



Send Me to the Wilderness

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Have you ever felt called to something? Has the voice of God spoken to you clearly about a specific call to do or say something in your neighborhood or to minister to someone?

Whether you are a young college student feeling called to minister to sick people and studying to be a physician, a soccer mom bringing snacks to her son/daughter's teammates and praying for families involved, or a Cumberland Presbyterian woman dedicating her life to leading women in a closer walk with the Lord, we all have a call.

The word "wilderness" is mentioned over 300 times in the Bible. It is evident that big things, good or bad, happen in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted but overcame it in the wilderness. The Israelites were sent to live in the wilderness to learn what it meant to be devoted to God alone. And in a time of bewilderment, Isaiah received a call when he heard a voice from the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send (Isaiah 6:8, ESV)?"

My call to mission work started in August of 2003 with a church group sent to the village of San Jose, in the wilderness of Belize to provide Bible studies for women and VBS for the kids. At first, I struggled with many emotions, seeing hungry children who suffered from malnutrition and had no shoes to hurting women. Then God showed me more than suffering as we played with children and lived with the people—they were filled with joy.

Close to the end of our time there, I went alone to a hillside to talk with God and I heard a voice from the Lord in that wilderness. Children sat down beside me and as we sang "Jesus Loves Me" together, the Lord spoke to my heart, "Daughter, I love you and I love these children just as much." I heard God speak to me that I was going to be sent to love people such as these.

I am here in Brazil, because 15 years ago I said "yes" to that call. Since that trip, I have taken numerous mission trips to Africa in search for that calling to be fulfilled. The thing about a calling is that everyone has a different and unique purpose that is ordained by God and prepared in God's own timing. It is woven into the very fabric of our unique lives. Isaiah said "yes" to the call completely ignorant of the nature of his commission, yet he freely accepted it.

Don't believe the lie that you alone can do nothing big to change things in your area, or that it is up to a larger church to do something about it. God desires to use you and God's design is always connected to a beautiful tapestry you may never see clearly. Close your eyes. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the call placed upon your life. Do you see it? It is vital to the Kingdom! Look again, hold onto it, see it.

Reflections

1. Read Matthew 3: 1-6. Here we find John the Baptist fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah preparing the way of the Lord. Like Lindsey, John the Baptist was sent to the wilderness. Discuss how it would be to spend 40 years in the wilderness like the Israelites spent when they left Egypt.
2. Sometimes we feel alone as if God has left us in a wilderness. Sometimes we feel as if God has asked too much of us or allowed us to have burdens too heavy to bear so that we feel we are wandering in a wilderness. Sometimes we welcome opportunities to spend time in the wilderness alone with God or to have opportunities to minister to others in a wilderness. Think of a time that you felt you were in the wilderness and share with the group what your wilderness was.

Call to Action

1. Some people in your congregation have probably answered the call to go to a wilderness such as Colombia, SA or Mexico, Guatemala, or Honduras, but not all of us are called to actually go. What actions can you take to minister in the wilderness? What has your CP Women's Ministry done to support ministry in the wilderness? Who are the children in your community to whom you can give love and meet physical needs?
2. As a group, select a project to support someone who has been called to serve in the wilderness whether abroad or in your community.

Prayer

God, we gather in solidarity with your children who struggle in the wilderness of life, voiceless and vulnerable. We pray for Lindsey and all your children who minister in the wilderness preparing the way and sharing the love of Christ. Show us your will and your way and give us wisdom and courage to serve in the wilderness you choose for us. Amen.