



What Is God's Process for Promotion

Course KC-202 Lesson 3 Text

Luke 5:16 – *"But He Himself would often slip away to the **wilderness** and pray."*

Wilderness – It's likely that you have a marginal note in your Bible about this word. It literally means "lonely places." The Creek is *tais eremois*. It's plural – more than one place. The verb here literally means "withdrawing." Jesus had a very different reaction to fame. Today the great religious leader gives interviews on Good Morning America, has a mega-church, a personal website and a long string of publishing credentials; but not Jesus. When His fame spread through the countryside, He deliberately retreated to the lonely places. He avoided the crowds. He stepped away from the limelight. Why would He do this? Couldn't He have accomplished more for the Kingdom by accepting the recognition?

There is a powerful – and difficult – lesson in leadership found in this word, *eremois*. It's all about the heart of darkness. Jesus knew that reputation and fame among men was the center of a great temptation. We all want recognition and when it is offered to us *for good reasons* it seems quite natural to accept the accolades. After all, Jesus was healing and preaching. He was famous for *good* works.

But Jesus knew that only One person could grant approval that truly mattered. All the rest was potential distraction and disaster. All the rest was laced with hubris or pride. So Jesus withdrew – to the heart of darkness where the Father offered counsel. He went to the lonely places – the places that were empty except for God.

But Jesus went there on purpose. He realized that human emptiness is God-space. If I want to be with the Father, I have to go toward the holes. If I want to be a leader who knows the Father's will, I will have to seek Him rather than the kudos of my devoted followers. The leader after God's own heart is the leader who spends more time in the heart of darkness than on the stage. Why? Because God is in the empty places.

(Permission granted by Skip Moen – "Spiritual Restoration – Volume I)

R. Loren Sandford in his book "Understanding Prophetic People" has a chapter entitled The Necessity of Wilderness Sojourns. He lists the:

The functions of the wilderness:

1. The desperate craving
2. Testing
3. Secure identity
4. Rest
5. Restoration
6. Preparation

Wilderness Dangers:

1. Anger and bitterness
2. Loss of faith
3. Apostasy
4. Rebellion
5. Disobedience
6. Turning to other powers

Nine Purposes of the Dark Night of the Soul in Psalm 88

1. Abandonment of hope and personal reward
2. Exposure and purification of defects
3. Abandonment and despair of self
4. Faith without agenda
5. Rest for the higher functions of the Spirit
6. Love of God
7. Purity of fellowship with Him
8. Humility
9. Radical compassion

David Ravenhill in his book, "They Drank from the River and Died in the Wilderness" discusses a revelation he received regarding the wilderness.

1 Cor. 10:4-5 – "They all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual brook which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness."

On the back cover of his book he states: "We are living in a land not our own. We are looking for a city whose Builder and Maker is God. Along the way, there will be rivers from which to drink. These "rivers" will renew, refresh, and restore vision and purpose. But the "river" will not ultimately satisfy the inner longing of your soul. The "river" along the way must not be mistaken for the City of God we all seek. We must go on, not being content with the provision of the "river," no matter how exciting its rushing power and glory may be. Many may have enjoyed the "river" but cannot understand why frustration still seems to set in. The "river" will never provide what only the Lord can provide. Don't die in the wilderness. Learn how to go on in your experience with God."

The following is a summary in the back of Skip Moen's book, "The Lucky Life – The Backward Beatitudes."

He says, "I don't need good luck. I don't even want it. Good luck is a myth of the "accidental" world. What I want is the lucky life God tells me I can have. And He *guarantees* it. Living according to His design means my good luck will never run out.

The Final Paradox – Each of the Beatitudes presents us with a sacred paradox:

- The destitute in spirit are the reason God's kingdom has arrived.
- Those who grieve are the open doors for God's comfort to the world.
- Those afflicted under God's sovereignty discover God's promised allotment.
- Those who are chronically deficient in righteousness are given the righteousness they lack.
- Those who give up justice discover the basis of their own pardon.
- Those who have received a clean heart have eyes able to see God.
- Those who relinquish peace discover they reflect God's character.
- Those who stand for grace no matter what call for the Kingdom's arrival.

Each of these points leads to God's bedrock values. They are nothing like the values we prize in this world. In God's world, the things that matter most are:

- Desperateness
- Brokenness
- Affliction
- Emptiness
- Losing
- Insufficiency
- Sacrifice
- Perseverance

These are the values of the new Kingdom. These are the ways that God conducts His affairs with men. Insofar as we avoid these values, we turn our backs on God's ethics.

But there is one more paradox. It is found in the entire collage of adjectives about these "lucky ones". Let's look once again at the results of *makarios* (meaning is not just blessed, but one's whose lives are candidates for happiness because of *what and who they are*, not what they've done.)

- God's kingdom arrives
- God's comfort reaches us
- Co's order prevails
- God's righteousness is provided
- God's pardon is given
- God' hand is seen
- God's peace reigns

- God's instructions are followed

The final paradox is that the man delivering these sacred paradoxes is Himself the fulfillment of each of the stages of *makarios*. He is the living sacred paradox. He is the arrival of the Kingdom, the One who comforts, the fulfillment of God's order, the reason from righteousness, the pardon completed, the visible God and the end of our strife. Yeshua is *makarios*.

Yeshua announced a new world – the world of upside-down, backwards thinking. But it is only upside-down and backwards from our perspective. In God's view, the conditions of the "rejoicing ones" are perfectly normal.

- Desperate before God
- Mourning life's brokenness
- Trusting in God's sovereign control
- Accepting the gift of righteousness
- Rejoicing in god's pardon
- Looking for God's handwork
- Making peace on God's behalf
- Standing for His grace

And Yeshua is the conduit of every one of these heavenly values.

- He showed us what it means to live completely for God.
- He wept over the world's brokenness and separation.
- He gave His life on the basis of "Thy will be done".
- He was the means of our righteousness.
- He removed the penalty we deserved to grant us pardon.
- He made us see God in our fallen world.
- He ended our war with the Father.
- He delivered the message of grace.

Yeshua is the paradox of all paradoxes. He is the man in the middle, the man of another world living in the midst of our groaning creation, the author and finisher of our faith. What He announced was God's strategy of redemption, in proclamations of rejoicing. God hears our cry and sends His Son. God sees our grief and His Son brings comfort. God announces His control and His Son confirms it. God designates us righteous by His Son's obedience. God pardons us because His Son takes the blame. God shows us His love through the life of His Son. God announces peace with the sacrifice of His Son. God responds to our pursuit of Him by letting His Son be driven out for us.

Rejoice, jump for joy, you incredibly lucky one.

Makarios are you who acknowledge life as paradox. You are welcome in God's world.

Permission granted by Skip Moen, "The Lucky Life – The Backward Beatitudes."