

## To Prove Thee in the Wilderness Walter Beuttler

[Comments: 1) All scriptures are from the KJV except where noted. 2) This message has been transcribed word for word (from Beuttler's own teachings) as accurately as possible (due to the quality of the recording). 3) Beuttler had his own dictionary of favorite words he used throughout his messages, and they have been transcribed and spelled out accordingly. 4) Spelling on certain proper names, airports, hotels, locations, etc. may not be exact. 5) Messages were spoken late 1960's, early 1970's. 6) Beuttler was a Bible teacher at NBI (a.k.a. EBI, Eastern Bible Institute) for 32 years traveling worldwide since early 1950's until a year before he went to be with the Lord in 1974.]

Well, would you mind if I took you back into the wilderness? I would even if you did mind! Now we are in the subject area of the Way of the Lord. We were basing that on Moses' prayer when he prayed; "*Show me now thy way that I may know thee.*" We're also told that God revealed His ways unto Moses. I've also mentioned from Hebrews that God is grieved because His people do not know His ways. For that reason, God is often misunderstood. I'm going to read to you in conjunction with that comment from Jeremiah 9:23-24:

**“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”**

Here God is encouraging us, in fact, exhorting us that if we're going to do any glorying, we should not glory in our wisdom, in our knowledge, in our educational achievements however fine they might be. Neither should we glory in our might, whatever power or authority we might exercise. We are not to glory in our bank account.

What we are asked to glory in is two things: "*that he understandeth and knoweth me.*" Now this glorying here is not a proud boasting. It is a sincere open rejoicing. There is a difference between that. That's for sure. We are to glory in the fact that we understand and know God.

God, of course, is infinite. For that reason God can never be fully understood or known. Finiteness cannot encompass infinity no more than we can put the Pacific Ocean in a teacup. But as far as God has revealed, we may know and understand Him. God divides truth into two great categories. In Deuteronomy we read:

**“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”** Deuteronomy 29:29

Notice the two parts: “*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.*” There are things concerning God that are none of our business. God has kept that to Himself. For instance, God has not revealed the nature of the Trinity. He has never explained how there can be three distinct persons in the Godhead, yet being only one God. The Lord thy God is one God. God has never explained that.

God has never explained how sin came about originally. Oh, we know where sin in Adam came. We also know that Lucifer, the greatest of God’s creation, sinned because of pride, but nobody knows what was it that caused Satan to sin to begin with. Where did he get his pride from? We know he became proud of himself, but that is an effect of a prior cause. The cause is not given.

God has not explained how God could be the Everlasting God without beginning and without ending. You and I cannot comprehend a being or an existence of anything without an original beginning. We cannot conceive of eternity. God has never tried to explain that.

God has not revealed many things about Himself. In the Bible, God is presented as a person, a divine person, without youth or old age. God has no age. He never was young. He never will be old. He is without youth or old age, without beginning or ending. We cannot conceive of such an existence, and if we are smart, we’re not going to try to. (Laughter)

“*But, those things which are revealed belong unto us,*” and within the sphere of those things God has chosen to reveal, a revelation written in this Book, within this sphere we may understand and know God. Folk, God can be understood. He wants to be understood. He can be known. He wants to be known.

Again in Jeremiah, “*I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*” In other words, God wants us to know His lovingkindness, His judgment - that is His justice is involved, His kindness, His lovingkindness to the children of men. (Now we’ll get into the wilderness shortly.)

Do you know that God is awfully nice? I think we’ve got the nicest God there ever was. I think He’s great. You know some 22 years ago, the Lord gave me a definite call to go and teach all nations. That’s why I’m traveling every year.

In those early days, I went by way of the Atlantic most often. The flights weren’t as long as they are now. Usually it was over to Europe, a little bit into Africa. Just like everybody, I like a little variety. I would always go of necessity, let’s say New York-London, New York-Rome, New York-Frankfurt, New York-Paris, what have you. And I got tired of going more or less the same way all the time. You know you can get tired of anything, especially traveling.

