



## Table Group Experience

September 06, 2020

### Mixer

What do you enjoy about light and dark and the turn of the seasons? What are some of your experiences in the places you've lived or visited?

### Connect

1. What was your childhood experience with the dark? What brought you comfort?
2. Each of us is undoubtedly experiencing adjustments in our routines, livelihoods and relationships. What is something that you miss that you can't wait to have back again? How are you handling the waiting/wilderness until then?
3. From last week, how did you do with **Wilderness Rule #1: Don't focus on being perfect. Focus on being present?** How did any changes you made help someone else in their own wilderness?

### Sermon Questions

1. Pastor Jared said that in nature darkness is necessary. Last week, we were reminded that God desires to grow us and He meets us in our wilds in order to do that. This week, what have you thought about your wilderness being 'necessary' to growth in your faith? What are the hindrances to growth when we take only the 'good' parts that we like and we throw away all the 'bad'? Why would God want us to have a balance of both?
2. In Numbers 11: 4-6, we learn that God's people were stuck in their own binary thinking. Like them, when we long for the good things of our past, we can fall into a spirit of grumbling about the misery of our current situation. And we are like them today: we don't have a misery problem, we have a memory problem. What would be helpful to remember when grumbling becomes the familiar path of your wilderness? How can you better embrace the new capacities God is creating in you?

3. We were challenged this week with **Wilderness Rule #2: Cynicism is an indicator of a binary mind. Gratitude is the habit that sets us free.** How can we use gratitude as our strategy of making sense of what is happening in our world? What gratitude practices can you begin this week?

## Go Deeper

The Bible is a constant parade of ordinary people - God's people - who messed things up, faced hardships of all kinds, and yet, God used them to advance His plan for the redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ. When we spend time getting to know these people, we see ourselves, and that is what makes God's Word alive and relevant to whatever we are facing in our day. Consider the story of Esther, a Jewish girl who marries Persian king Xerxes I. God used Esther to pave the way for the coming Messiah - she risked her life to go to the king to plead that he reverse his edict that all the Jews were to be killed. Her cousin, Mordecai, sends her this encouragement in Esther 4:13: *"...Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"* Esther's reply back in 4:17, *"...I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die."*

Then there is the story of Joseph, son of Jacob (Genesis 37, 39-45). Sold into slavery as a young man by his jealous brothers (who told their father he was dead), Joseph found himself as a servant in the household of Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian guard. Joseph endures many hardships as a slave, including incarceration for a false accusation against him, but one day, his character is noticed, and this Jewish slave is elevated to a trusted governing position in the house of Pharaoh. We eventually see famine strike the land of Joseph's (Jacob's) family, but God already had Joseph placed in a position to help - Joseph had a place in God's plan for the coming Messiah! Joseph says this to his brothers in 45:7-8, *"God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your families alive and to preserve many survivors. So, it was God who sent me here, not you!"*

Let their responses resonate in your quiet time this week. ***You were made for a time such as this. God is sending you ahead.***

1. This week we were introduced to the concepts of "solar spirituality" and "lunar spirituality." What resonated with you in how you approach your relationship with God? What are the pitfalls of too much of one or the other?
2. In the story of creation (Genesis 1), God set the sun, moon and stars in the sky to separate the light from the darkness. Our binary thinking tells us that when the sun sets, it is gone. Similarly, we think because we can't see God in our troubles that He must be gone. But what is the truth? The balance of day and night (and the sun and the moon) in the heavens gives

us some answers. In what ways is God bringing some balance to the light and dark of your 2020? Can you see the partnership of the sun and the moon - and of God and you in the world?

- 3.. As Pastor Jared said, God is the God of the feast and famine, the weeds and the wheat. What did Jesus say in John 16:33 and how might that encourage you to be an Esther or a Joseph in 2020? What can you declare about God in your troubles and believe He is for you like they did? Do their stories give you a 'language for dealing with life when it crumbles?' (Pastor Jared)
4. Hebrews 11 is the chapter often called the Hall of Faith - a listing of demonstrations of what faith can do in adversity. Read through their summaries and then read Hebrews 12:1-4. Like these pillars, **God has set a race before you**. Like Esther, **you were made for such a time as this**. Like Joseph, **God is sending you ahead this week in the world**. And remember Jesus said, **in Him you may have peace**. How are you going to commit to running the race well?
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you run the race this week with endurance and to keep you focused. Tap into Him to fill you with everything that a marathon runner will need. Write this out in a prayer for this week.

## Pray This Week

**Fall is upon us!** Pray for our groups and ministries that begin another season of connecting digitally. Pray also over the efforts of our production team bringing meaningful worship and God's inspiration to households on all of platforms. Gratitude and Glory to God!