

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Word of Witness Video?</b>	No
<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There are several pictures, scripture verses and text to show throughout the sermon
<b>Other Notes</b>	

### Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

#### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the story of Joseph and what we can learn from his experience in the wilderness.



#### ***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because it addresses the wilderness and reminds us that God is with us and at work in all the circumstances of our life.

#### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This sermon is the first in the Messages from the Wilderness worship series. It is the day after Independence Day and the first Sunday back after vacation.

#### ***What are the next action steps?***

When you find yourself in the wilderness, remember that God is with you.  
When you see a neighbor in the wilderness, be God's presence in their life.

#### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news is that God is with you in the wilderness.  
God is at work in our wilderness, even when we don't recognize it.

#### ***Metadata***

1. Topic(s)
  1. Grow
  2. Changing Lives
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
  1. Genesis
3. Series
  1. Messages from the Wilderness
4. Speaker
  1. Andrew Conard

6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2015

Messages from the Wilderness - 13 Years a Slave and Prisoner

Genesis 37:23-28

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1H1ZhUa>

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1gjZMAo>

5. Tags

1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, United Methodist, United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, El Dorado, Kansas, Great Plains, Annual Conference, Great Plains Annual Conference, wilderness, messages, Old Testament, Joseph, faith, providence

---

*This work by Andrew Conard is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>.*

---

## Table of Contents

<b>Genesis 37:23-28, CEB</b>	<b>5</b>
Response to Scripture	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Sermon Starter Video	
Series Review	
Sermon Notes and Scripture Study	
<b>Opening</b>	<b>6</b>
Prayer	
Monument Rocks.	
Messages from the Wilderness	
<b>Wilderness as a Place</b>	<b>6</b>
Geography of the Wilderness	
Transition	
Judean Wilderness	
Sinai Wilderness - Saint Katherine Monastery	
Sinai Wilderness - View from Mount Sinai	
Going to the Wilderness	
Transition	
<b>Wilderness as a Metaphor</b>	<b>10</b>
Illustration: Harry Emerson Fosdick	
Meeting God in the Wilderness	
Transition	
<b>The Story of Joseph</b>	<b>11</b>
Family	
Illustration: "Who do you love more?"	
Dreams	
Plot against Joseph	
Potiphar's house	

6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2015

Messages from the Wilderness - 13 Years a Slave and Prisoner

Genesis 37:23-28

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1H1ZhUa>

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1gjZMAo>

Wilderness for Joseph

Transition

**In the Wilderness**

**13**

God's Presence

God's Work

**Conclusion**

**13**

Good News

Call to Action

Invitation

Closing Prayer

## Genesis 37:23-28, CEB

When Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped off Joseph's long robe, took him, and threw him into the cistern, an empty cistern with no water in it. When they sat down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with camels carrying sweet resin, medicinal resin, and fragrant resin on their way down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, "What do we gain if we kill our brother and hide his blood? Come on, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites. Let's not harm him because he's our brother; he's family." His brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they pulled Joseph up out of the cistern. They sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and they brought Joseph to Egypt.

### Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

---

## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

-----  
\*\*\* Start Sermon Timer \*\*\*  
-----

### Series Review

In the Bible, the wilderness was both a geographic place, barren and harsh, and a metaphor for those times when life is difficult and filled with adversity. In our own lives, we'll all have seasons when we walk through the wilderness – seasons of loss, opposition, abandonment or despair.

During this series, we'll study the lives of biblical characters who found themselves in the wilderness. From them we'll learn the keys to surviving our own times in the wilderness. If you have a friend or loved one who is in the wilderness right now, invite them to join us beginning July 5

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can

reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

---

## Opening

### Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Monument Rocks.

Last week our family went on vacation to Colorado. On the way we stopped at Monument Rocks in northeast Kansas. These are limestone formations which were formed millions of years ago. Today, they rise up out of a pasture like tall silent white monuments. We spent some time exploring and had a picnic next to our vehicle. For most of the time we were there, we were the only ones in sight.

The dictionary defines wilderness as “an uncultivated, uninhabited, and inhospitable region.”

This was it.

We were there.

### Messages from the Wilderness

The wilderness is the focus of our worship series this month. Over the next several weeks, we will take a look at characters from the Old Testament and their experience of the wilderness. These are the times when they experienced challenges, difficulty, despair and grief.

We will look at how they were sustained during these times and consider what God did in and through their circumstances. As we look at their stories and the way that God was at work in their life, we will learn something about ourselves and the way that God works in our life.

