

## THE DESERT EXPERIENCE – OUR ACTIONS



### 1. IF WE'RE NOT ACTIVELY SEEKING JESUS; HE REMOVES THE DISTRACTIONS THAT STOP US - EVEN IF WE'RE NOT AWARE OF THEM (MORE THAN LIKELY) JUST BECAUSE HE LOVES US SO MUCH.

Mat 18:14 *In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.*

He'll remove all the distractions of this life, so we can:

- Meet with Him
- See what He is doing, and
- Hear his voice clearly and so know our purpose for this life.

### 2. WE MUST GET BACK TO, AND DESIRE TO GET BACK TO, THE BIBLE

How do we solve this? Well we've provided:

- Sunday teaching/preaching
- Home groups
- CIMS

We can only **provide**, you have to **decide** to make the Bible more than an occasional read. In regard to this Word of God, you must put off your current lifestyle, and put on the lifestyle of Jesus – if they're in conflict.

- One thing that you, as a Christian, can do is to list what you're actually doing now. From this list, identify what you and your family don't absolutely need ... e.g. TV, computer games. Re this last item, *are your children really not hooked?* A simple test is remove the games for a week, and see their response ... some Christian parents have been horrified. This test should also be applied to all your listed activities.
- What about your work? Are you spending too much time in work, beyond what is required? Any company will gladly accept you working (for free) all the hours you're prepared to put in. But, what about your family? What about God? If you're too busy for God and your family, you are far too busy.

It may be uncomfortable, but does God want you 'up at the top' of your company / profession? If not, plan your priorities accordingly and get out of your office on time. Remember, **if you drop dead today, they'll replace you tomorrow.**

The Bible is **totally relevant** to our lives, here in 2003. But, it has been so mis-taught that it's now seen as irrelevant to the majority of people in our nations. These people don't know how real, Holy Spirit inspired Christianity has impacted this world.

### **3. WE ARE GOING TO BE TESTED & REFINED, EVEN IF WE DON'T WANT IT - HE LOVES US TOO MUCH TO LET OUR LIVES BE WASTED**

You can **kick, scream, resist**, but **God will take you to that place of testing/refining.** Why? Because He loves you too much to let you **stay and die where you are.**

**One word of caution. Check it out, but your 'problem', your 'testing' may not be an attack from the Enemy; it may actually be the wake-up call of God - respond to Jesus today.**

- Isa 35:3,4 calls us to **obey God** and **strengthen** feeble hands, **steady** knees that give way, **speak faith** to fearful hearts, for ourselves and others. This will enable the lost people to see the glory and splendour of God (Isa 35:2). God, Himself, will come to save (Isa 35:4).
- At this point, those **Believers** who have been blind will see, those deaf will hear, those lame will leap, those mute, who have been unable to praise God shall praise Him (vv 5,6). **The people will be set free!**

### **4. HOW IS THE ROAD TO BE MADE STRAIGHT - WE'RE NOT EXPERT ROAD BUILDERS**

Isa 40:3-5 *A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare [ye - AV] the way for the LORD ; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

- There are no exceptions, we are all to be involved in making straight the highway for our God – together, we do the 'making straight in the wilderness'.
- When you look from where you are –no matter how bad it is - to Jesus, and you walk towards him ... **any line that joins 2 points is a straight line!** This is how you make the path straight.
- What, though, is this road? **It's our life and walk with Jesus.** When we respond, God always gets involved – see His response in v4?
- The result is that the glory of God will be revealed and all mankind will see it (v5).

### **5. BE FREED FROM THE PAST – OR BE INEFFECTIVE**

## a. Hurts belong buried in the past, not remembered in the present

Jer 31:34b *Declares the LORD. "For I will **forgive** their wickedness and will **remember** their sins no more."*

As God does this, so must we copy Him – **especially** with ourselves.

## b. The past is to learn from, not to get bogged down in

Isa 43:18,19 *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."*

- In Isa 43:18,19 we receive a warning to guard against living in the past, and we're called to look for the new thing God has already started to do. The implication is that we're not looking for what He's doing – let's stop doing other things and seek for His will in my life.

## c. Have a funeral service for your past

Consider your past, are there hurts, problems, fears that have entered your life through your job, your family, your church, your own actions? We can be bound up by things like, "This happened to me before, therefore it will be the same here." or, "I don't have the ability, I can't do ...". Hurt and fear rule our lives through this ungodly form of attack.

Nothing will happen unless you do something. Once you decide you want to do something, the Holy Spirit can make the breakthrough.

Mat 11:28,29 *Listen! Jesus says, "Come<sup>1</sup> to Me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take<sup>2</sup> My yoke upon you and learn<sup>3</sup> from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and [then] you will find rest for your souls." ... when you do<sup>1-3</sup>.*

## 6. GOD NEVER TELLS US TO DO SOMETHING THAT HE WON'T DO HIMSELF

Jesus is already preparing for us to get started on our road. Isa 43:19 tells us that He's also making 'a way', i.e. **He** is coming to **us**. After all, isn't **Jesus' name 'Emmanuel'?**

As we are making straight our way, He is coming to meet us with blessings. As these two roads join (Isa 40:3 & 43:19), He brings refreshing springs, streams, water, drink to His chosen people - those formed for himself so that His people proclaim His praise (vv 20,21).

## 7. THE BATTLE REALLY IS IN HEAVENLY PLACES, SO WE HAVE TO LEARN / BE TAUGHT HOW TO FIGHT - INDEED WE NEED FIRST TO KNOW "WHO IS MY ENEMY"

Eph 6:13,18 *Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you*

*may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Note, we're to pray for **all the saints**, not just those we see with needs. We are to pray for all the saints consistently. One other observation - 'all' leaves no exceptions, so you should also pray for yourself.

Read 2 Cor 5:16 – Learn to see situations from God's perspective, not your own.

*2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have **divine power to demolish strongholds**. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

There is no force in the heavens, or on the Earth, that can stop a committed Christian from changing the world. You may be a Wesley, a Wilberforce, a Smith Wigglesworth. They started with humility before Jesus, and he used them as a power force that touched our whole planet.

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