

# The Way of the Lord in the Wilderness - Part 1

by Walter Beuttler

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*Walter Beuttler's sermon emphasizes God's ability to guide and provide for us through the challenging wilderness experiences of life.*

**Topics:** "God's Providence", "Faithfulness"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the 'Way of the Lord in the Wilderness' from Isaiah 43, emphasizing God's power to make a way where there seems to be no way, leading us through deep waters and afflictions. He highlights the need to let go of past trials and focus on God's promises, even when faced with perplexities. Beuttler discusses the Israelites' journey through the wilderness, showcasing God's ability to provide in desolate places and His faithfulness despite human reluctance and unbelief.

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## Transcript

We are beginning with Isaiah 43, the "Way of the Lord in the Wilderness." The Lord gave this to me yesterday, contrary to my expectations.

"Thus saith the Lord, which makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; Remember you not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:16, 18-19

The keynote here is the "Way of the Lord in the Wilderness." This will have to do not only with the Lord's way, but with the Lord's power and ability to make a way where there is no way - a path through mighty waters.

At times, we may go through deep waters, sometimes waters of affliction in a wilderness where we cannot seem to find our way. Mrs. Beuttler and I have had a rough time recently. I knew that it was coming. While I was in Southern France, I was talking with the leader's son.

He said, "Brother, you are going home in a few days, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." I wish I would not have to, because I knew the problems that I would have to face as soon as I got home. The Lord dealt with me about His ability to make a way where there is no way, to make a way through mighty waters, through the wilderness. When everything seems to run contrary, when you are simply baffled, dumbfounded, astounded, and you need to act, and do not know how to act; when you have to move, and do not know

where to move, or when your back is against the wall -we are going to look at this.

"Remember you not the former things." You know there is such a thing as turning our back on the former things, putting them out of our mind, and looking for a new thing from God. I think sometimes we make it rough for God by living too much in the past with our trials, our sufferings, and our perplexities, and not enough in the future with the life of the promises, power and ability of God.

We get some good advice here, "Remember you not the former things." Turn your mind off; switch it off from the former things. Do not consider what is in the past. "Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?" We are going to know when God is doing it.

Again, "I will even make a way in the wilderness, where there is no way." God will find a path, or, He will make a path. He will make a way in, and a way out, or, a way through. Whatever the need, God will make a way. "And rivers of water in the desert" where everything is dead and dry.

I want to take you back to Exodus 5:1-2. We are looking here first at the power of God to make a way. I do not know what your circumstances are. You do not know what ours are, but we are looking first at God's power to do what is absolutely impossible in the natural. Then we are going to look at the nature of this wilderness experience.

When we seem to be walking in circles and getting nowhere, going around and around, like Samson when he ground in the prison house. The man was moving all right. He kept going all the time, but he got nowhere. Have you ever noticed in our Christian experience, we can be moving all the time, and getting nowhere. We are coming back to the same spot time and again. Also, we will look into a warning concerning the wilderness for us.

Then we will look into the area of what God is doing concerning our wilderness experiences. Right now, we are watching God. This should give us faith in God. It should shed light on His ways. It should help us not to be overcome, defeated in the wilderness, and help us to look forward, as to what God is able to make out of our own wilderness.

In Exodus 5:1-2, observe the plight of the Israelites. They are here in Egypt under the strong hand of Pharaoh. The people were restive, and wanted to leave. God wanted them to leave, but Pharaoh was a mighty man of power, and there was absolutely no chance for Israel to escape in the natural, apart from divine intervention. You know this story, but this is what the Lord gave me.

"Afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Exodus 5:1-2

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh. This is an awkward arrangement, as it was the result of Moses' timidity. I do not know if you realize why Moses and Aaron went in before Pharaoh. God had called Moses to be His spokesman to go to Pharaoh and talk to him.

Moses said, "Lord, I am a man of a slow tongue, I am not a fluent speaker. I have a brother who has a good mouth. He had a good mouth all right. Too good! Lord, he will be the right man to do the speaking." God became angry with Moses and said, "Who made man's mouth? Who made the deaf, the dumb, and the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Go there and I will be with your mouth."

Moses said, "Oh Lord, but I am not a good speaker. I have not studied homiletics, public speaking, or psychology. Lord, I have a brother. He knows all about it." So God said, "All right then. I will speak to you, and you speak to your brother what I say to you, and your brother will speak to Pharaoh."

So Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh. God spoke to Moses, and Moses told his brother what to say, and then his brother spoke to Pharaoh. You know because of our timidity and failure to respond to God, He is often crippled and has to go through a rather cumbersome arrangement because of our reluctance to obey God.

So that is what we have here. God spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh. I wonder if Pharaoh thought, "Why does not Moses speak to me directly?" There are times when God acquiesces to man's reluctance and lack of response, and then He does the best He can, under the circumstances.

The word that Aaron spoke to Pharaoh, after Moses spoke to Aaron was, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness." Then in Exodus 7:16, we have the same words. They go right down the line, "You shall say to him, The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, Let My people go, but Pharaoh would not."

In Exodus 8:1, "Go to Pharaoh, and say to him, Thus says the Lord, Let My people go, and Pharaoh would not." In Exodus 8:20, "The Lord said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh... Thus says the Lord, Let My people go, but he would not." In Exodus 9:1, "Then the Lord said to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go, and he would not." Then in 9:13, "The Lord said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go, and he would not." Then in 10:3, "Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh, and said to him, Thus says the Lord God, How long will you refuse... let My people go, and he would not." He was a very stubborn man.

"And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Exodus 12:29-30

Can you imagine the power of God to put pressure on this great powerful Pharaoh? What encourages me here is this: God knows how to put pressure on people in this case, to let them go. If people ever stand between you and God, and hinder you, and restrain you, and restrict you - this is how the Lord spoke to my heart - God has the power to put pressure on people, on mighty people, people with authority and power.

We have a big God here. He said, "Let My people go." Pharaoh said, "Nope." God said, "Let My people go." Pharaoh said, "Nope." "Let My people go." "Nope." "Let My people go." In agony, "Nope." "Let My people go" Stubborn agony, "Nope." "Let My people go, just get rid of them!"

The power of God to put pressure on people. This is my God! This is your God! God smote the firstborn in the court of Egypt right down to the prison dungeon. Wherever there were people, the firstborn was smitten to death. God knows how to put the thumbscrews on.

I do not know if any of you were ever in the Tower of London. Some of you might have visited the old prison there. They have medieval instruments of warfare. They have those thumbscrews. Sooner or later, the prisoner will confess anything. Now I do not liken God to a torturer, but to a mighty God who is able to put enough pressure on the greatest sovereign to achieve His purpose. We' are looking here at the power of God.

"He called Moses and Aaron by night." Pharaoh had become weary of Moses and said, "Moses, get out of my presence. The next time you see me, you will be a dead man." Now Pharaoh gets up in the middle of the night and calls for Moses to intervene with God. He said, "You people go and serve your, God and get us out of this mess." God knows how to make a way.

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, for God said, (presumably to Himself) Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." Exodus 13:17

Notice something here about the ways of the Lord. Actually there was a short route to the Promised Land, through the land of the Philistines, but God did not send them the short way. He sent them the long, round-about way through the wilderness. His reason was: If He would send them the short way; the Philistines would put up a military resistance. The people might turn back to Egypt being afraid to fight a war, so God took the precaution and led them a longer way through the wilderness. Now that shows us something, namely, that God does not always lead us in the shortest route, for our own protection, for our own sake. God sometimes has to lead us to a destination the longer way because the shorter way would jeopardize us, would present dangers, which we might not be willing to face up to, or be able to face up to. So God, at times, takes the long route.

This is one reason why we may feel like saying, "How long will this last? How long till the answer comes? How long till the situation changes? How long till the fog clears?" Sometimes God has to take us the long way.

"And God led the people about through the way of the wilderness." The people had not yet sinned through unbelief. This came later. But God led the people through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Notice that there are times when God seeks to lead us into a new experience with Him, and the way does not lead by the way of a picnic. The way may lead through the wilderness. God sent them through the wilderness to get to the Promised Land.

So often, we want more of God, "Lord, use me. Lord, give me more. Lord, make Yourself known to me." And then we expect a great feast, a great time in God. Instead of this, we are led into the wilderness, and we wonder what happened? when God is actually answering our prayers to do a new thing for us. To do it, He has to lead us through a wilderness to get us to our destination. The wilderness is where so often we lose the way.

