

Backdrop: The Wilderness The Place of Testing and Provision

Opening Discussion:

1. Have you ever been lost in the woods? Or have you ever visited a true wilderness?
2. Have you ever had what you would describe as a spiritual wilderness experience?
3. How can we learn to depend on God more in the wilderness than other places?
4. What can we learn about God in seasons of spiritual wilderness?

In the wilderness, we are _____ into the _____ of Jesus, and we learn to _____ on God and _____ alone.

1. The wilderness before _____

- God miraculously provided Hagar and Ishmael with bread and water in the wilderness. (Genesis 21:14-20)
- Joseph was thrown into a pit in the wilderness. He was taken out of the pit and sold into slavery in Egypt. (Genesis 37:21-28)

2. _____ in the wilderness

Now Moses . . . led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

Exodus 3:1-2

In the wilderness, Moses:

- Met with God
- Learned about the character of God
- Learned to depend on God

3. The _____ of _____ in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2-6)

The 40 years in the wilderness were designed to:

- Humble the people of God
- Test the people of God
- Teach the people of God: dependence on God, the importance of obedience, their identity as the people of God

4. _____ in the wilderness (1 Kings 19:4-8)

Like the nation of Israel, Elijah:

- Wished to die in the wilderness
- Was miraculously provided with bread and water
- Journeyed for 40 days sustained by the food God provided
- Came to Mount Sinai

5. _____ the _____ in the wilderness (Luke 1:80, Mark 1:2-5)

John's ministry in the wilderness:

- Called the people of Israel out into the wilderness
- Called the people to a time of preparation
- Preceded the realization of what God has promised
- Included baptism which pointed to the crossings of the Jordan and the Red Sea

6. _____ in the wilderness

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Matthew 4:1

Jesus' temptation in the wilderness:

- Came right after His baptism and declaration as the Beloved Son of God
- Lasted 40 days that included testing and hunger
- His hunger was satisfied by the Word of God

Other significant wilderness moments in the ministry of Jesus:

- Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness to pray: Matthew 14:13, Mark 1:35, 1:45, 6:31

Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray. Luke 5:16 (NASB)

- The feeding of the 5,000 occurred in the wilderness

Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate (wilderness) place." Luke 9:12

7. _____ in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:5-4:3)

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. Hebrews 4:11

The book of Hebrews:

- We are like God's people in the wilderness
- Some of us will prove to be faithful followers of Jesus
- Others will fall away along the journey

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:11-13

In wilderness seasons:

- We learn about God's care and provision for us
- We often face temptations, tests, and trials
- God refines us
- We meet with God in unique ways

Fill in the Blank Answers:

In the wilderness, we are refined into the image of Jesus, and we learn to rely on God and God alone.

1. Moses
2. Moses
3. nation, Israel
4. Elijah
5. John, Baptist
6. Jesus
7. Christ, followers