---

### Wilderness as a Place

As we begin, I want you to understand a little bit more about the wilderness.

The wilderness is a geographic location in the Holy Land and a metaphor for what we go through in life. As a geographic location, I want you to see where it is on a map and understand where our story takes place.

## Geography of the Wilderness



What you see here is satellite imagery of the Holy Land and Egypt. The location marked on the map with a red pin is the region of Hebron. This is the Jacob lived and is the starting point for the story from scripture for us today. It is on the edge of the Judean Wilderness. You can see that it is more arid than the area to the west and north and on the edge of a desert like area – the wilderness.

Jacob sends his sons to Dothan, which is north of the red pin, so they can graze their sheep. You can see from the satellite that these are greener pastures. Dothan is where Joseph goes to meet his brothers and it is where that they sell him into slavery.

The slave traders take him along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the area of Goshen, which is the green area on the lower left hand side of the map. This is the Nile River delta in Egypt. In between you see the Sinai wilderness.

### ***Transition***

I want you to see what the wilderness actually looks like. What you will see are pictures that I took on our trip to the Holy Land in 2007. We are considering a pilgrimage from First United Methodist Church to the Holy Land two or three years from now. If you are interested in traveling to the Holy Land, let me know.

6th Sunday after Pentecost

Messages from the Wilderness - 13 Years a Slave and Prisoner

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1H1ZhUa>

July 5, 2015

Genesis 37:23-28

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1gjZMAo>

## Judean Wilderness



The picture that you see here is of the Judean wilderness just outside of Jerusalem, to the east of Hebron where Jacob lived.

This is the wilderness where the prophets in the Bible went to seek God.

This is the wilderness where they flee from those who sought to kill them.

John the Baptist lived most of his life here in the wilderness.

Jesus was tempted in this wilderness for forty days and forty nights by the devil.

This is the Judean wilderness.



6th Sunday after Pentecost

Messages from the Wilderness - 13 Years a Slave and Prisoner

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1H1ZhUa>

July 5, 2015

Genesis 37:23-28

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1gjZMAo>

## **Sinai Wilderness - Saint Katherine Monastery**



The other wilderness area from the map was the Sinai wilderness. This is a picture of the Sinai Wilderness, near the base of Mount Sinai. In the valley, you can barely see Saint Katherine Monastery. It was built on the site where Moses saw the burning bush. We spent the night not far from here

## **Sinai Wilderness - View from Mount Sinai**



This picture is taken from the top of Mount Sinai as the sun is rising. You can begin to get an idea of what the Sinai wilderness is like.

### **Going to the Wilderness**

The wilderness is where you went when you were afraid.

The wilderness is where you went when you were seeking God.

It was where you went to hear God's voice.

It was where you went to get away from everything else.

Thousands of monks moved into the wilderness in the third, fourth and fifth century to seek God in this place.

### ***Transition***

The wilderness is also a metaphor.

---

### **Wilderness as a Metaphor**

Everyone in biblical times knew what the wilderness was like.

They knew that there were wild animals there.

The wilderness was dangerous, desolate and rugged.

When people talked about going through difficult times, the wilderness was an appropriate metaphor.

It still is today.

## Illustration: Harry Emerson Fosdick

Harry Emerson Fosdick was a prominent minister in the early 20th century in America and a preacher at a Riverside Church in New York City. While he was in school, he experienced a terrifying nervous breakdown. Years later, he described the experience in this way:

It was the most terrifying wilderness I ever traveled through. I dreadfully wanted to commit suicide, but instead made some of the most vital discoveries of my life. ... I found God in a desert." — Harry Emerson Fosdick

## Meeting God in the Wilderness

Today we still meet God in the deserts of our lives.

Our time in the wilderness is an opportunity to meet God.

When we walk through the wilderness we learn more about ourselves.

We can understand and know more about God in the wilderness of our lives.

This is what we are focused on in this sermon series.

## Transition

Today, we begin with the story of Joseph.

---

## The Story of Joseph

### Family

“Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, lived in the land of Canaan with ten half-brothers, one full brother, and one half-sister. He was Rachel's firstborn and Jacob's eleventh son. Of all the sons, Joseph was preferred by his father, and this is represented by a “long coat of many colors.”<sup>1</sup>

We hear this described in Genesis 37:3-4. Hear these words:

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was born when Jacob was old. Jacob had made for him a long robe. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him and couldn't even talk nicely to him.