The fact is, the Lord led the Israelites into the land, through the wilderness right in front of the Red Sea. The wilderness was now behind them. They had crossed the wilderness. In front of them was the Red Sea. There were no ferryboats. There were no bridges. Have you ever been there? They had their backs up against the wall. In front was the Sea, behind was the wilderness. And also, Pharaoh's troops were coming from behind.

They said, "We are entangled in this wilderness and we are shut in, and Pharaoh's troops are coming." In front of them was the Red Sea and all appeared to be lost. What an experience to go through. They could not turn back, nor could not go forward. It would take a divine intervention, but what a triumph they experienced when the sea parted in front of them.

There are times when the Lord desires to make a way for us in the wilderness, by doing a new thing. Do you ever ask the Lord to do a new thing? And the Lord begins to answer to do the new thing by leading us into situations that we had never anticipated, and would have never wished for.

Many years ago, I had prayed, "Lord, I want a new thing." I did not know what the new thing would be, but I wanted something new from God. Then one day I was in a meeting when someone gave an utterance in tongues, and the interpretation was, "You have asked for a new thing. A new thing would I do for you, but it will call for suffering and humiliation." When I heard this, I drew back and it took many years before I started over again, asking for a new thing.

When our hearts go out after God, and we desire Him to do a new thing for us, it does not need to be defined. We should not be surprised if we get into situations that are baffling, confounding, that appear to be the very negation of His promises, as all seems to be dark and cloudy, and hopeless and helpless.

You say, "God, what does this mean?" Here, I have prayed and asked the Lord, as my heart wants nothing but Him. I want more of Him, and look what I am getting. This is the way of the wilderness to the Promised Land. We may think that the Lord will send a stagecoach and carry us right in, but this is not His way. So, this is where we need to carefully watch, so we do not get overthrown.

I do not know who of you is in the wilderness, but Wife and I sure are in one. It is beginning to clear, but what a time we have had.

"When we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us." Deuteronomy 1:19

God takes us through great, terrible wilderness experiences. Just the other day a lady called me fairly early in the morning crying at the other end of the phone, "Brother Beuttler, what am I to do?" I felt sorry for the soul, but God is still God.

"Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint. Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that He might humble you, and that He might prove you, to do you good at your latter end." Deuteronomy 8:15-16

I do not know who of you is in the wilderness, but I do know He "who led you through that great and terrible wilderness." You know, we think God should lead us, through the garden of roses. That is what we think, but not necessarily. In fact, the roses come later. God makes the wilderness and the desert into a place of roses, but that comes after we are through it. He does not say he led them through the garden of roses, but through that great and terrible wilderness.

"Wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions." You know some of these fiery serpents even walk in Pentecostal robes, as I am persuaded there are Pentecostal scorpions. How do you know? I got stung! When you get stung by a scorpion, you do not question anymore.

"And drought." Does it ever get dry for you? The more you pray, the dryer you get, and you wonder what on earth is the matter with you. You are dry! You get nothing out of reading the Bible, get nothing from the Lord, there is no song, nothing. What is the matter? God said, "Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness." It is still in the desert where we need to believe in the leading of God, in spite of the facts.

I speak from experience. "Where there was no water." You seem to get nowhere, you get nothing. "Who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint." This is a hard spot where God performs a miracle for us.

"Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that He might humble you." How humiliating! "And that He might prove you, to do you good at your latter end." I have said about this place, "God always has in view our latter end." God works toward the end, toward eternity, toward our perfection there. What God does allow or permits now is related to His objective for us throughout all eternity.

"For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye." Deuteronomy 32:9-13

When fears and doubts and questions and wonderments assail us, we may ask, does God care? Is this God? Can that be? That is the howling of the wind in the wilderness. Then God found him in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy 8:2, it says, "That He might prove you, that He might see what is in your heart." The wilderness experience brings out of us what is in us. God listens. "To prove you, to see what is in your heart." This is when our talk exposes what we are. When we go through the wilderness with the howling winds of fears and doubts and questions, God is watching to see what is in our heart.

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." Out come the grumbings, murmurings, complaining, questionings, all our doubts about God are exposed. One reason for the wilderness experience is for God to find out what is in us, and to make us see what is in us. "To see what is in your heart." What is in our heart will be expressed in words. The words disclose the reality or unreality of our faith and experience.

