



NAVIGATING THE WILDERNESS

THE PROMISED LAND WEEK 1 | DAVE D'ANGELO

In this series, we will discuss the Promised Land and the wilderness seasons of life, so we can:

- Know where God is and what He is doing in our lives.
- Help others navigate their own wilderness experiences by:
 - Understanding what the real Promised Land is.
 - Discovering what causes our wilderness seasons (and keeps us stuck there).

“...For such a time as this” **Esther 4:14**

God wants to say something TO us and THROUGH us in this series.

What is the **wilderness**?

History: The Israelites spent 400 years as slaves in Egypt. Then one day, God used Moses as the deliverer of His people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. The time between the Israelites' deliverance from slavery and entrance into the Promised Land lasted 40 years. That is the biblical time period we call the **wilderness**.

That wilderness was described as:

- A season of wandering
- A navigation of an uninhabitable circumstance while looking to God for everything
- A time of desperation, fear, heaviness, helplessness, and hopelessness.

BIG PICTURE THOUGHTS ON THE WILDERNESS:

1. God led them there and sin kept them there.

Why? Moses explains:

Deuteronomy 8:2

“You shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that **he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not.”

God's testing reveals what's in our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”

“The simple pleasures of earth (satisfying career, healthy body, best friends, fulfilling marriage) are never completely safe in the hands of sinners – even redeemed ones. Without care, we feast on the abundance of God’s house and forget that it is His house.”

Scott Hubbard, *Desiring God*

Testing is mercy. God tests out of love.

We cannot confuse our identity in wilderness moments. We are not teachers, we are students.

1 Corinthians 10:5-10

“Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not:

- desire evil as they did
- be idolaters
- indulge in sexual immorality
- put God to the test
- grumble”

2. Not every wilderness is actually a wilderness.

Are we chasing a promise that is not from God?

The Promised Land is not connected to our desires. When our desires become expectations, trouble is near.

We are not all in a wilderness, as the world suggests we are. It is God who defines a Promised Land, not the world.

3. Jesus viewed his wilderness season through the lens of scripture.

The world teaches us to view scripture through the lens of our wilderness. Jesus does the opposite.

In his own wilderness, Jesus responded to temptations with “It is written...” over and over and over again.

Where do these statements come from? The wilderness experience of God’s people coming out of Egypt toward the Promised Land.

- Matthew 4:4 - “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (**Deuteronomy 8:3**)
- Matthew 4:7 - “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to

the test” (Deuteronomy 6:16)

- Matthew 4:10 - “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” (Deuteronomy 6:13)

When we face wilderness moments, we have God’s word to turn to frame our response. But we instead turn to our feelings.

Big Dipper and North Star illustration:

- The Big Dipper is our feelings. The North Star is God’s truth.
 - We can never confuse the two or exchange the two.
- The Big Dipper often points to the North Star.
- The Big Dipper moves around, but the North Star never moves.
 - Sometimes our feelings, the Big Dipper, don’t align with the direction of God’s truth, the North Star.

How do we respond to the heaviness of our world right now?

- Take our eyes off the problem and put them on Jesus. He is the answer.
- Rise up by kneeling down in prayer.
- Rise up by speaking out.

2 Timothy 4:5

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

What does the world need right now? **They need to know the real Promised Land and how to exit the wilderness.**