

WILDERNESS

THE ONLY WAY AROUND IS THROUGH

Wilderness Series

Part 4 - "The Recovery of Hope"

Small Group Material

May 27th, 2018

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Waiting as a declaration of trust serves as an act of worship.*

Study Verses: *Hebrews 2:14-18, Romans 5:3-5, Romans 8:24-25, Psalm 22:5, Psalm 119:116*

Define The Win: *Participants would recognize that waiting isn't being passive, but rather a proactive step in facing their struggles. They would be able to articulate the difference between placing their hope in the relief of their circumstances and God's redemption shaping their character. Group members would pinpoint how their greatest struggle centers on dependence, trust and identity.*

Key Points

- *Temptation leverages fear. Hope leverages faith.*
- *Waiting isn't wasting time, it is recovering hope.*
- *Christ enters into our struggle. He is working and fighting for us.*
- *The struggle we face always centers on dependence, trust and identity.*
- *The foundation of our hope comes from our identity and not our circumstances.*
- *The harder something is to endure, the more we will want it to be over.*
- *Our hope is not that things will be different, but that we will be different.*
- *Character produces a hope by which we become more of ourselves through whatever struggle we might be facing.*

- *The power of redemption is that He is redeeming, restoring, and awakening.*
- *Relief produces hope, but not one that sustains.*
- *Shame undermines our worth, attacks our identity, and disconnects us from His grace.*

ENCOUNTER

- **Why are the disciplines of waiting and displaying patience in such short supply within our culture? How does a lack of endurance influence how we respond to finding ourselves in the wilderness?**
- **In what ways does every struggle we face center on dependence, trust and identity? How do you see this play out in the struggles you face?**
- **Why is looking solely for relief from our struggles and circumstances a short-sighted goal?**

FORMATION

- **Read Hebrews 2:14-18. What does it mean that Jesus "entered into our struggle"? How did His willingness to withstand the wilderness impact the hope we have in dealing with our own struggles?**
- **Read Romans 5:3-5, Psalm 22:5 and Psalm 119:116. In the midst of the struggle and temptation, what can we place our hope in that will disappoint? Why does relying on the hope found in our redemption in Christ never put us to shame?**
- **Read Romans 8:24-25. What is the connection between hope and waiting? How does God form and shape our heart in the midst of the waiting?**

EXPRESSION

- **Where do you need to display patience and allow waiting to serve as a declaration of your trust in Christ? How can worship serve as a weapon when facing this specific situation?**
- **Are there places in your heart where you feel shame due to giving into your struggles? How is shame undermining your worth, attacking your identity and disconnecting you from His grace? Why do you keep holding on to this shame? What would redemption look like for this struggle?**
- **During the "Wilderness" series, how has your view on the struggles you face changed or been confirmed? What is the greatest insight you have**

receive and how can you utilize it when you find yourself in the wilderness again?

LEADER INSIGHT: *When we find ourselves in the wilderness, we yearn for relief. Rather than persevere, we look for a way out. The harder something is to endure, the more we will want it to be over. Relief allows us to catch our breath for a moment. The chaos calms down. Uncertainty subsides. We gain back control, or so we think. At best, relief is a temporary fix. If we don't get to the root of our struggles, it's not a matter of if, but when temptation will rear its ugly head again.*

We desire a change in our circumstances while God's focus is molding and shaping our character. A quick fix prevents Him from completing a transformative work within us. The power of redemption is that He is redeeming, restoring, and awakening our heart.

Character produces a hope by which we become more of ourselves through whatever struggle we might be facing. The foundation of our hope comes from our identity, not a change in our circumstances. The important thing isn't that our situation will be different, but that we will be different.

Waiting has a purpose. It isn't wasting time; it is recovering hope. We shouldn't confuse patience for passivity. Waiting as a declaration of trust serves as an act of worship. Temptation leverages fear while hope harnesses faith. Shame always attempts to undermine our worth, attack our identity, and disconnect us from His grace. It tries to convince us that, "If we struggle, we must not be good."

The enemy doesn't just ruin us by tempting us to make bad decisions. He works in more profound and subtle ways. He tells us to trust our strength and our perspective and slowly undermines our trust in God's provision, perspective, and purpose for our lives.

Worship becomes a weapon we yield in the wilderness to combat the lies the enemy tells us. Christ endured temptation to enter into our struggle. He is working and fighting for us. He intends for the battle to draw us closer to Him. The tendency is to pull away, but we must draw near for this is where we learn to understand our value while encountering His grace. He isn't just redeeming our circumstances or our situation; He is redeeming us.