



HEARING GOD IN THE WILDERNESS, WEEK 2
“FROM SLAVERY TO WILDERNESS”
SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: JUNE 20, 2021

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY: EXODUS 19

Exodus 19 teaches us that God IS speaking and God CAN be heard, and that he might actually be heard more clearly in the wilderness. Looking at how the Israelites heard from God, Pastor Brad points out three features of this passage: a moment, a reminder, and a vision. First, Moses pursued a moment with God. As the leader of Israel, Moses wanted to hear from God and led the people to a place deep in the wilderness to a mountain, seeking a moment with God. Arriving at Mount Sinai, Moses, “...went up to God.” God is often pleased to speak when we look for him.

Next, God tells Moses to remind the people of God’s gracious love for them, and how he delivered them from slavery in Egypt. This is also a reminder for us. The Lord wants us to have an encounter with him and hear from him. He most often starts by reminding us of his grace and love, that we are his “...treasured possession.”

Finally, God then gives Moses a vision of the people as “...a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” As part of God’s people, this passage offers a purpose for our lives beyond being saved and reconciled to God. But God’s promise is conditional, and hinges on our obedience. God’s grace and love are freely given. We cannot earn them, but stepping into his preferred future requires that we walk faithfully with him, motivated by love and gratitude in all we do.

Brad concludes by reminding us that hearing God is an important part of joining him in what he’s doing in the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What is your favorite thing to do when the weather gets nice?
2. Do you have any family traditions surrounding Father’s Day?
3. What vacation plans do you have for the summer?
4. When was the last time you got an answer to an important question you had been asking?
5. If you have ever been taught how to pray, what were you taught?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Compare Exodus 19:1-5 to Galatians 3:1-6. Paul is writing to the Galatians about the Spirit. We are also taught in the book of Acts that the Holy Spirit is continuing the ministry of Jesus through the people of God. With these things in mind, who appears to be the people who hear from God? Are there people who do not hear from God and why do you think that is?

CONTINUED:

2. What is the promise God gives to Moses when giving the command to obey and keep the covenant? What is the promise to be found in this for us today?
3. Does this passage seem to tell us that when we are in the wilderness, we are more or less likely to hear God? When does the Bible seem to tell us are the most likely times for you to hear God?
4. Why was it important or significant that Moses went up the mountain to meet with God?
5. How do you think the Israelites felt when Moses went up on the mountain to speak with the Lord? How were they waiting to hear the word of the Lord, in fear, joy, or...?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Most ancient civilizations had structures like pyramids to represent high places where you would meet God. What symbols and structures do we have in our society that serve the same purpose?
2. How do we try to create moments today? What do you think is the core value people are expressing when they try to create significant moments? Why do you think it is a core value?
3. What do you think motivates people most often: duty or love? How does grace figure into that assessment?.
4. Do you think most people believe they deserve every good thing? How do you think they feel about accepting the sacrifices of another to have good things? If/when they consider Jesus' sacrifice for them, might they experience reverence? Why, or why not?
5. Do you think most people view Christianity as a "prophetic faith" that is transforming the world for the better? Why, or why not? How might their view affect their perception of us as followers of Jesus?

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to apply the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How do you hear from God? How do you know when you are hearing from him?
2. Have you ever labeled times in your life as "wilderness"? During that time did you think about where God was? If yes, did you experience God near you or do did he feel distant from you?
3. Do you want to meet with God? How are you is drawn to him as a holy God and how do you engage that desire?
4. Why do you think you end up in the wilderness? We don't typically seek out the wilderness, and often find ourselves confused and frustrated by it. Do you tend to feel desperate and alone in the wilderness, OR, do you feel confident and connected to God?

CONTINUED:

5. If the “wilderness” feels like a dark place, do you believe God will meet you there? Why is it a dark place for you? One of the most beautiful things we see in Exodus 19 is that God accepts his people *before* they obey. Do you believe he accepts you before you obey him? Why, or why not?

LIVE IT OUT: These action steps help apply this week’s message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Find something that you think could be transformed because of God’s powerful love and grace. Begin to pray for and work for that change. Make every effort to see the transformation through.
2. Examine your motives to see how often you’re moved by love. Strive to love others around you from the fullness of your heart, not because of what you might get in return.
3. If you have not observed grace, read 2 Corinthians 12:9. If you feel something change in you when you think about the grace of God, and wish to respond to that, be sure to tell a friend, family member, or pastor. This could be the first time in your life you respond to God’s invitation to become one of his children. Or, it might be a reset to accept the grace of Christ for your life.