

## THE WILDERNESS WALKS LEAD US FROM THE TOMBS TO THE GLORY

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How many of you have been on a “wilderness walk?” Not one in the literal wilderness, but one that has caused you to be led by the Holy Spirit into places that makes you feel like you are living in the tombs?

Although we may feel like we are in the ‘grave,’ the tomb, actually we are on the path to resurrection. Following our Lord Jesus brings us to a path. A path which leads to crucifixion of the flesh and resurrection of the spirit man within.

We are all aware of the resurrection of the body that is spoken of by Jesus. I’m sure we are all looking forward to that. “When the last trump shall sound and those who are asleep in Christ will come forth first and those who remain shall be caught up to the sky where we shall meet with our Lord and there we shall ever be with him.” (I Thes. 4:15-18)



But the subject we are dealing with today is a resurrection of the Christian believer from Spiritual death. The resurrection of the fullness of life and spiritual authority enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the garden. We lost that fullness of life when they “died” spiritually.

When they sinned they did not die physically. Rather, they lost the “zoe” life of God, which had been breathed into them by God himself. They were “separated from God” and were driven out into a purely physical world where they then had to earn their bread with physical labor and Eve had her children with physical pain. They had to battle the elements of the physical world and most of all, they were under the subjugation of the spiritual forces and attacks of Satan.

When they lost fellowship with God and were driven into the wilderness, the entire human race that was to come into this world through them also lost that “zoe” life.

What did we lose?

1. Fellowship with God. Access to God on a daily basis in a close, personal, intimate way.
2. We lost the authority of God over the earth and all that was created in it.
3. We lost the sinless nature of God.
4. We lost the spiritual, eternal life of God.
5. We lost the likeness or nature and characteristics of God. I.e. Peace, joy, compassion, love, etc.
6. We lost the blessings of God in every area
7. We lost the position of sons and daughters of the most-high God.
8. We lost our position of grace with God.

What most Christians don't understand or remember in this great adventure is this fact: When Jesus came up from the tomb, when he defeated Satan and took away the keys to death and Hades, He wasn't the only one resurrected. He resurrected every believer in him who had been 'spiritually dead' because of original sin and restored to them all the benefits and authority of his spiritual kingdom, not only for our lifetime on earth, but in the millennium as well.

Because of his resurrection we today are also free from the power of sin and its ability to rule over us. All of our sins, past, present and future were washed away by the power of the blood of Christ. He removed the yoke, the burden of sin and its authority in our lives when He arose from the dead.

When Christ was with his disciples on the earth He spoke openly and often of his coming crucifixion.

But, IF you read carefully, He spoke just as much of His coming resurrection. He was sure and very, very certain about both issues. He knew without a doubt that his life was not being "taken" by his enemy. He specifically said "no man takes my life from me, I lay it down and I will take it up again." This authority has been given me by my father." (Mark 9:9-10: John 2:19-22)

He knew the full purpose of His coming to this earth was to take our place on the cross, to die for us, to allow Himself to be put into the tomb and then to "take up His life again," so that we might join him in it. He did this so that we might partake of the heavenly life once again. He wasn't weak and whimpering because he could do nothing about the coming events. He was living under discipline in submission and humility.

Down through the ages we've been given a false understanding of Biblical submission. We've been taught to see ourselves according to the Greek word "humas." This means we are little better than dirt or earth, which means meanness of spirit, not worth anything, just a pile of dirt. We've also been taught that submission is having you're thumb on someone in order to control them with an "iron fist."

This is an untrue meaning of who and what we are to see ourselves as, according to the word of God.

Submission is the choice, or willingness, to "die to self," as Christ did, for the benefit of others. It is voluntarily laying down our lives as He did but not dying physically. In simple terms it means dying to the dictates of the flesh or the self (selfish) nature. We learn to walk in humility with our God.

Humility is the grace or unmerited favor that makes us think no more highly of ourselves than we ought to, but gives us every tool we need to do all we are called to do in His name and for His kingdom purposes.

Submission and humility are intended by God to cause us to be keenly aware of our total dependence upon God and his holy spirit, while at the same time being totally aware of our strength and authority in Christ and our wonderful place in God's kingdom. Strength and humility are a two-edged sword of love.

