but you're not listening because you're

wrapped up in the storm or you're wrapped up in the situation or you're wrapped up in everything else but God is shouting and the moment you stop and begin to say now wait a second you're telling me that God's voice is here I'm telling you God wants you out of the wilderness and God is going to give you a voice he's going to speak to you he's going to provide for you and he's going to be your God he's going to be right there he's never left you and the moment you calm down and begin to listen you're going to hear God and it's going to be a powerful voice and God's going to minister to your heart and that is the bread of life you begin to eat that bread it becomes a great thing and we see that there's a hunger and when there's a hunger for God that's a wonderful thing he said the very same

thing in on the sea in other words before that storm could leave Jesus stood and spoke his word Jesus wanted them to hear his word in the storm and then to open their eyes to see who he was so God will give you the bread of God will speak to you his word and that's a profound thing when I come to realize what God wants me to do so here it is I'm bummed out so I don't want to get in the word no no the Bible says I'm going to eat his bread under the enemy in other words I'm going to enjoy the word of God under the camp of the enemy he gives his word and it's going to be in my life don't run away I don't want to get in the word you need to get in the word I'm bummed out doesn't make a difference get in the word you need to hear God's voice you hear my voice you hear your spouse's voice you

hear your boss's voice you need to hear God's voice what is God saying and the moment you hear that voice your heart's going to burn and it's going to shout and you're going to begin to realize things are beginning to crack open because now you found the answer to life the bread of life it's going to set you free and secondly not only the bread is mentioned here but the water of life notice in numbers chapter 20 verse 11 Moses is speaking again about Jesus Christ he says Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smoked the rock twice and water came out abundantly and the congregation drank and their beast also I kind of like that word the beast also because sometimes we just want water for me but what about your spouse she needs it too and when you start drinking guess what she gets to

drink and when God works in your life other people get blessed and if you're happy your animals are happy if you're bummed your animals get bummed so you have to understand that things happen to you for a reason but here is that river of God right underneath your feet it's been there all the time and all you have to do is dig down a little bit the manna has been there it's on the tree you just have to go get it well I'm kind of bummed I don't want to go get it you have to go get it well I don't want to be filled you have to dig down there's a point in your life that you have to understand it's going to take a little bit of energy from your part to want the things of God so if I really want the word of God it's right here go get it he humanly gave it to you now I mean he divinely gave it

to you now you have to humanly gather it or if I need the spirit of God you might have to hit your knees and begin to dig that water but there's a spring underneath of you that's ready to go out you remember the woman at the well and John chapter 4 powerful verse Jesus came to her that day at 12 o'clock it must have been 120 degrees out in Syria and here this woman's coming by herself with a bucket she had no business being there at that time except she was despised by the city she must have been something that people did not respect because people would come early in the morning not at that time but Jesus was waiting for her and when all of a sudden Jesus was there he said to her so you're getting water and she said where's your bucket oh I don't have a bucket well how are you gonna get

water I am the living water and then he began to speak to her you've been married five times and the husband you're with now you're not even married to she took off she left her bucket kind of interesting she did not need what she came for what she needed was a spiritual feeling not a physical feeling she went back into town she told everybody come meet the man that told me everything about myself this city came out and when they came out Jesus said if you drink of her bucket or drink of this well you're going to thirst again but if you drink of me you're never going to thirst again in other words I'm going to satisfy the inner means and sometimes what happens in the wilderness is we pat somebody on the back it's like dust it's like they've been walking like a mummy for 25 years you know

and you just pat them and their arm falls off or their eyes falls out you know and you want to love a brother but you you pat them and they're dust and you make you cough and what happened to you I'll tell you what needs to be done you need to be soaked in the holy spirit they need to take you like that clay when it's hard and crusty and dump you into that bucket of water and let you soak and you're going to get soft and tender and pliable and you're going to be able to be molded and God's going to mold you with his fingers which are the circumstances of your life so you have a George here a Bill Hill you got a job here you got this you got that and God molds you and when all of a sudden you're fighting with the clay and you're messing with the maker he'll just put you all together and

throw you back in a bucket I can't work with this clay it's too stubborn and all of a sudden bubbles come up help help help and so he reaches down and picks you up and puts you back down you're nice and slimy he begins to mold you you get all the way up I'm perfect and God says oh you're prideful pushes you all the way back down so this potter is moving the wheel he is the one who's spinning the wheel too many things are happening in my life who's doing that God and who has the vision God and who has the hands God what is the clay talking back to the potter go back in the water until you behave yourself when you come back out and all of a sudden you get all done praise God I'm done are you really really then he picks you up and takes you over and puts you in an oven shuts the door at 1500

degrees and smiles at you through the door and you're screaming at God what are you doing and God says I'm right here I don't care open the door and that's what my cookies come in cookies 350 12 minutes great chocolate chip cookies what do I do open the door shut the door open the door shut the door 45 minutes later cookies aren't done why because I do exactly what I do with God I stop God I start God I stop God I start God I won't let God work in my life and so the work of the Holy Spirit Jesus said the very same thing if any man thirst after me let him come into me and out of his bellies shall come forth torrents of living water and listen to what Paul said in first Corinthians chapter 10 verse 4 did all drink the same spiritual drink they drank from that spiritual rock that followed

them that rock is Christ so two things right off the bat I'm in this wilderness let me ask you a question have you heard God no are you sensing God no then something's wrong your heart's not right because in that wilderness God is trying to teach you something and God is trying to work in your heart you have to yield to the work of his Holy Spirit and so so important but number three there's a serpent in the wilderness too and he's the healing of life kind of interesting and numbers chapter 21 verse 9 it says Moses made a serpent of brass put it upon the pole that's where you get the medical thing and it came to pass that if the serpent had bitten any man when he had beheld the serpent brass he was healed and lived that's exactly what happened they had sinned 23 000 have died and the

