

Saturday Afternoon

Shared Reflection with Discussion & Prayer Groups

Shared Reflection

When Israel came to the Red Sea (Exodus 14) they were on the verge on their deliverance from Egypt but had an uncrossable sea in front of them, Pharaoh's chariots behind them, and an unknown and threatening wilderness, a desert, all around them. Moses wanted them to begin to learn to trust the God who was delivering them. He urged them, *"Don't be afraid, stand firm and see the salvation that the LORD will accomplish ... Yahweh will fight for you. You have only to **be still.**"* (Exodus 14:13-14)

You know the story of the Red Sea:

Only God could open the threatening waves of the Sea.

Only God could render Pharaoh's war-chariots powerless.

Only God could finally break the grip of slavery and oppression that had engulfed Israel's every thought and action and hope for generations.

They had left their old reality behind. They were on the brink of a wilderness that they must pass through.

Today, we're reflecting on the importance of experiences in the wilderness for ourselves. We're thinking about Israel's journey through the wilderness in order to think about our situation now – the things we're up against. Each one of us personally is the expert on what we're going through in our own lives. So, each of us desires and needs to think clearly – to think with wisdom and with God – about the impact of our experiences on ourselves and on the people around us.

Wilderness Obstacles

1. In the next few minutes – while a song plays – think about what you're anxious about, what you're fearful of, what you're up against in this wilderness time. On your computer or tablet (or on a piece of paper),

note down these challenges, anxieties, fears, obstacles, deep concerns, etc. Focus on those that, in your own experience, are most challenging and difficult. Save the list to use in your group discussion.

2. Read through your list and reflect on what's there. What do you need in order to face these challenges? Do you need courage, resilience, emotional awareness, wisdom, etc.? Do you need some specific resource? Try to express your need in a focused way in a single sentence.

Create Your Own List Now.

After time for writing and reflecting, we'll transition to smaller discussion groups to share our concerns and pray for each other.

Guidance for Discussion & Prayer Groups

1. As your group begins, go through the group and each of you "count off" (1, 2, 3, etc.) and say your name. Remember your number and notice who has the next number after you. As discussion goes on, take special notice of the person with that next number after you. Later in the group time, each of us will pray for the person with that next number after us. The person with the last number prays for no. 1.
2. Take turns sharing your lists of wilderness obstacles, anxieties and fears you're facing right now. Share also what you believe you need in order to face those challenges. Listen carefully to everyone, but especially to the person for whom you will pray.
3. When everyone has shared, take time to pray for each other, using the number order.

Return from Discussion & Prayer Groups

We'll share a prayer together for God to work powerfully through the whole process of individual reflection and shared prayer that we've joined in together.

Closing: Psalm 46