



## Tuesday Devotion: Exodus Week 4 April 21, 2020

### What will Jesus Do in Your Life While in the Wilderness?

Bible Reference: Exodus 18

The first time I went through a wilderness season, I whined. I cried out to Jesus and complained. I complained when I watched all my other friends get married out of college when I wanted to so badly as well. I cried while I was in churches that weren't a good fit for me, even though I played a big part in being placed there. I had people share with me wisdom from Exodus and Samuel, but I didn't listen. I liked complaining. I liked people feeling bad for me. I was miserable in those wilderness seasons. This time, in this wilderness season, I refuse to live that way.

The first question you might ask when you read chapter 18 of Exodus is why did Moses leave his wife and two sons before he went into the wilderness? For the answer you have to go back to Exodus 4. It's a pretty weird scene. Zipporah (Moses' wife) refused to circumcise her sons. Circumcision was part of God's law, and Moses knew *everyone* needed to follow it. Moses and Zipporah got into a fight. Out of anger Zipporah circumcised one of her sons but not the other. Moses then sent her and the two boys back to live with his father-in-law, Jethro. After Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, Jethro came to visit Moses at the base of the mountain of God, bringing back his wife and sons. During the visit Jethro saw just how awesome God is and, get this, helped Moses organize his ministry.

There is so much here I want to say right now. This chapter is like the most amazing gift ever. But first let me ask this...

What is Jesus teaching you in the wilderness?

Perhaps there is something you've needed to see and now He has your full attention. What is He showing you?

I know my single people out there are struggling. They are alone and they wish they had somebody with which to share this struggle. I hear you. I don't have answers for you but know this...you are not alone. We are praying for you! You can see in this chapter of Exodus that Moses understands how it feels as well. He left His family behind to go into the

wilderness. I can't imagine the bravery it took to leave his family behind. What is even more crazy about this is the timing. It all happened right after Moses was whining about not being able to speak well enough to appear before Pharaoh.

The overall most powerful part of this chapter is that Jethro, who accepted keeping his daughter and grandsons, now goes to find Moses. I did some research on Jethro, but like many things in the Bible, sometimes all we know is what Scripture tells us. Though some debate about who Jethro was, after listening to Moses it is obvious that his faith was strengthened in seeing what God had done. Not only that, but then God used Jethro to counsel Moses on an important skill every pastor or church leader must understand... boundaries. He helped Moses take some stuff off his plate to make room for other ways God was going to use him.

Let me just take a minute and share what God is teaching me in this wilderness. I've grown in my tech knowledge. We have been provided tech experts and have learned how to improve our services. Our little church has been able to use new technology because of our intentional relationships with two churches. Pastor Chris from All Nations has helped me know what to add to our services, and CFBC members are helping me do it. I remember when CFBC first came to Mt. Calvary and there was a question about why we should empty all the closets downstairs and give them that space? Now that space which we gave them has also blessed us by becoming our recording studio.

What else is Jesus doing? Our services have tripled in size! On a Sunday morning maybe 100 people would attend worship, but now over 300 people are watching our services on Facebook. I know that you miss being together, and so do I, but this is incredible! I had a pastor buddy say, "I pray it isn't just Lutherans watching other Lutherans," and I responded, "Who cares if it is? And there is no way that it is because, think about it, can you go around and watch all those Lutheran services? On top of that I have friends who have never seen me preach giving me incredible encouragement right now."

Another example of Jesus working...our finance team had questions about increasing our giving to All Nations in this wilderness season, but they have been blown away with your giving. There was also debate about whether we could continue to pay our teachers, but through your giving and the PPP forgivable loan, we are able to do it. Don't miss what Jesus is doing in this season!

Don't misunderstand me. I don't think it is easy to stay at home all the time, and I am not saying don't cry out to Jesus when it is hard. I think we are often overly critical of each other right now. But Jesus is prioritizing our lives and doing some great things through these challenges.

Being home more now, I noticed my sons were playing basketball on a Little Tykes hoop much too small for them. It was time to upgrade. Since getting a "middle of the road" hoop, the boys and I have been playing basketball almost every day. It has been a great opportunity to share with them that playing basketball is where Jesus and I had many long talks. We've talked about why my parents had to get a divorce. We talked about why high

school was so hard. We talked about why He didn't give me a girlfriend during those times I wanted one so badly. It has opened up great conversations, which before I was too caught up in other projects to have with them. It's good for me and them. The other day my son looked at me and told me, "Dad I had an amazing time playing basketball with you."

Here's another. Mindy talked me into renting a dumpster so we could clear out some junk. Getting rid of things and decluttering has helped our house look and feel amazing. I actually have a great home office now. And something else unexpected happened from this, I started meeting my neighbors. They are stopping by to ask if they can throw some things in our dumpster. One of the people who stopped by is out of work, and another has a son out of work. These are great examples of who Mt. Calvary can give gift cards to, and I will be doing that for these neighbors.

Don't miss what Jesus is doing in this season! When we spend so much time whining, we miss it. I did for the first part of my life and I will not let that happen again. I am going to do everything I can to help you see it!

God's Peace,  
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