

Why You're in the Wilderness

In the truest definition of bait and switch, the promised product is greater than its value, thus giving the purchaser a sense of getting a deal. But when God does a bait and switch, the action of advertising goods that are an apparent bargain, is coupled with the intention of substituting inferior goods for more expensive goods. May I propose to you that many of us have been lured into the wilderness by a good, good Father who has a bait-and-switch operation going on. He lured us in with the promise of a ministry, money or a calling that resonated in our spirit, because we believed Psalm 37:4 that says He gives us the desires of our hearts. We know who He made us to be and we know there is greatness inside of us, so we accepted the invitation to the wilderness with the intention of getting a promotion to showcase our gifting.

Jesus is a Master Teacher; He knows how to use the Word of God to show what He has been and is doing in our lives. If you cannot locate yourself in the Word of God, it is time to do some relocating. If we are walking by the Spirit and not the flesh, we will locate ourselves in the Word of God. As I was listening to Ron Carpenter from Redemption Church in Greenville, South Carolina, today, he said something that located me in the Word of God, and I jumped for joy. He was preaching on the story of Elijah and Elisha, when toward the end he unlocked the Word of God and revealed me, and I believe many of us that have been in the wildernesses' location.

When Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha in 1 Kings 18, Elisha burned his job, fed the people and followed Elijah with the desire for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. But in 1 Kings 19 when Elijah was taken up to heaven, Elisha was not interested in a double portion of Elijah's spirit, his heart's cry was: "My father, my father, not my portion, my portion." As Ron spoke these powerful words, the Lord spoke to me and said, "It is my bait and switch. I called you into the

wilderness with the promise of greatness and you followed, but during your wilderness training I showed you who I am and you fell in love with Me, not your ministry.” (Selah)

I believe many of us, like Elisha, have discovered that what we came into this process for is not what we found. We found a gift of far greater worth than gold, we found a relationship with the King of kings, our hearts are exploding with a love for the Lord that money cannot buy, we have found the pearl of great price, and we have found that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and that He is the reward. We found the lover of our souls, we found why we were made, and we found a relationship with God that is honestly indescribable in natural words but seen in our love for Him and others.

Not realizing it upon entrance, God Himself was inviting us not into a ministry, money or any other material thing. He was inviting us into a relationship with Him. He was what our hearts desired. We just did not know it when we started. He was the one we were looking for. He has stripped away all the facades, preconceived ideas and premonitions, and He has shown us the Father. We can honestly say, “All we want is You!” It was the best bait and switch that could have ever happened to us. He switched our shallow desires for our hearts’ desire. He switched our desire to be something for a desire to know someone. He invited us into a relationship with Him, and we could not have been given a better gift.

Once you see Him, know Him and walk with Him, you realize He is an all-consuming fire (Heb. 12:28). He is your heart’s desire, and there is nothing that can compare to Him, for He is “I AM that I AM” (Ex. 3:14-18). We used to think we were created to do something, but now we know we were created to be someone, someone who knows her God, someone who loves people, someone who is loved by Him. He always has been and always will be all about relationship. That is why the word “first” in Matthew 6:33 means “only” in the Greek: Seek only the

kingdom of God and all these things will be given unto you. The things we longed for and didn't know it were the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the fruit comes from a relationship with Him. He did the best bait and switch, and it was all for His glory and our enjoyment. Thanks a million, Jesus! {eo}

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