

## David: Faithful - Adam Heather

### Consider the Wilderness

Looking at David in the Wilderness, we see him in his most difficult but best years. We need to understand that the Bible is not a series of theological abstractions, but a story of God dealing with humanity. And David has more stories than most other Bible characters. We see God dealing with David. The Divine mixes with the Dirt - Earth mixes with Heaven. It's a story of a real person meeting a real God.

CH Spurgeon says: *"Where there is faith, there will be trials. Anyone who has any dealings with God will at some point... experience the terrifying reality of the wilderness."*

E Petersen says: *"There are times, no matter how thoroughly we're civilised that we are plunged into the wilderness. Not geographical but circumstantial. Everything seems fine.. we've accepted responsibilities that define our significance. But suddenly we're beside ourselves ... Feelings arise and we question things we've never questioned before. There is radical change in us..., and we are out of control."* (Abridged).

We find a 1,000 things conspire against us (job, betrayal, diagnosis etc.) and peace can be hard to find and easy to lose. A wilderness is a terrifying place yet it has opportunity - as David and Jesus discovered. David's wilderness was between the promise and the palace; between trusted Shepherd and trustworthy King.

Refining gold requires heat for the dross to come to the surface. A fish farmer said that an abundant summer requires a bitter winter. **James 1v2-4** *You know* that tests produce maturity. God works behind the scenes.

### 1. Focus - Psalm 63v1-11

The wilderness distorted David's perception - but on his bed he remembered God. God is all you need. God is all you have. Thinning mirrors give us a wrong reflection. JI Packer said: *"A half truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth."* R Warren keeps an open Bible by his bed (it's harder to ignore!). He reads last thing at night and first thing each morning. Focusing on the news our discouragement is self-inflicted! We need to become disciplined.

### 2. Faith - 1Sam 30v6

David had 13 years in wilderness. Even his Mighty Men (outcasts and misfits) turned on him but how did he minister to himself? He didn't listen to himself but preached to himself **Ps 103** - "Soul, praise the Lord!" Israel was terrified of Goliath but David had beaten lion and bear. He knew that in a time of anxiety, God came through. He didn't forget God's previous actions (Ps103v2).

### 3. Friendship - 1Sam 23v15-18

Jonathon came to encourage David before returning to the palace even though David remained in the wilderness. We all need "Jonathans" Who speaks faith to us? To whom do we speak faith? Who struggles?

Eventually, David came to the Palace. His first job was to move the Ark of Covenant into the city. (Saul was afraid to do this because of the people) but David became undignified in service to God. (2Sam 6v22). David had learned that God had sustained him in the wilderness and would sustain him in the palace. Even when opportunity arose to kill Saul David chose not to, waiting for God's time (1Sam 24v4-13) to get out of the wilderness.

### **For reflection:**

- Are there testimonies of times when we have experienced wilderness times? How did we get through?
- How do we focus on God? What do we think of Rick Warren's idea of an open Bible?
- How do we stop "listening to and start preaching to ourselves"?
- Who has encouraged us recently? Do they know that?
- Is there someone who needs special encouragement now? How can our Collective help?