

“Beyond The Desert”

Beyond, Week #2

Introduction

Sometimes life is easy and things go well, but sooner or later we all hit a point where things fall apart. In the Bible those times were often depicted as time spent in the wilderness. The prophet Elijah had his own wilderness experience recorded in 1 Kings chapter 19. The story of Elijah’s journey reassures us that God doesn’t leave us in our wilderness; he meets us there, right when we need Him most.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What is the most remote or isolated place you’ve ever visited?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Heading into the Wilderness

Q1. Read 1 Kings 18:36-40; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Exodus 15:2

Before his time in the wilderness Elijah had a significant victory. What had happened in 1 Kings 18:36-40? Oddly it was on the heels of this event that Elijah fell into doubt, depression and fear. What threat to him in 1 Kings 19:2 caused him to flee God’s land and hide in the desert? Have you had momentous occasions (e.g. marriage, birth of a child, a new job) followed by overwhelming doubt or anxiety? There are times when we must rally to face to giants in our lives, but even if we are victorious, those times can leave us spiritually and emotionally depleted. Elijah conquered 450 pagan priests, yet one angry woman sent him running. How does running to a place of isolation remove us from the source of the strength we need? (1 Chronicles 16:11, Exodus 15:2)

God Finds Us in Our Wilderness

Q2. Read 1 Kings 19:4-9; Philippians 4:19; 2 Corinthians 9:8

Elijah had given up. What was his request of God in verse 4? Rather than giving Elijah his request, what did God provide (v. 6-7)? The miracle is that God meets us at our moment of need, not to give us what we ask for, but to provide for our good. God used an angel to provide Elijah with what was needed to move him forward in his journey- to Mt. Sinai (Horeb). What is one outcome we can expect when God provides our needs?(2 Corinthians 9:8) Has there been anyone in your life that God has used to minister to you in your time of need? Share with your group about those times.

Whining in the Wilderness

Q3. Read 1 Kings 19:10-16

We know when we are in the wilderness we are not in a good place, and sometimes our attitude toward God reflects that. What was Elijah’s response to God’s provision (1 Kings 19:10)? Elijah was whining. His focus was still fixed on himself and not on God. How did God draw his attention back to Himself? (v. 11-12) Elijah may have witnessed the power of God on Mt Carmel through fire, but God showed Himself differently on Mt. Sinai (Horeb). When has God spoken to you in a whisper?

God was not finished with Elijah. What did He ask Elijah in v. 13? Of course God knew the answer, but He wanted Elijah to remember his identity; Elijah was God’s prophet. During the times we wander in the wilderness we can forget our identity. What would you say is your calling or identity in Christ? Do you feel God has shown you the direction He wants you to move in? Share your thoughts with your group and commit to support one another as you move forward in God’s calling.

Wrap-Up

There will be times in our lives when we wander in the wilderness; spiritually and emotionally depleted. But we serve a loving God who finds us there. He provides for us and ministers to our deepest needs. Healing may take time, but God wants to speak to us and remind us of our identity in Him. He will restore us and use us when we leave the desert behind us.

Memory Verse

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Psalm 32:7 ESV*

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life and other needs (see space to write on back).

Challenge:

If you have identified an area God is calling you to, take steps this week to act on that calling.

Q1.

1 Kings 18:36-40 ESV - 36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." 40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

1 Chronicles 16:11 ESV - 11 Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!

Exodus 15:2 ESV - 2 The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Q2

1 Kings 19:4-9 ESV - 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. 9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Philippians 4:19 ESV - 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV - 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Q3

1 Kings 19:10-16 ESV - 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." 15 And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

Prayer Notes cont.