However, at the same time we are walking in this wonderful, God-given authority, we are always to be mindful of the awesome fact that He did every bit of it for us. We can't take personal pride in who or what we are or have become. As Paul said, "IF we are to boast, we can only boast of the Lord and what he has done." James 4: 6 "He is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble."

When God speaks of submission, humility and resurrection, He's speaking to us and dealing with us in our understanding of ownership. He owns us, we don't own Him; We serve Him, He doesn't serve us.

Yes, we have been restored to our place of authority. However, that carries with it the understanding and connotation that the asking is to be done according to His will, His plan and His purposes. IF we ask, thinking that God has to do anything we ask because it is in His word, we are walking in presumption.

When we have died to our psuche or fleshly nature, we won't walk in presumption, but rather by the spirit of God, the 'zoe' life within us. When we have died to our own desires, we won't walk in presumption.

Listen to what presumption means, scripturally.

Dueteronomy 18:20 To act insolently, fiercely or wickedly; It is used especially in speaking of those who

sin knowingly and purposely against the precepts of God.

As used in Esther 7:5, It means to fill a place with anything. The reference here is to fill a situation with our own understanding, rather than His will and desires. To live by the "natural" man, the psuche, rather than by the "zoe", the spirit of God.

Numbers 14:44 It means to swell up, to be tumid, tumulus. Interesting word, tumulus. It means to be in a tomb, a seplechur and a resting-place of your own making.

Listen to Isaiah 22:15. "Thus says the Lord God of hosts, "come, let us go to this steward, to Shebna, who is in charge of the royal household and say, "what right do you have here, and whom do you have here, that you have hewn a tomb, (tumulus, resting place, kingdom) for yourself here?"

Obviously the meaning speaks for itself. To be presumptuous is to build your own place in the midst of God's kingdom, whether it is for a moment, a day or a year. Whatever we build has to be submitted to God and come under His authority. IF it is not of His Spirit, it has to come down. The "psuche soufflé" must take a walk in the wilderness and come under the authority of the spirit man within.

This brings us to the point where we now know that submission is a choice. Submission, even unto death, was a choice for Jesus and it is for us as well. Every area of our lives must go willingly to the cross and be buried in order for the "zoe" life of Christ in us to come forth. It means total surrender.

These times of wilderness walking and living in the tombs or what seems to be a place of death or dying are the very circumstances which God is using to mold and shape us into what we asked for; the image of His son reflected in our lives. When we understand the need for this process to take place in our lives we no longer look just for the coming physical resurrection. We then begin to understand that God is in the process of resurrecting every area of our spiritual lives.

This path, this wilderness walking leads us to the same places that Jesus began his ministry.....it says in Matthew the spirit led him into the wilderness...Mark says the spirit impelled or thrust him out into the wilderness. Luke says he was "led about by the spirit." So, the first and primary thing we see about Jesus is that he was obedient in all things to the will of the Father. He demonstrated this by walking in submission and humility for 40 days and nights in the wilderness. Even prior to that, His first act of obedience was to leave His heavenly position and humbled Himself, being born into the physical world; the same world He created I might add.

His own words show us his heart in this matter. He delighted himself in doing the will of the Father. John 4:34 says this, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish his work." This was humility under the discipline of the Holy Spirit. He was obedient to undergo both Spiritual baptism and water baptism so that the scriptures might be fulfilled. He was tempted, yet without sin. Heb. 4:15 He showed us the way to live a victorious overcoming life by the power of the Spirit of God within.

Each of us must go through these "wilderness walks," the healing, refining process of which God is the initiator. It is during this process that the flesh will come under submission to the Spirit. This processing time is when we learn to "die to self." We are purified in these times of hardship and sometimes despair of the soul; the Holy Spirit's processing of our lives burns up our carnal natures. This is purification, not persecution and God initiates it. It is not from any another source.

Purification for Jesus was 40 days in the wilderness where every area of his faith and belief in God and his ability to remain in obedience were tested. The wilderness walks are what cause us to go from glory to glory.

### **1. He was tempted to turn the stones to bread to take care of his physical needs. This temptation was to "take care of the flesh."**

We are reminded in this that the miraculous powers that were given to Jesus and to us are not to be used to serve self. They are given for the benefit of the body of Christ. Had He used His powers to take care of Himself, His physical body, He would have put Himself outside of the providence of God, just as Adam and Eve had. He would have been walking in presumption of God's provision in all things.

