

Lessons You Can Learn While in the Wilderness

Time. That space between planting and harvesting, between promise and fulfillment. Living in a world where we are widely accustomed to instant gratification, the concept of having to wait can be frustrating. Yet if we understand the purpose and potential of these times, we can learn to cooperate with God and enjoy the journey.

Many live with a sense of destiny and promise but struggle to see how it can be fulfilled in the light of their present circumstances. That can be a frustrating situation, especially when they see how God is already moving in the lives of others. It invites all sorts of questions: *Why not me? I know God has called me to greater things, so why do I feel stuck where I am? What am I doing wrong? When will God fulfill the promises He gave me?*

This is a very common experience, and it can be disorienting if we don't understand what God is doing or know how to respond to it. Some people call it a "wilderness" and for good reason. Like Joseph in Egypt, the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land, David in exile, and many other figures in Scripture, we are in the midst of a process between calling and fulfillment. Through their experiences we are able to take hope in the truth that God will also bring us through whatever situation we may find ourselves in.

Jesus spent years waiting for God's timing in His life too. He didn't begin His ministry until He was about thirty (Luke 3:23) which means there were long years of waiting. He had a calling. He had a vision. And He had God's promises, but He was not yet walking in the fullness of what God called Him to do. He also had an actual wilderness experience in which He overcame temptation and was able to solidify the reality that

God had spoken and could be trusted.

In the wilderness we have the same opportunity to have our trust in God's words tested and solidified until they become like iron in our soul. (See Psalm 105:18-19.)

The enemy came at Jesus in the wilderness with all sorts of temptations and distractions, doing everything he could to steer Him away from His purpose, distort His thinking, or question His identity. But when Jesus came out of the wilderness, He began ministering with power the world had never seen before.

A lot of Christian leaders and teachers are doing a great job equipping God's people for their calling, showing the way to walk in God's power, and casting vision. Not many talk about the *process* between promise and fulfillment or calling and destiny, so the wilderness can come as a shock to those who are unprepared.

I believe there is a great need in our time to understand the processes of God, the baptism of fire, and the joy and power of surrender. My personal journey included years of frustration and wondering what God was doing, but I learned to lean on Him in those times and came out with a relationship that could not be shaken. Whenever I teach on this, it seems to resonate with many people. Some remark on how rare it is to hear from speakers about their years of preparation and their behind the scenes stories of trials God has brought them through. Many are encouraged to know the process from wilderness to wonders.

I believe you can embrace your journey with fresh hope and perspective, and that not only will you survive the seasons between promise and fulfillment, but thrive in them. In fact, with the right kind of response, your wilderness season can become a time of accelerated growth and fruitfulness.

I hope that encourages you. Wilderness seasons are a great

opportunity to lean on your Beloved and learn the deep things of His Spirit. You learn to anchor yourself in the One who gives you lasting joy. You learn to carry the peace of God in every situation because the Prince of Peace is within you. You learn not to let the wilderness or the enemy shape your identity because you find your identity entirely in Him.

In the wilderness we learn to dream God's dreams. We discover God as our source in every situation. We learn how to respond to temptation, injustice and pain. We not only endure obstacles and storms, we become victorious in them and rise above them. In the wilderness we learn to recognize divine invitation and wage war with the promises God has given to us. Regardless of what we are going through, in the wilderness we learn to find our delight in God alone.

God wants to be the glory and the lifter of your head in every situation (Ps. 3:3, KJV). No matter how difficult your circumstances may seem, He wants you to look up and see His glorious face. He wants to tell you how lovely, free, clean, and redeemed you are. God wants you to know you are the beloved apple of His eye and that He has created you to shine.

✘ The wilderness cannot prevent you from shining. Jesus shone in His wilderness season and you can too. Jesus' wilderness experience became one of His greatest victories. That can be your testimony too. You are destined to shine just as He does and to walk in His power, doing even greater works than He did. And even if you are in the midst of a wilderness, that can begin right now.{eoa}

Adapted from *Wilderness to Wonders—Embracing the Power of Process* by Katherine Ruonala, copyright 2015, published by Charisma House. This book examines the journey we take through wilderness seasons of test and trials, and emphasizes the importance of enduring the process. You'll be encouraged to stand in faith for all God promised you when you see how God is for you, believes in you, and is making all things work for

your good. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of April 3, 2016

This week pray that the Lord will help you embrace your life's journey with fresh hope and perspective, so that not only will you survive the seasons between promise and fulfillment, but thrive in them. Ask Him to help you have the right kind of response, so that it can become a time of accelerated growth and fruitfulness. Continue to pray for those who lost loved ones during the recent terrorist attacks, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the protection of our nation and allies. Lift up our spiritual, civic and government leaders and pray for revival to spread across the land and around the world. (Ps. 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 1 Tim. 2:1-3).