The wilderness becomes a testing ground as to what we really are, in God. You know what Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." God has to listen to us say, "Now where is the Lord? How do you explain this, "if God loves me why did he pass by me with no response?" He listens.

Or whether we say, "I do not get it, but one thing I know, God is still God. I do not understand this, as it is baffling me, but one thing I know, God is still God. I do not understand, but I am not going to question the integrity of God." That is what God wants to hear, a demonstration of our confidence in Him in spite of what He does or does not do. The wilderness brings it into manifestation. "That He might prove you, that He might see what is in your heart." The wilderness will bring it out.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, And were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." I Corinthians 10:1-5

We can go on in God, and then comes the wilderness where every thing seems to negate the love of God, the care of God, the existence of God, the power of God, the word of God. This is where the faith of many

gets overthrown, "What is the use? I might as well call it quits. I feel nothing, see nothing, get nothing, have nothing, I am nothing." Then call it quits.

We are to learn from these Israelites that God uses the wilderness as a school and as a way. He wants to turn that wilderness into a garden of roses, but that comes after the experience and not before.

"Neither let us tempt Christ, (that is to say provoke Him by unbelief) as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." I Corinthians 10:9-12

What is murmuring? Speaking complaining in an undertone. (Under his breath) "I don't know what is the matter with the Lord. Everything is going wrong. I cannot understand why God lets this happen. I do not know what to believe any more."

"Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." We can go on seemingly very well in God and grow in God and cry out to God for more, "Lord, I want more. I want all You have." Well He has a lot of things and among them is the wilderness. So God begins to act and lead us through the wilderness, and then we say, "That is not what I meant. I was looking for the power." Instead of that, "I have nothing. I looked for light and there is only darkness." This is a part of the way.

The idea is to have confidence in the power of God, have confidence in the ways of the Lord in the wilderness. God is still leading and caring in our lives. "Who kept you in the wilderness, who kept you as the apple of his eye."

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together. That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it." Isaiah 41:18-20

If God does not first lead us through the wilderness experience, and let us experience the howling of the winds of fears, doubts and perplexities, and experience the dryness and the desert of the place, and then give God the opportunity to change it, how will we be able ever to see, to know, to consider and to understand that it is God who is able to perform by His mighty power?

How can we know what it is to be led out of the wilderness if we do not know what it is to be led into it? How can we expect to be led out of it if we are overthrown in the middle of it through unbelief? How can we expect it? In Isaiah 35:1-8 reading in portions:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing... Strengthen you the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees."

But first comes the desert, then comes the rejoicing. First comes the desert experience and God will turn that into a place of roses. A rose garden comes after the wilderness and not before. How can we experience the power of God changing our wilderness in our course of life into a garden of roses, if we first do not permit Him to deal with us and lead us into and through the wilderness?

Now in the wilderness there is the groan, and the moan, and the sighing and what have you, but in time there will be joy, there will be singing.

"Strengthen you the weak hands." This is what I have been trying to do through this message. I do not know who it is for, but this is what the Lord gave me. Through this little informal chatting about the wilderness, God seeks to strengthen some weak hands and to confirm the weak knees.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isaiah 35:4-5

There is blindness that is not physical you know. In other words, those who cannot see anything in His word, those who do not hear anymore from God - seemingly, their eyes shall be opened. They will see again the revelation of the truth of God's word. The ears will hear again from God. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened. Any blind reading this? You cannot see anything. You do not hear anything. Well, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Hallelujah!

"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." "Lord, I cannot carry on anymore. I just do not even want to try anymore. I think the devil has me down. I do not know what to do." We can all sympathize, but sympathy will not do it. "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." Hallelujah!

"And the tongue of the dumb sing." "Lord, no more sorrow in my heart." The Father will restore their glory. "For in the wilderness shall waters break out." In the wilderness! "And streams in the desert." "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water...And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness."

These are just a few fragments of the "Way of the Lord in the Wilderness." What shall we do with it? Just go on and still believe in God and know that God is the God who has the power to deliver us from our enemies, every one, and take us through the wilderness to see what is in us, to put steel into our faith. At the end of the experience, God will turn that wilderness into a garden of roses.

We will have a new thing, and we shall sing a new song, even the song of the "Way of the Lord in the Wilderness."

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