

Lesson #7

MMBC

Review

Worship in the Wilderness

Revisit: Exodus 7:16 NIV

Are you aware this verse is repeated seven times amidst the ten plagues? God's people had an appointment with Him in the wilderness with one sole purpose in mind, **worship**. God desires that we worship Him on His timetable and not ours.

God released the Israelites so they could worship (some versions may say serve) Him in the wilderness. There are two points for your consideration:

1. The purpose of their deliverance was so they could **worship** God in the wilderness. Wouldn't you think God could have taught them to worship Him in Egypt? Couldn't He have waited until they arrived in Canaan? This shows the object of their freedom was not simply to leave Egypt. The purpose was the worship of God.
2. The second point, which is more directly related to our discussion, is the setting of their prospective worship, "in the wilderness." True worship always happens in the wilderness. Praise is almost always the answer to a "storm" that arises in the desert!

I would argue to worship God is to understand who He is and what He means to you. They were seeing this first hand. He showed Himself to them on Mt. Sinai and He proved Himself to them time and time again. He prepared them to worship in Exodus 19, as He taught them how to consecrate themselves.

God gave them a new identity at Sinai. Now, they were ready to worship.

In 2017, the wilderness is still where we worship. In fact, there is not genuine worship without a wilderness experience. It's not always a dry place where there is parched land. However, it is where we can connect with God at what seems to be our lowest points.

Take a moment and breathe! Access where you are in the wilderness and understand you are right where God wants you to be to worship!

Read where David built an altar in 2 Samuel 24:25.

We could list many others who built altars and worshipped in their wilderness.

The Israelites had to be taught how to worship. Think about it. They didn't know how to worship. Think about their former taskmasters.

They worked from sun up to sun down. Their overseers didn't give them time to worship. In addition, all they knew were the gods. They didn't understand what it meant to worship one God.

See Exodus 20: 1-2

Notice the first commandment freed them to worship God and to worship God only! The Egyptians, worshiped hundreds of gods. They worshiped manmade gods represented by idols and animals. The Egyptians had a sun god, a water god, a moon god, a snake god, a frog god, and many others. When God delivered Israel from bondage His desire was to deliver them from the influence of that pagan system of worship.

Explain:

Polytheistic vs. Monotheistic.

What did God want from them? God wanted no other love, no other allegiance, no other authority to come between Himself and His redeemed people. Our focus is to be on Him alone.

What does God want from us? God wants us to love Him above everyone and everything else. God wants us to give Him total allegiance and not allow anyone or anything to come between our love for Him.

Read Exodus 20:5b ...for the Lord thy God is a jealous God...

In the context of Exodus, God did not want them to lose their affection for Him. God's jealousy is an example of a father's love for his children.

Discussion. Does God have a right to be jealous?

He had protected, provided, and directed them. He has every right to be jealous when we consider who He is and what He has done for us.

This is the first task of the church. Our central focus is to worship God! However, we can't truly worship God until we allow God to have first place in our lives.

- Martin Luther, the reformer said, "***Whatever thy heart clings to and relies upon, that is properly thy God.***"
- The Reverend Billy Graham said, "**If you really want to know something about the real god in your life, look at where you spend your time, your money, and what has your heart.**"

What was God doing? God was teaching them how to worship? However, before they could worship Him they had to clear their minds of the gods of their past.

We assume too much of those who come to church. Some people need to be taught how to worship!

They didn't have time. We have to take time!

The Tabernacle

Read Exodus 25: 8

What did God want from them?

Though the tabernacle was mobile it served its purpose for 40 years. God wanted them to worship Him.