

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

March Madness

By Ken Woodley

I hold the door to the world's wilderness in the palm of my hand because my smartphone makes this third planet from the sun seem more of a wilderness every day.

A vastness where love and compassion have been utterly consumed.

Where only March madness remains and has nothing at all to do with brackets and Cinderella stories.

As a pandemic seems to be receding, the threat of nuclear weapons appears over the horizon, with Russia pushing the world toward the brink of a wilderness we can't even imagine.

Every time I push "unsubscribe" the news updates come more furiously through my "in" box.

"Hope" sometimes seems like the cruelest four-letter word in the world because it feels ever-present but never real.

And if Earth's trembling landscape isn't enough, we all have our own private wildernesses and wilderness moments, too.

The wildernesses most of us face in our lifetime are those occasions that make us feel lost and alone. Whether it's the loss of a job, an illness, the death of a loved one...or a difficult memory, life is full of wilderness moments that turn our lives into a tangled maze.

The world's chaos only makes it worse.

I know God has promised to make "a way through the wilderness" but, honestly, there are times—like this morning—when my heart and soul cry out: "How? How can you possibly make a way through all of this wilderness?"

And this morning I felt God's answer: "All of this wilderness is not yours. Do not be pulled into every corner of wilderness in the world. Trust me to guide you lovingly through your own wilderness. Let that be enough today."

And then I felt a moment of peace. A moment that grew into another moment, and another and another. Dominoes of peaceful moments falling into each other, creating a pathway forward.

No, it's not always going to be straightforward, but the pathway will always be one I share with God if I embrace the promise of God's loving presence.

"Don't let every wilderness in the world surround you," I feel God telling me.

But I know that doesn't mean I should ignore everyone else crying out from their own wilderness, or leave Ukraine and the world out of my daily prayers.

On the contrary, it is only by walking on with God through my own wilderness that I have any chance of helping anyone else lost in their own moment of desolation.