

INTRO

- You're stranded in the desert. Whose 1 person you wish was with you?

We begin a new series by looking at how God uses the way of the wilderness to do some of his deepest work in us. The wilderness metaphorically speaks of those times that are uncomfortable, we feel tested to our limits and not in control of all that's happening to us.

Many have described this ongoing pandemic time as a wilderness experience on both a societal and personal level.

Qu: Can you think of one way God's using this time to work on us?

READ

Exodus 13:17-18

REFLECT & RESPOND

When God led his people out of Egypt towards the Promised land, he didn't take the direct route. There was a work to be done—a people to be formed, culture to be created, an identity to be bestowed. For that, God chose the way of the wilderness.

Qu: why do you think the wilderness can be when God does his best work in us?

FORMATION THROUGH TRANSITION

Another way of understanding the wilderness experience is that it represents what's called liminal space (meaning threshold). A threshold is the space of transition between something ending/beginning, what was/what's next. It can be a challenging time marked by disruption, discomfort, doubt, and the unknown. We may respond with fear, resistance, grumbling, wanting to return to what was familiar, and impatience.

Qu: how would you describe your reaction now 12 months into this pandemic wilderness?

Despite the challenges, the invitation is to be receptive to what God is doing. And like the nation of Israel, God is using our wilderness moment to draw us closer to him, to have our identity rooted in him, and to have our lifestyles shaped by him.

Qu: Can you identify & describe a specific way in which God is working in you right now?

Lastly, for us as a church, we are also experiencing a wilderness transition. We haven't been able to meet in-person for nearly a year now and we're not sure what the immediate future holds! But God wants to encourage us both pastorally & prophetically in the wilderness:

Pastorally — read Dt 32:10

*"He found him in a desert land,
and in the howling waste of the wilderness;
he encircled him, he cared for him,
he kept him as the apple of his eye."*

Prophetically — Is 43:19

*For I am about to do something new.
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.*

Qu: how do these scriptures challenge/encourage you?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for eyes to see, discernment and receptivity to ALL God wants to do in YOU in this moment.
- Pray for opportunity to encourage others struggling in their own "wilderness".