When we will not wait upon God to hear His word and be obedient to His command, we become our “own provision.” God calls us to resist this temptation to become our own providers. Our minds say, “do something,” but God says, “wait!”

**2. The second temptation was to prove His deity or Godly powers. This would have caused Him to walk in presumption upon His position of being the Son.. Satan said, “jump from the temple pinnacle, an angel will catch you.” He was tempting Jesus to show off and look good for self and others. It would have made the present, earthly kingdom the focus of attention rather than the spiritual kingdom.**

Can you imagine what the people would have done if they had seen Jesus flinging himself off the temple and angels appearing to catch Him? Talk about a media blitz!

I can just hear every king and ruler of the times asking Jesus to come to their palace and show them that ‘trick.’ I wonder how many shamans or spiritualists would have tried to match him? Everyone would have wanted to follow someone who jumped off a 60-70 foot building and walked away unhurt, no? He would have no problem amassing an army and overthrowing Rome with those kinds of credentials!

But Jesus’ focus was not the earthly kingdom and neither can ours be. Our focus must always be upon the spiritual kingdom of God and the furthering of that kingdom, not the kingdom of self. Jesus source of strength was his obedience to the Father’s will as ours must be.

**3. The third temptation was to get immediate rulership or power instead of waiting for the timing of the Father. Satan tempted Jesus to take over now and avoid the cross that faced him. Satan was trying to get him to take a shortcut, the easy way to rulership. In order to do this Jesus would have enhanced His own rulership at the expense of the very foundation of all He had created and would have destroyed any idea of our sharing rulership with Him. His focus was on the restoration of relationship between man and God, His entire purpose for coming to earth.**

Satan says you can have whatever you desire now! You don’t have to live in hard times. You don’t have to suffer for the cross. God must give you what he promises in his word, just make a demand upon him, his word, his anointing.

Do you see the lie? Yes, we can and should ask God. We need to make our requests known, He tells us that in his word. But that isn’t the full counsel of the Word. The full counsel says that if we come in submission to His will, in obedience to His desires, we will have that which our hearts desire and our needs will be met according to His riches in glory.

The enemy will come to us with shortcuts. He will tries to get us to shorten the days of the wilderness walks. He will say, “ avoid all that pain, avoid all that nonsense of waiting.” Just leave this place, it will be alright. Get out now! He tries to get us to avoid the suffering part of the Christian life because he knows that when we come out of these wilderness places we will come out in renewed power and authority of the Holy Spirit and he’ll be defeated in our lives.

God gives each of us a word, a vision, a talent or gifting. Then He sets us in a wilderness place for a time and season in order to test the Word in us. This is not for His benefit, it is for ours. It is not done so He can see what is in us. It is allowed so we can see what we are made of. We can see where we are weak. We can see the areas that need to be submitted to the cross for death, burial and resurrection!

Satan is terrified of your finding out about these places of strengthening. It is the triumph of the wilderness times that we become mighty in the strength of Jesus! It is only as we submit to death, voluntarily, as Jesus did, that we can overcome anything that holds us back, spiritually. Quite often Satan will come with a suggestion to cheat, to take the easy way, telling you the end result will be glory for God. People will see how great you are and will come to Jesus because of you.”

Anytime this kind of suggestion to sin, supposedly in order to help God’s kingdom comes to you, recognize the trap. Satan is trying to get you to take another short cut. He’s trying to get you out of the wilderness, to get you to lay down your cross and pick up your “psuche soufflé.” All of these teachings

that say we don't have to go through any tough times if we are a real Christian; We don't have to have times in the wilderness and times in the tombs of despair, etc. Those comments are just pure hogwash! Let's prove that by looking at what the Word has to say about this subject.

These are some of the sayings Jesus himself said directly to his disciples:

1. **"If they hate me, they will hate you."**
2. **"They will persecute you the same way they are persecuting me."**
3. **"Fill up the cup of my sufferings."**
4. **"In this life you will have tribulations (troubles), but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Overcome means there had to be a struggle to overcome something. He further says, "and to those who overcome, I will give them to sit on my throne with me."**
5. **"Study, show yourself approved, rightly dividing the word of truth."**
6. **"Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything, stand firm." (Eph. 6:10-11)**

Why read, and study? Why would he tell us to prepare? Why fight if all of this has already been done for us? What is he saying to us in all of this? Just as His Son, filled with the holy spirit and God's power, living in a fleshly body, was sent out into the wilderness to be tested in every area, so too are we. The times of testing we come up against are the wilderness areas of our lives and just as He overcame, we also can overcome.

