

PART 2 - THE PLACE OF ABUNDANCE

When we hear the word wilderness, what's the first thing that comes to mind? What visual imagery comes to mind when we hear the word wilderness? What emotions does the word wilderness evoke within us, and why is this the case?

I believe one of the greatest mistakes we make as God's people, is to confuse earthly wilderness with the eternal wilderness. Earthly wilderness is associated as a place of struggle, turmoil, death, hardship, tribulation, dryness, barrenness, desolate, parched, lifelessness, emptiness, and lacking anything of abundance. Eternal wilderness is the exact opposite. It is associated with faith, richness, freshness, abundance, colour, vibrancy, effervescence, fulfilment, life and a place which always has more than enough.

The problem is that the earthly wilderness and the eternal wilderness stand shoulder to shoulder. They are 2 very distinctly opposite dimensions but they both exist on earth. It's no different to the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God. Jesus brought His kingdom to earth with Him, but it requires faith to see it.

Q. Which one do we know and associate with and why?

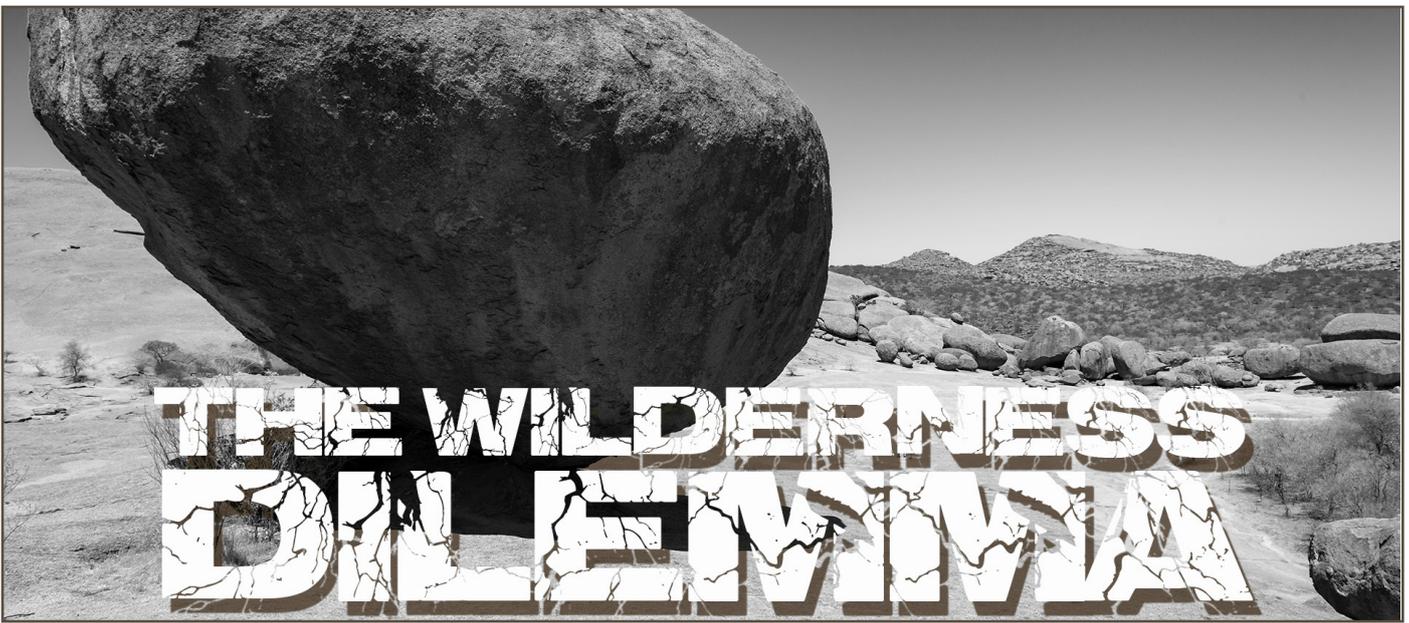
I am going to suggest to us that the way we hear, see and understand the "wilderness dimension", will determine everything about the way we live our lives. One perspective will keep us in a state of fear, worry, anxiety, depression, rejecting and denying the way of life, while the other will have us in faith, freedom, flow, abundance and fully receiving all that He has for us in this place.

Why is it that these 2 perspectives are so counter opposite to one another and they cause so much contention in and between God's people?

I want to suggest to us the major reason is down to sight. Do we see as He sees and do we see as He says. This determines everything. Are we in fact also like the Israelites who couldn't see the Eternal Life that was directly in front of them when they were in the wilderness of Sin, the earthly place. I have incredibly good news for you if you believe the wilderness is a place of nothingness and have made it your mission in life to avoid the wilderness at any cost.

There is an "ABUNDANCE of LIFE" to receive, come into and live from, in the wilderness.

Exodus 17:1-7 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may



drink.” And Moses said to them, “ Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”

2 PART GROUP EXERCISE:

1. Take some time to marinate on these verses of scripture and write down what you see (key observations) in relation to this wilderness encounter.
2. With each key observation ask why is this key observation so important in the context of the wilderness dimension?

Q. Why is it important we look to God and others to help us access the life in the eternal wilderness, if we can't yet see it?