From a childhood on, I was intrigued for some reason I cannot give, by the Azores. I wanted to see the Azores. I couldn't stop there because at that time the airlines had tourist class travel only for what was then known as the Northern Route. What was known as the Southern Route to the Mediterranean by way of the Azores, they used only first-class travel. For economic reasons, I traveled tourist class so I couldn't stop in the Azores.

One year I went to Rome, Italy and had all my plans made. I even had laid them before the Lord to get a witness to make sure I was going the right way. I wanted to be in the Lord's will even to the routes that I was taking. I had such a witness from the Lord, that inner rest and tranquility, that I knew all was well, all was in the center of His will. I think I went New York, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Zurich, Rome.

One morning I picked up "The Philadelphia Inquirer" and here was an article, "Airlines Opening up Azores Route to Tourist Class Travelers to Europe." I thought, "*Oh, I missed it. Here I could have gone by way of the Azores with no extra fare.*" I went back to my heavenly Father. I said, "*Father, did You perchance read The Philadelphia Inquirer?*" (Laughter)

That's exactly how I pray. I don't pray ecclesiastical prayers like the Reverends do when they want to make an impression more upon the people than upon God. Who wants ecclesiastical prayers?

So I prayed just the way I told you, "*Did You perchance read The Philadelphia Inquirer?*" Don't you smart alexs say, "*He didn't have to read it. He knew what was involved.*" I know that too, but you leave me alone. (Laughter) My prayers work. Does yours? I added, "*Father, just look at this. I could have gone by way of the Azores, but I know that I'm in Your perfect will to go the Northern Route. Father, how about letting me go still by way of the Azores.*" And the Lord gave me such a witness in here (stomach area), no words, only a witness, but I understood what the witness meant.

The witness meant, "*If you'd rather go by way of the Azores, get your ticket changed. It makes no difference to Me.*" So I got it changed. All right, there was nothing special to the Azores, but my curiosity got satisfied. It was only a refueling stop in the middle of the night, but still I got to go by way of the Azores.

I came back to school at the end of the summer and told the class what had happened. I mentioned how good the Lord was and His lovingkindness when He let me change my route. When I got done with my story there was an utterance in tongues and interpretation. The interpretation was very close to this wording. Obviously God was listening as He is tonight. "*God is pleased when He sees that He can please His children, for God loves to show His lovingkindness to His children...*" and so it went on giving to us the obvious pleasure of God. When God saw that I was pleased with His lovingkindness, then He was pleased because I was pleased, so we were all pleased. Apparently God believes what has often been said, "*Joys not shared are only half enjoyed.*"

God wants us to know Him. He loves to get us to know Him in His lovingkindness for God is so kind and so good. No wonder Moses prayed, *“Show me now thy way, that I may know thee.”*

Now today we're preoccupied with the way of the Lord in the wilderness. This morning we saw God leading His people by the cloud, the glory of God, into the wilderness. You know often we speak or think of God's leadings, but God leads into all sorts of things. The Spirit led the Lord into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And there are times where God leads us into situations not pleasant that will do a work in us, which cannot be done in any other way.

You know we're a strange people. We think that everything ought to come fast. We're in the age of instant: instant love, instant marriage, instant wealth, instant security, instant everything. The world is full of instants - more and more. But there is a work to be done in us that cannot be done in an instant. God has to put us into a given situation, and sometimes put us between the hammer and the anvil.

First He puts us in the fire and there we holler *“Oh God, get me out.”* After awhile He brings us out and puts us on the anvil and down comes the hammer, *“Ouch, that isn't what I meant!”*

God says, *“Well, that's what I meant.”* God has a work to be done in us and what a job. What a pain we are to the Lord when He tries to bring us into the likeness of His Son. For that, at times He has to lead us into a wilderness, a place where we just don't know where we're at. We can't understand it. We can't explain it. We're at wit's end.

We mentioned this morning this wilderness is a place of perils. There are dangers. We enumerated some. It can be a place of defeat, the perils being unbelief. We talked about that. Lastly we mentioned rebellion. We can rebel against God in the wilderness.

One year I almost rebelled against the Lord because I didn't want to travel anymore. You know you get fed up with this traveling. I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay home, and I found my heart approaching its fate that was not far from rebelling. I checked Beuttler right away. We have to be so careful with this rebellion. I gave you quite a story this morning about what happened to me. I'll not repeat that of course.

