



DATE June 24, 2018

SPEAKER Jared Petty

TITLE Bitter or Better?

SERIES David is the most written-about character in the Bible. He's most often remembered for all the good in his life, but like us, he had his fair share of failures. What can we learn from all the good, the bad and the ugly woven together in David's story?

We have all found ourselves in the wilderness, some of us more often than others. Our problem can be so serious that 'we can't see the forest for the trees.' Or, our wilderness can be as simple as managing a housekeeping issue with a family member. Pastor Jared's sermon taught us that the way we handle these trials can make the difference between remaining bitter and resentful, or coming out on the other side as a better person or with a better relationship.

1. David was in the wilderness running from Saul. Wilderness is a place where you may be tested and tempted. What is an example in your life where you experienced wilderness? And how did you talk with God through it?
2. Are you Saul hearing your own voice or are you David hearing God's voice?
3. Pastor Jared mentions that the wilderness is a place or situation where we are tested and tempted yet learn to trust God.
 - a. What wilderness are you in currently, dealt with in the past, or may be facing soon?
 - b. Will you choose to allow these experiences to make you better rather than bitter?
 - c. How can you turn away from bitterness in your life?
4. When was Psalm 57 written and why? What verse moves you?
5. As Pastor Jared shared, there is a difference between being a bitter person and a person going through a bitter time. Where do you see yourself in regard to these two positions?
6. Pastor Jared shared a scenario where he and his wife cleaned out the closet in their home and felt the freedom of letting go.
 - a. Can you identify where the root of bitterness is in your heart and give it to God?
 - b. Do you think you can do the same by cleaning out the root of bitterness in your heart?
 - c. Have you been placed in a situation like David where someone you love or are close to becomes bitter against you because of jealousy? If so, how did you handle it or did you do as David did and find refuge in God? [Psalm 57:1]
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 - c. How can you turn away from bitterness in your life?
8. Name some ways in which bitterness robs us of the blessings and purpose Jesus intends for our lives.
9. Today's message compared a person's heart being overcome by roots of bitterness to a garden being crowded by weeds. List some ways in which we can prevent and remove the roots of bitterness from taking hold in our lives. (See Ephesians 4:21-31.)
10. In the final video, which sign do you identify with the most?
- a. What might God be teaching you from this type of wilderness experience?
 - b. How can we view our enemies and difficult situations through a lens of grace?
11. Is there a time in your life in which it was challenging to control your reaction to the acts of another? How did you find the strength to control your reaction?
12. Can you think of examples in today's society where bitterness is having a negative impact on our country? On the world?
13. Think back to the concluding video and to a time when someone hurt you. If you haven't forgiven, what is on your "Forgiveness Sign?"

The following words from the late Billy Graham provide us with additional guidance on coming out of the wilderness **BETTER** rather than *bitter*.

"Suffering should not make us bitter people," my mother once said, "it should make us better comforters." Young people need to hear this from those who have walked before them, because someday they'll be walking those same steps, but there may not be anyone following behind.