

03.16.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “Pushed Into the Wild”

Scripture Reading: [Mark 1:1-13](#)

Reflection: Pastor Henry

One thing (amongst many others 😊) that Pastor Doug said in his sermon this past Sunday caught my attention. I wonder if it caught yours as well. Here is what he said.

In reminding us about the Israelite's journey from Egypt, through the Red Sea, throughout the wilderness to the promise land, Pastor Doug said there is not a “...a way to grow spiritually (baptism to maturity) without spending time in the wilderness; we all need to be bent, shaped, and molded so that God can use us in ministry and so we can reflect His name.”

What do you make of this claim? Do you think it is true? Possibly true? Or simply hogwash? For what it’s worth, my spiritual life has taught me that this claim is about as true as it gets.

If any of you have ever spent an extended amount of time out in the wilderness away from grocery stores, hot showers, comfortable chairs, air conditioning, gaming systems, microwaves, flush toilets, cell phone service, Wi-Fi, electricity, etc., then you know firsthand the power of the wilderness to bend, shape, mold, and form you physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually. The wilderness has a power like no other to uncover our true self, who we are inside and out. When we expose ourselves to the wilderness, it will expose us for who we really are. The wilderness quickly reveals how limited and dependent we really are.

So, most often we avoid the wilderness at all costs. We crave our couches, our controllers, our consoles, our crafts, our cappuccinos, our cars, our cotton fibers, our collections, and all our other creature comforts instead. We crave these things, so we won’t be reminded of our frailty, our limits, our dependence. We crave comfort so these things within us won’t be exposed.

The irony, however, is that only when these things are exposed, only when our frailty, our limits, and our dependence are allowed to surface, only when we come to an end ourselves, only then will there be room for God to enter in. This is the gift of the wilderness. When we are in the wilderness, a time, place, and/or season of testing, seeking, searching, reflection, and self-examination, God is always present right there with us (See [Psalm 139](#)). And not only is God right there with us in the wilderness, but God is also ready to reveal himself to us in the wilderness. God is ready and willing to shape and form and mold and mature us if we allow God to do these things within us.

Friends, sometimes we go out into the wilderness. We go out into the woods or desert to seek, search, reflect, and examine, asking God to bend, shape, and mold us as we do these things in the wilderness. We enter the wilderness on our terms. Other times, the wilderness comes to us on its terms. The wilderness finds us through a phone call or text, or through a face-to-face conversation, or while sitting in a waiting room somewhere, or while driving down the road, or walking the hallways at school or work. The wilderness, a season and place of

seeking, searching, reflection, and examination comes to us through the circumstances of everyday life. Either way, there is not "...a way to grow spiritually (baptism to maturity) without spending time in the wilderness; we all need to be bent, shaped, and molded so that God can use us in ministry and so we can reflect His name."

How are you seeking out and/or embracing the wilderness in your life?

How are you allowing God to bend, shape, and mold you in the wilderness?

Prayer:

Father, thank you that we belong to you, that you love us unconditionally, that your Spirit resides in us, and that we have the privilege to "wear" your name. Thank you for your presence, strength, and grace as we walk through the wildernesses of our lives. May our time in the wilderness be an opportunity for us to deepen our faith, grow in Christ, and prepare for the ministry you are calling us to engage. Give us the courage to reflect you, our Father, in all that we do. In Jesus name, Amen.

-A Prayer by Pastor Doug

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Sometime this week, find a time to spend a significant amount of time (2 – 8 hours) outside somewhere alone, in the woods, or a field, away from other people and without your phone. Just be. While in the wilderness spend time with God seeking, reflecting, examining. Allow God to bend, shape, and mold you during this time.

Don't have time this week? Schedule a time in your calendar to do this in the next few weeks.

Song for today:

[Wilderness](#)

[Blessed Be Your Name](#)

[Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days](#)