Another one of those perils is murmuring, grumbling. We used to have in Pentecost what was known as the grumbler song, *“Oh, they grumble on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; grumble on Thursday too; grumble on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, grumble the whole week through, grumb, grumb, grumb, grumb...O they grumble...”* They don't grumble in Oakley though! Grumble means speaking complainingly, often in an undertone, *“Why doesn't the Lord keep His word? Here is His promise. I quoted it to the Lord. 'Lord you said You would do such and so. Now Lord I demand that You fulfill Your word.'”* We clobber God over the head with His Book, *“You said. Where is the promise Lord?”*

Can any one of us honestly say that we have never grumbled, complained, speaking complainingly in an undertone? *“Why doesn’t the Lord undertake? Why did the Lord let this and that happen? Why did the Lord not prevent? Here is a promise. Why doesn’t the Lord fulfill it quickly? Where is the Lord?”*

Here I just happened to pick up Job 23, *“Oh that I knew where I might find him.”* Job was in deep trouble. He could not account for his sickness. He no longer had any awareness of the Presence of God. He groped for God in the dark. Where is He?

**“Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even unto his seat! Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.”** Job 23:3, 8-9

Job was a godly, righteous man by God’s own testimony in great distress. He was battered in his body by the devil, cursed by his wife, forsaken by his friends, pushed to the side by the young people (you have that in 29), the object of the devil’s hatred, yet God stands in the shadows. Satan was also standing in the shadows hoping Job would curse God in his distress. God was hoping that he wouldn’t. Job was in the center of the arena with God and Satan in the bleachers as the spectators. It was up to Job now to vindicate God by his conduct in distress or hand the great victory to the devil so the devil could look into the face of God and laugh.

Here was this man groping, *“Oh God where are you? God where are you? God, answer me.”* And all he got was a mocking echo. God would not speak. He had to let the drama go on to vindicate His name. We are told in Job that in all these things, Job sinned not with his lips. God and Satan were waiting for Job to say something by way of deprecation of God and handing Satan the palm of victory, BUT HE DIDN’T.

God listened. He hears the murmuring, the complaining, the questioning, *“Why doesn’t God answer our prayers?”*

*“I don’t know, hon, I wondered myself.”*

*“Say old man, do you think something’s wrong?”*

*“Goodness knows, I don’t.”*

Now I’m taking you to Deuteronomy 8 where Moses is speaking to Israel:

**“Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.”** Deuteronomy 8:15-16

*“Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness.”* Hallelujah! When we’re going through the wilderness, He’s still leading.

You may grumpily say, *“Well, I can’t see it.”*

No, you can’t see it, but you can believe it. That was the trouble with them. They did not believe God in the wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, scorpions, drought, no water... *“Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna which thy fathers knew not that he might humble thee.”* Whew! Did you know there is such a thing as God humbling us?

*“Well, who wants to be humble?”*

That I don’t know, but I do know that God wants His people to be humble. Moses was the humblest man on the earth. I think he probably was that for keeps. That he might humble thee. Some of us need a pin in our bubble. There are people who think they’re growing when all they are is swelling. (Laughter) *“To humble thee.”* You know it’s so easy to let pride, conceit and what have you develop in our nature, and sooner or later, God has to deal with it.

What pride? I don’t know. It could be pride of face. I know we’ve had girls in our Bible school who spent more time looking in the mirror admiring themselves than they did waiting on the Lord. Pride of face, pride of dress, pride of social standing, pride of goodness knows what. There are pride of a thousand and one varieties. I think that some of you have heard me relate, very likely here, but it’s coming up on me. I’ll repeat it briefly.

You remember Madam Guyon? She was a woman of known beauty, regarded as the greatest beauty in Paris in her day whom they called a religious mystic. She was a deeply spiritual woman who knew the Lord beyond many people. Those of you that like to read, if you get your hands on the book. Let’s say the title would be “Madam Guyon” or “The Life of Madam Guyon.” That book is worth its weight in gold. Don’t let it go. Pick it up. If you don’t want it, tell me. I’ll buy it from you.

