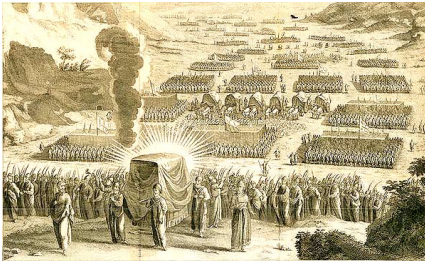




From the Pastor's heart

The spirit of wilderness



There is never a dull moment in the wilderness as it is demanding on all aspects of a person's being involving the body, soul and spirit. It is in the wilderness that a certain kind of spirit is developed that will determine the outcome of an individual in life. Since wildernesses can come and go and be different in how long they go on, it is important to develop a spirit within oneself of resilience toward the damaging aspects of wilderness times. We must also replace our wildernesses with fruitful forests by the wisdom and power of God. *Isa 32:15*

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. In the context of this verse, we determine that in the wilderness times one becomes a fruitful forest by receiving God's Spirit in the wilderness.

Dead and unworkable situations in a person's life can be considered as wildernesses. Spiritual regression (deterioration) can be as bad a wilderness and even worse than the wilderness of not being sufficiently cared for in material life. Even poverty of the world cannot compare to the poverty of the spirit. It is the spirit of man that must come to the place of regeneration before he can have fulfilment. Even having all the wealth in the world can bring you into wildernesses with the wrong spirit. There are many people who suffer wilderness and are depleted of life because they do not understand the reasons for wilderness. The main kind of wilderness is the God kind, where He takes you through it for His own reasons. The ones we create for ourselves through sin and disobedience are even worse and requires God to discipline us before some of us will realise. In this teaching I am attempting to focus on attitudes one must maintain in the wilderness times that will determine the level of our spirits (spirit level= alignment). Without right attitudes, we will suffer and even die in our wildernesses. They are not pleasant places but there is hope if we hold onto the word by the Spirit of God to release ourselves into the Promised Land.

God speaks of why He took Israel through the wilderness *Deu 8:2* *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.* *Deu 8:3* *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.* Only a handful in Israel understood the plan of God and so most missed out. The result of the wilderness for most Jews was to end up with a complaining spirit that led all who came out of Egypt to their deaths except Joshua & Caleb. The rest who were born in the wilderness survived. This should help us see that God in His sovereignty demarked who should live and who should die. The ones born in the wilderness also complained and committed sin but they did not die. This generational demarcation was for a reason. It was to preserve Israel as a nation without depleting its numbers too much so that they would not appear weak in the sight of their enemies.

The mysteries of God's decision making process are the same with us today as we see complainers, sinners and the righteous in the mix of what is known as Christianity/Church. Life on earth is a wilderness that we are passing through. Many are complaining and carrying on about everything under the sun. Those who have received of the Spirit of God have gone on to make their wildernesses fruitful forests but others have not learnt and are trying hard to be what they cannot be without God. What the smart ones have done is to receive the Holy Spirit and submit to Him in their Christian walk and have become overcomers through faith in what Jesus did for them. Hence, they are walking in the wilderness covered by the blood of the Lamb and having great testimonies of God's provision in their lives. Others are struggling to make it through their wildernesses not realising that they need to humble themselves. They are prying God for more, demanding from or lashing out at the Church and its leaders (like the Jews did with Moses) to pick on all the

mistakes and other issues that they think are worthy of their time and effort to correct in their self righteousness. Instead of focussing on their own poverty to bring it to prosperity, they spend their time criticising. *Rev_3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

These last days will determine who will make it through in this era called the Church. Many witnesses have gone before us who have died in Christ and have made it through to eternity. They have left behind a legacy that we should build upon and learn from of how God dealt with them and the things that God did among them. We must then use that information to build our faith in God. The last days will require us to walk in the spirit that depends on God's word and not on our material blessings. We do not determine the salvation of an individual by what they have been blessed with but rather the knowledge that they have the Spirit of Christ in them *Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* These are sobering words because many claim to be Christians based on blessings but live lives that have no relevance to the true faith in Christ. This is exactly how the Jews lived in the wilderness and paid dearly with their lives. They mistook the blessings of God for the approval of God.

The desert experiences in a person's life is for their benefit and not for their destruction. However, these experiences can be so trying that one can mistake them for an abandonment by God of them. Yet, the trust that God expects us to have in Him is being proven by Him in our wilderness. He wants us to depend on His word in these instances like Jesus portrayed when He was tempted in the desert by the devil. Jesus depended on the word to break the advances of satan in the wilderness. Having done all, Jesus still went to the cross for us because there was one more gulf to cross and that was the final desert experience of the death on the Cross. His trust was in God to see us all through to heaven.

Complaining about life is waste of time but that takes time to understand. When we stop the pity parties, the complaining about others, trying to up stage others based on our self righteousness and attempts to dictate to life based on our knowledge, then we will have freedom from this life. The dangers of self indulgence in the wilderness is separation from God's ways in the wilderness. We must come to that place of blessing in the wilderness where our heart is sure of our relationship with God based on His goodness and unchanging nature. Tragedies and triumphs are impostors. This means that no matter whether we are on the mountain top or in the valley, our experiences in life do not determine the steadfastness of God in Christ. We must come to that place in our reasoning. Joshua put it this way in the wilderness; *Jos 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

When we compare Joshua's words to our situation, we too must choose, if we are to cross over to the Promised Land. The wildernesses therefore are never the end of the journey but the beginning. When Jesus pulled us out of the world, He brought us into Himself and gave us life. This should be more than enough for us. We must put away our worldly attitudes and prejudices and come to the glory that is Him. Then we will begin to experience His kingdom and love like never before. There is nothing for us on this earth but to continue this journey till Jesus comes for us again. In the meantime, our spirits must walk on this earth in the blessings of Abraham through Christ and not in the curses of sin that came through Adam.

There are many in the worldwide Church who are struggling with their faith. Others have made a shipwreck of their faith. Many others have fallen away never to return because they have not understood the journey. Appropriating the goodness of God in the land of the living takes faith and trust in God through life. Our wildernesses will become fruitful forests as we trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us *Psa 32:8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* The exhortation is to be wise *Psa 32:9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Psa 32:10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.* Animals do not have spirits like men. They are without the depth of understanding that comes from God.

When you are in this life as a Christian, behave as one. You are saved and washed clean by the blood of the Lamb and you should be grateful for all that God has done for you. Your life must be spent in thanksgiving, love for God and one another and growing spiritually to become strong against the enemy for the establishing of God's kingdom on earth. God will use you and cause you to come to that place where He will prove you. Only, depend on Him through His word and Spirit and not on yourself.

Lots of love
Pastor Noble
09/07/2017