

Wilderness U: The Forging Work of Uncertainty

Exodus 15:22–17:7

Young Adults – January 26, 2026 – Steve Clements

“How long does it take for a miracle to wear off?”

BIG IDEA

The wilderness is not God's punishment—it is **God's workshop**.

In seasons of uncertainty, God is forming our **identity**, deepening our **trust**, and teaching us daily dependence on Him.

1. THE WILDERNESS AS A SACRED THRESHOLD (LIMINAL SPACE)

Liminality = a *threshold* or in-between space where the old is gone, but the new has not fully arrived.

Examples of liminal spaces in young adulthood: -

Key Truth: God uses liminal spaces to strip away false certainties so He can become our only certainty.

Notes: _____

2. MARAH: BITTER WATERS & BITTER HEARTS (EXODUS 15)

The Crisis: Three days after the Red Sea, Israel finds water—but it is bitter.

The Heart Issue: Forgetting our identity as *rescued people* quickly leads to bitterness.

Christological Typology: - The **tree** thrown into the water points forward to the **Cross** - Jesus makes what is bitter sweet by reconciling us to God (1 Peter 2:24)

Notes: _____

3. THE WILDERNESS OF SIN: MANNA & DAILY TRUST (EXODUS 16)

The Crisis: Hunger leads to panic and nostalgia for Egypt.

Internal Egypt Syndrome: Facing new problems with old fears, habits, and self-reliance—even after God has set us free.

My “Internal Egypt” might look like: -

Key Line: *You cannot stockpile yesterday's grace for tomorrow's problems.*

Typology: - Manna sustained daily life - Jesus is the **True Bread** who gives eternal life (*John 6*)

Notes: _____

4. REPHIDIM: THE STRUCK ROCK & THE GOSPEL (EXODUS 17)

The Crisis: No water leads Israel to put God on trial.

Functional Atheism: Believing God exists but living as if He is absent when life is hard.

The Gospel Moment: - God stands on the Rock - The Rock is struck - The people drink
“*You drink because He was struck.*”

Fulfillment: “The Rock was Christ.” (*1 Corinthians 10:4*)

Notes: _____

LIVING IT OUT

- When you feel dry, **don't file a lawsuit—look at the Cross**
- God is more interested in getting **Egypt out of your heart** than rushing you to a circumstantial Promised Land

THE MANNA JAR (COMMUNITY PRACTICE)

Throughout the year, this Manna Jar will serve as a shared memorial of God's faithfulness.

- **Red Sea Moments (Praise):** Clear, dramatic ways God has delivered you in the past
- **Wilderness Pleas (Prayer):** Current struggles, fears, or unanswered prayers
- **Manna Moments (Praise):** Ordinary, daily ways God has already provided—often small, timely, and easy to overlook

Manna Moments are not prayers asking God to provide, but praises for noticing that He already has.

As the song plays, reflect and respond by adding your slip to the jar as an act of trust and remembrance.