



Sermon Text: 1 Kings 17:2-7

Sermon Date: February 10, 2019

After bursting onto the scene in verse 1, Elijah is sent out into the wilderness of obscurity to be grown into a “man of God” (v.24). During that time, God teaches Elijah three important lessons.

LESSON #1 – OBEDIENCE WITHOUT ANSWERS

God’s command in verse 3 for Elijah to “hide” himself by the brook Cherith must have felt as abrupt and illogical to Elijah as it seems to us when reading it. After all, the most impactful place to be would have been in the ear of the King. Yet even though he doesn’t understand, Elijah obeys without question or hesitation or complaint. Discipleship isn’t really a matter of understanding the why of God’s commands, but obeying the what of His commands.

LESSON #2 – DESPERATE FAITH FOR DAILY BREAD

Next we saw God teach Elijah to rely upon His faithfulness every single day for survival. At God’s command, ravens provide Elijah with food in the morning and evening of each day, and he drinks water from the brook. God put Elijah in a place of helplessness so that he would put all of his hope in the promised faithfulness of God. While we wish that God would provide His grace in Costco sized quantities, He doesn’t. He gives us just what we need—moment by moment.

LESSON #3 – UNSHAKABLE TRUST IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

While those first two lessons are always painful to learn, God wasn’t finished teaching Elijah. In His providence, God allows the brook to run dry. It is fascinating: on one hand, God overrules the natural order (so that ravens function as waiters), but on the other hand He lets nature run its course. And the whole time, God gives Elijah no insight into His actions, no glimpse into how He will provide in this new predicament. God will strip away our strength, pull back His provision, and make us empty so that we have nothing but Him, and in those aching seasons we discover that He alone is enough.

4 SUMMARIZING TAKEAWAYS

1. **God refines His servants through obscurity and suffering.** As A.W. Tozer has said, *“It’s doubtful that God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.”*
2. **We are called to immediate obedience to God’s Word.** At the heart of discipleship is a willingness to follow Christ wherever He leads whenever He leads, not to follow him wherever we want whenever we want.
3. **Our Character is forged in the furnace of daily grace.** Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread because that alone is what God has promised to provide.
4. **Even when the brook dries up, God remains your good Father.** In those painful seasons, God is still God. All that was true about him when the water gushed remains true when the water goes dry. He has a plan. He has a purpose. He will provide—but sometimes only after He lets the brook dry up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Of these three lessons, which one has God been teaching you lately? What have you learned?
3. Looking back to the quote by A.W. Tozer, how has God blessed you through a deep hurt or time of suffering?