bites were happening and people were bitten by a serpent and Moses made this serpent stuck it up and said as many as look to this will be healed well you're sitting next to a guy maybe he's been bitten maybe I

got bit and robbed sitting next to me and he's saying Steve look to God why he bit me why should I look to God it's just a stick it's just Moses doesn't make any sense I need medical attention right now no look to God no I need medical suck this blood out rob right now hurry up no look to God I don't do it I'm dead it takes a step of faith exactly same thing happens in our life we think we can do it but we don't look to God I can handle it you need to look to God in a very powerful way look at what John said in John chapter 3 verse 14 as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness

even so must the son of man be lifted up and whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life so there comes a moment of faith in your life God is speaking he has the water to once again work in and through your life but you're going to have to believe you're going to have to come to a point in your life that no matter how much pain and hurt and agony there is God is good and that God is faithful and God is always right and you're always wrong and God is going to help you but if you don't listen there's no reason to be in this wilderness one day longer than you need to be yes you got to get through but not 39 years not around a mountain for 39 years not in rebellion and not growing one inch in 39 years that is stupidity that is a person that says listen I don't want

to live by faith I want nothing to do I'll tell you what happens you have no concept of God your life is dry and I tell you what when God says look to me you don't do it why because you get used to this kind of glory you get used to the rivers opening up you get used to the river turning into water good like marsh you get used to the things going around why do I need any more in my life because you're in the wilderness God is going to be faithful to you but there's an abundant life and that brings me to the very last point and probably one I really enjoy the most it says here number four he is the star in the wilderness not you you're not a star in the wilderness Christ is that star and look at here in a very profound way the star of Jacob in Numbers chapter 24 verse 17 he says I shall

see him but not now I shall behold him but not nigh there shall come a star out of Jacob a scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corner of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth in other words there is a ruler coming named Jesus Christ and what I believe this is talking about is the most important thing of your life hope because if God takes you and begins to speak his word to your heart it's a great day and when the spirit of God begins to fill your heart it's a wonderful day and when you begin to live by faith man that is where it's at but here is where it stops but that's it because I've blown it I'm no good I can't do it I'm just a crybaby I'm just this I'm just that no stop where is the new ambition where is the new man in Christ the new woman in Christ where do

things begin to explode again and now you begin to realize you're being revived this is a brand new day in your life and you're going to take all the pain and put it together and you're going to be used for the glory of God in other words this is where God restores the vision the hope and the dreams of your life and he says this there's a star coming it's Jesus Christ that's a great thing to think about and what happens in my life is I get bummed I go through it and then I lose heart I don't want to do it no more and then God says Steve what's wrong with you well you know I just don't hear your word well why well I just haven't been looking at your word I don't feel your spirit why I'm still so dry you know I'm in the hospital Stephen do you have any faith not much Stephen what about the

people I just want to go to bed that's a pathetic thing Stephen I know and God begins to show me your heart is wrong and boy I turn my heart it's like Jeremiah your heart begins to burn you get you get me out of hospital I want to preach I want to go for it and then we read here in Luke 1 7 8 through the tender mercy of our God whereby the day spring from on high has visited us who is that Jesus Christ coming in a

form of a baby who's going to come to Mary Peter said it this way in second Peter chapter 1 verse 19 we have also a more sure word of prophecy where to ye do well that you take heed as unto the light that shines in darkness until the day dawn and the day star rises in your heart what does that saying God's gonna slight the fire in your heart again he's gonna put the passion for

your husband in your heart again it can never happen it can't happen he can make it a torch he can make it to the point that he opens the door and there you are grabbing him and just kissing him what happened to you I got lit I'm gonna light you right now you know so all of a sudden things happen or you call your kids come home and they're waiting for you to lecture them and you love them what happened dad I got filled with the spirit of God the light went on and I realized that God made you in his image and God's responsible for you I just want to thank God that you're okay things change and it says here not only that in Revelation chapter 2 verse 28 I will give him the morning star he's saying to the church I'll give you the morning star but here's the best one in Revelation chapter 22

verse 16 I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star in other words what God is saying to you and I in a very profound way is there's no reason to be in this wilderness right now you've been here long enough it's time for God to light your heart on fire how does it work well I'm the bread of life are you willing to go gather it I am is it there it is you mean I need to get up and go grab it grab it okay I can do that and God speaks to your heart and all of a sudden you want that spirit you're hungry for the spiritual things of life and you're not getting it from anywhere are you willing to dig a little bit willing to dig down and hit the stream that's underneath of you and all of a

sudden that spirit just fills your heart and takes the old wineskins and makes it a brand new tender thing and makes you pliable and flexible and and begins to fill your heart and you begin to bubble over and people see it and they're affected and then all of a sudden faith comes back into your life you think you know maybe I can do this maybe I can look to God maybe God can heal our family maybe God can put things back together maybe God can heal the country maybe God could do a great work he can and all of a sudden the most exciting thing happens he lights your light and he makes you a flame and he gives you ambition and dream and you finally realize this whole thing has been to get me to this moment of my life you know why because God's never left you you talk about him not being in

your willness he's all over your life you're just stubborn and won't look to him you gotta turn to God and let God fill you and bless you and anoint you and use you don't give up on God people can't give you what you want there's too much pain and agony in this world let the spirit of God break your heart and fill your heart and use your heart and push you out because it's never too late

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