She was a woman of exquisite beauty. She knew she was pretty and loved to look in the mirror. She was seeking the Lord. She wanted more of God. The Lord brought to her attention her pride, pride of face. She loved the admiration of people. Not only men, but women would give her a second look on the streets of Paris because of her beauty. She wanted to do away with that pride, but she couldn’t. She even prayed the Lord would deliver her from that pride because it was hindering her progress in God, but it wouldn’t go. She could not pray it away. It wouldn’t go. Pride’s a powerful thing.

One day she challenged God, *“God, do You mean to tell me You are not powerful enough to take pride out of my heart when I don’t want to have anything to do with it?”* This time He listened. She got sick and lo and behold, she got smallpox. Her face was full of pox. Her friends told her they knew of salves that she could use to save her face from being pox marked. She said, *“No, I want no salves. God is answering my prayer.”*

God saved her life, but not her face. When all was over, her face was full of holes, pox marks, smallpox holes. She looked in the mirror and was astonished at the sight. Her beauty was gone, but so was her pride. God had answered her prayer. Apparently it was the only way in which she could get rid of pride - to humble thee. God uses, when need be, all kinds of means as much as need be to take pride out of our hearts.

You know we had a revival in school. The revival lasted ten days thereabouts. Three of these days were used up in public confessions, three days of public confession in our chapel. So many of the students would come up, stand behind the mike and confess pride - various kinds of pride. That had so puzzled me. I was in charge of the meetings. I had to keep things in order you know. I had known of this principle that when God deals with us to make confession of things done, or stolen, or said or whatever. The circle of the confession should never be greater than the circle of the offense. Now I see from some of your looks you don't quite grasp it. All right, we'll give you a case.

Among those confessions, one of our married students stood up and made a confession of adultery. Now that was a great mistake and I had dealt with him on that. He had no business to make a confession like that before the whole student body. They were not involved. That was a matter between him, his wife, the third party and his God. It had nothing to do with the student body. The circle of confession should have been kept between the parties involved. Now he spread it over the whole school. That wasn't necessary.

Here the students confessed pride. *"I want to confess that my heart is filled with pride because I'm among those students that have the highest grades."* That seemed to have nothing to do with the others. That was between them and God.

I went to the Lord about it. I said, *"Father, will You tell me something please. I know that the circle of the confession should not be greater than the circle of the offense. Why do these students have to make a public confession for a state of pride in which others are not affected?"*

And the Lord gave me the answer, *"Pride usually does affect others either directly or indirectly. But the main reason for the public confession of pride was that few people can be delivered from pride apart from the experience of public humiliation."* You can think that over and do with it what you like, but I can see it. This pride has such roots in us that God cannot simply pull it out. It has to be destroyed through a public confession when God leads to do such a thing. I think there ought to be some kind of a prompting to do that. Anyhow, the Lord takes us through situations to humble us.

I was a young preacher and had my first series of meetings after Bible school. I heard the people talk, *"Brother Beuttler, my what truth! Did you hear Brother Beuttler? You should have heard him. My, that fellow's good."* And I liked what they said. I liked what I heard. I couldn't help but overhear. I was asked to stay a second week. Sure, why not, after all!

I used a little outline like I have right here. I thought, *“If they find out I’m using an outline, they won’t think I’m so great.”* So I was carefully hiding it below my little Bible so they wouldn’t see it. I wanted them to think I was speaking using all those scriptures extemporaneously. It was a hot day. People had put in a big fan on the platform in the corner. I was over there on the other side preaching, walking around like a caged lion. As I turned around I just saw my outline here in the air fluttering down in front of the pulpit and dropping to the floor. I had to go all the way up to the other end where the steps were and go down, walk over, bend myself in the sight of all the congregation, picked it up and walked around. I’ve been hiding no more outlines. (Laughter) It’s the faithfulness of God that He sticks a pin in us before He has to use a sledgehammer. God gets us into situations and deals with us to humble us.

In school where I was, we had a lady who was a great talker. She had a sharp tongue. She could bite and sting like a scorpion. She would talk about people in such a way in her camp cottage that people walked around her cottage so they wouldn’t hear what they didn’t want to hear. If you were sick, or went to a doctor, or even took Aspirin, in her opinion you went straight to hell, straight to hell. She let that tongue go against anybody that went for medical help.