After we have hungered and thirsted after Him, after our flesh is exhausted and we've come to the knowledge that self can never overcome anything or anyone; When we finally realize and understand that it's all Him and His power; then and only then do we come to the place where we give up and allow Him to crucify our flesh. It is only through death to self, burial and His resurrection power in us that we can come out of the graves, out of the tombs. Then and only then can we surrender self gladly, knowing that there is no good thing in the flesh. Even the disciples said of Lazarus' body after four days, "Lord it stinketh." Our flesh and its ways of doing things is a stench in the nostrils of God.

The Word says there are those who are, "learning, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of Christ." Better ways to do this program or that program, but never submitting the flesh to Christ. Sitting in a graveyard of despair and broken dreams, mourning over the sins that God shows in our lives is no fun. Pride is destroyed, hope and personal ambitions lay on the ground around us. Knowledge of man pours out in a puddle at our feet as we finally realize how much time, effort and money we have wasted. The feelings of foolishness and stupidity mock us as we sit amongst the burial spices, trying to make this dead body look and smell good.

Others will walk past you in these times and laugh at these "foolish Christians: who seemingly have nothing worthwhile. Everything the world values is gone. We sit in emotional sackcloth and ashes. Perhaps we begin to get a little glimmer of understanding of what Christ meant when He said, "those who try to keep their psyche (soulless life) will lose them, but those who give them up will keep them."

For those who truly love God it's all over. The kernel of wheat has fallen into the ground and as we lay in that ground, that dark tomb, it feels as though we'll never see the light of day again. God hasn't spoken to us in so long and perhaps He'll never speak to us again. We'll never have a ministry. Our dreams fade and flicker as the last wisps of hope dims. We despair of ever knowing Him in true power and spirit. He must not have meant this for me.

But suddenly, what's that? All of a sudden you feel this little nudge as a small tendril of life begins to break out of the cocoon of death. More and more spurts of growth take place until you feel the roots beginning to go down deep into the rich earth. The rains begin to fall and soak the ground and you are able to drink it in once again. Ahhhhhhhhh!

Life, hope, joy unspeakable and full of glory begins to renew itself in you. But this time it is rooted in the life of Christ and His word. The dead husk of the old life is left behind as you begin to break forth into the sunlight of life eternal. You feel as though someone has given us a long, cool drink of water after an incredibly long walk through a hot and arid desert. At the same time we begin to hear new sounds. Sounds of the heavenly realms ring in our ears as the voice of the Father begins to speak to us once again. But this time it's clear and loud and very, very precise.

All of a sudden we realize, it's not our life we are feeling, but His. It is not our own power surging through us but His. We are raised up to stand upon our feet and we realize someone else is holding us up and strengthening us. The same power that holds the sun, moon and stars in their orbits is now coursing through us, causing us to stand straight and tall, filled with Holy boldness. And as we finally realize that none of this is our doing, We can only bow down before the King of Glory. We walk in the realization that this life can never be taken away. We don't ever have to be afraid of losing it, it is eternal.

But in our excitement, let us never forget how we came to live this way. Let us never forget which pathway we took to find this treasure. It is the pathway that sometimes leads through the wilderness and walking through the tombs. It is the same pathway Jesus walked and it takes us to the cross.

**It is the pathway of:**

- 1. Submission to another's will. total obedience without questioning or arguing.**
- 2. Understanding. Living with the understanding that I must follow the same path Jesus walked if I desire to be like Him.**
- 3. Willingness. Having a willingness to lay down my life, knowing He will raise me up again into true life in Him.**
- 4. Knowing this is a path of joy. Never again do I have to fear for my future.**
- 5. I know what my final destination is, even if I don't know where I am sleeping tonight.**
- 6. I know what my purpose is, even if I don't know how to accomplish it.**
- 7. I know what authority I have even if I don't always know when and how He'll have me use it.**
- 8. I know whose I am, even if others don't recognize me. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. His spirit and his power have resurrected me. Nevertheless, it is not I that lives, but Christ in me, the hope of glory!**

Blessings & Love,  
Rev. Gerie Martin