### Illustration: “Who do you love more?”

Imagine that a child comes to a parent and asks, “Do you love me or my sister more?” If the parent is wise, they say, “You know, dear, I love you both the same.”

This is not Jacob's answer.

His answer was “Joseph is my favorite. I love him more than the rest of you.”

How do you feel if you are one of his brothers?

You don't like him one bit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Joseph (patriarch)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph\\_\(patriarch\)&oldid=667436116](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_(patriarch)&oldid=667436116) (accessed July 5, 2015).

And it just gets worse as Jacob grows older.

## Dreams

“When Joseph was seventeen years old he had two dreams that made his brothers plot his demise. In the first dream, Joseph and his brothers gathered bundles of grain, of which those his brothers gathered, bowed to his own. In the second dream, the sun (father), the moon (mother), and eleven stars (brothers) bowed to Joseph himself. These dreams, implying his supremacy, angered his brothers.”<sup>2</sup>

## Plot against Joseph

“Joseph's half-brothers were jealous of him wherefore, in Dothan, most of them plotted to kill him, with the exception of Reuben, who suggested to have Joseph thrown into an empty cistern, intending to rescue Joseph himself. Upon imprisoning Joseph, the brothers saw a camel caravan carrying spices and perfumes to Egypt, and sold Joseph to these merchants. Thereafter the guilty brothers painted goat's blood on Joseph's coat and showed it to Jacob, who therefore believed Joseph dead.”<sup>3</sup>

## Potiphar's house

“Ultimately, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Later, Joseph became Potiphar's personal servant, and subsequently his household's superintendent. Here, Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, which he refused. Angered by his running away from her, she made a false claim that he tried to rape her, and thus assured his imprisonment.”<sup>4</sup>

## Wilderness for Joseph

This is the wilderness for Joseph.

Sold as a slave by his brothers.

Falsely accused and imprisoned for 13 years.

## Transition

How does Joseph respond to the wilderness?

What can we learn from his story that might make a difference in our lives?

---

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Joseph (patriarch)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph\\_\(patriarch\)&oldid=667436116](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_(patriarch)&oldid=667436116) (accessed July 5, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Joseph (patriarch)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph\\_\(patriarch\)&oldid=667436116](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_(patriarch)&oldid=667436116) (accessed July 5, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Joseph (patriarch)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph\\_\(patriarch\)&oldid=667436116](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_(patriarch)&oldid=667436116) (accessed July 5, 2015).

## In the Wilderness

### God's Presence

In all his years as a slave and prisoner, Joseph continues to trust God. Throughout his time in the wilderness, he does not turn away from God. He believes that God will never leave him or forsake him. The scripture text repeats over and over, "The Lord was with Joseph." God was with Joseph in the midst of his wilderness.

### God's Work

In the wilderness, Joseph finds himself in a place to be able to interpret a dream of the pharaoh. He is released from prison and placed as second command of the entire country. His leadership helped the country prepare for a seven year famine with enough food left over for those from other countries to find food.

Even, Joseph's own family.

His brothers come seeking food and eventually Joseph reveals his identity. They are terrified, because they realize the evil they have done.

Listen to how Joseph responds to them. Hear these words from Genesis 50:20:

You planned something bad for me, but God produced something good from it, in order to save the lives of many people, just as he's doing today.<sup>5</sup>

God was at work in the midst of the wilderness.

---

## Conclusion

Every one of us experiences the wilderness in our lives.

You have been hurt by somebody, some time.

You have been abused, cheated on, lied too, falsely accused and condemned.

You have experienced circumstances in your life that are overwhelming.

You have received a medical diagnosis, lost your job or experienced the death of a friend or family member.

This is the wilderness.

### Good News

The good news is that God is with you in the wilderness.

God is at work in our wilderness, even when we don't recognize it.

### Call to Action

When you find yourself in the wilderness, remember that God is with you.

When you see a neighbor in the wilderness, be God's presence in their life.

---

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 50:20, CEB

6th Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2015

Messages from the Wilderness - 13 Years a Slave and Prisoner

Genesis 37:23-28

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1H1ZhUa>

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1gjZMAo>

## **Invitation**

This is the message from the wilderness in the story of Joseph:  
God is with you.

## **Closing Prayer**

God, I trust that you are with me always.  
I offer my life to you.  
Help me to forgive, O God.  
Release me from the prison of resentment.  
Take my wilderness story and use it for your glory.  
In Jesus name, Amen.