One day she didn’t feel good. (Laughter) She got to feel worse. She saw me on the campus and said, *“Brother Beuttler, what do you think of a person going to the doctor just to find out what might be wrong?”* I knew right away what was up.

I said, *“I don’t think that would do anybody any harm.”*

She said, *“Well you know, I’ve come to think the same way.”* She went to the doctor and what he found was so bad, he put her in the hospital right away. She didn’t even come home. She was in the hospital for quite some time. I forgot what she had, but it was very serious. She was there a long time.

Finally she returned from the hospital and we passed each other again as we often did on the campus. We exchanged greetings and talked.

She said, *“Brother Beuttler, I must tell you something. You heard that I had an operation didn’t you?”*

I said, *“Yes, everybody heard that.”* (Laughter) Everybody was interested.

She said, *“I had surgery, but I want to tell you something. When they performed surgery in my body, God also performed surgery in my spirit. God has delivered me from the spirit of judgment. I have nothing more to say when other people get sick, go to the doctor or take medicine. God has cured me from the spirit of judgment.”*

But she had to go through this wilderness of surgery, if you please, so that God had an opportunity to get at her critical spirit. I would venture to guess that God had no way of

delivering her in any other way. She had to go through it and be publicly humiliated. Everybody knew she was the one who had everybody else on the griddle for even taking an Aspirin. He had to go to the hospital to humble thee.

Folkses, God has more to do than to crown us with glory. There is more to the Christian life than to be crowned with glory. Hallelujah! hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, we go shouting. All right, let's hallelu while we can hallelu, but likely there will come a time when we won't feel like hallelu. We'll ask for grace to hold steady under the knife of the Divine Surgeon when He performs some spiritual surgery to deliver us from a spiritual disease. Sometimes God is obliged to shorten some tongues and blunt the tongues. It may well take some Divine surgery in a hard place.

*"That he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee."* Whew! To prove thee, to put us to the test. You know how people can sing; "I'll go with him through the garden?" O yea? That has yet to be demonstrated.

I'll go with him through the judgment. WHAT! Well, let's see that. God hears us singing. "Where he leads me, I will follow." Then He leads us up a hill to a cross and says, *"That's for you."*

*"ME! I want the glory."*

*"That will come after the death."* To prove thee.

Do people ever nail you to your cross with their tongue? Uh? Do they ever pierce your hands with their tongue over the things you do? Do they ever pierce your feet the way you walk and where you go? Do they ever criticize what you're doing, where you're going with their tongue?

God watches. We might angrily say, *"Well, I'll tell you as soon as I get out of this, I'm going to give them hell."*

Oh yea? Is that what the Master said? He said, *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."*

Somebody said, *"That Brother Beuttler! He won't stay home from going overseas until he breaks his legs."* I think they'd wish I'd break them. That was said to my daughter.

And my daughter replied, *"That wouldn't do any good. He'd go in a wheelchair!"*  
(Laughter)

People want you to fail so they can gloat over you. We sing, "I'll go with you through the judgment." People tear you into pieces with an acid tongue. You get bitterly criticized for doing the will of God or doing the will of God in a way different from what they want you to do. To prove thee, to prove our own singing: "I'll go with thee through the judgment."

Tomorrow morning is communion. We put our hands to the cup. By doing so we testify that we are ready to partake of the sufferings of the Master - the fellowship of his sufferings. The Lord puts us to the test to see how we act and react when the chips are down.

*“And to do thee good at thy latter end.”* Folkses, in all of our trials, wilderness experiences, all sorts of happenings, God always has in mind our latter end – *“to do thee good at thy latter end.”* What God does to us, and for us, and with us and by us now is directly related to our latter end. God works today in view of our latter end to do us good in the end. For it is the end which will last throughout all eternity. Today’s trials, wildernesses, or whatever must be understood, and if not understood, endured in confidence that God has in mind the end, our ultimate good, and that therefore *“all things work together for good to those who love the Lord”* and don’t call it quits until He’s done with His job.

The Way of the Lord in the Wilderness - It’s not finished. I don’t know whether I shall. We’ll see tomorrow, but you’ve had enough for tonight to think about.