

1 KINGS 17

ELIJAH - PART 1



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GOD'S TRAINING PROGRAM

For the next couple of weeks I would like to do a series on one of the great men of God in the Bible. We will be in 1 Kings on the life of Elijah the prophet. Today we will see how God made him into an amazing man of God.

CONTEXT: When Elijah was alive, the Northern Kingdom had 19 consecutive evil kings spanning about 200 years. Imagine not, 19 *ineffective* leaders, but 19 wicked leaders.

In the present, there was King Ahab, who married wicked Jezebel, the Bible says more than once, *"did more evil in the eyes of God than all kings before them."* Did bad, bad things. Dark time. Idol worship. Child sacrifice. Engage with temple prostitutes. Corruption, major scandal.... Finally God's patience ran out and he said, "Enough!"

But when God began to move against the evil, he didn't raise up an army, but raised up one person to take a stand.

And today God may also raise up one or two to make a difference. One teenager to take a stand for sexual purity; one business man to stand up for integrity and honesty. One person in politics to stand for the truth.

THE NAME: Just a little bit about the name of Elijah. It comes from three other words, "El" – "I" – "Jah"

El (Elohim) = God

I = my

Jah = Jehovah

Basically it means, "Jehovah is my God"

So, by the very name of the person God chose He's making the testimony...ELIJAH: MY GOD IS JEHOVAH.

THE STORY: At beginning we have no background about Elijah, except for where he's from:

1 Kings 17:1 *Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."* (NIV)

In an agrarian, agricultural society, this would not create an economic depression, but an economic SHUTDOWN!

So this prophet stands down this evil King and says, "no more rain." Very strong start.

BUT, the first thing God does is not to send him into battle, but to take Elijah into a season of hiding and difficulty. Quite a long period of time. Time of preparation.

God takes him away so he can do: *so much more IN HIM so he can do so much more THROUGH HIM.*

...Many of you will identify with the preparatory work God takes Elijah to. Three Seasons of preparation:

I. **THOUGH A SEASON OF ISOLATED PAIN**

Where he's very alone and has no one to turn to.

1 Kings 17:2-3 *Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan."*

Kerith—cut off, or cut down. To be cut off from the source of the blessings. It's like God is saying "I'm going to take you through a season of breaking. I'm going to cut you down. I'm going to humble you privately so I can use you publicly. I'm going to teach you to be totally dependent on me, before I'm going to use you. I'm go to do something in you that's very deep so I can use you more."

A lot of time people are in the Kerith Ravine – a season of pain - and their saying, "Where is God? Where is God?" And the reality is that maybe he's right there. There doing a preparatory work.

Let me ask you...Can you put your finger on a painful experience that God used to shape you into who you are today.

"Man I'm in the *Kerith Ravine*, I'm being broken. The things I depended on I can't depend on."

Remember you may be there for a reason. "I've got you there because I'm teaching you something you couldn't learn any other way." Some of you, you're there. Elijah was there for months, all alone.

“It is doubtful that God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.” A.W. Tozer

So, if you're there, be encouraged. The more he breaks you the more is preparing you for something.

The 2nd thing God takes Elijah through as he is shaping him is:

II. A SEASON OF TOTAL DEPENDANCE

1 Kings 17:4-6 *“You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.”* ⁵*So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there.* ⁶*The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.*

In middle of drought God brought him to a brook with water. And he does this unbelievable feeding miracle. God had his own “heavenly catering service” to feed him. “The Raven Express.”

God is very clearly saying, *“No matter what and for always, I will be faithful. You can always count on me to provide for you.”*

Some of you now you're in a season that there's something you used to trust in for security and it's been taken away. And you no longer have something to trust in but the *giver of all good things*. You're having to learn that when everything else fades away, God will forever and always be faithful to you.

Forever and always god says I will be your provider.

God didn't give him 2 days worth of food, a month of food, he just gave him enough for the day.

- Some of you, you're in a season where you're hurting alone and afraid. “I will be your comfort for the day.”
- You don't have much. “I will be your provision for the day.”
- You feel very Weak. “I will be your Strength for the day.”
- Friends leave you. “I will be your friend for the day.”

“I may not bring *more* than you need, but I will always be *all* that you need. I will be your daily bread.”

And Elijah is learning to depend on God for the day. God is teaching, breaking, humbling him. When he has no ability to provide for himself God is teaching him, “I will be your provider.” What are you trusting God for right now?

And the 3rd thing God takes him through as he is shaping him is:

III. A SEASON OF UNCONDITIONAL OBEDIENCE - vv. 7-9

The plan seems to start breaking down...

*“Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him: “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. **I Kings 17:7-9a***

Let's put ourselves in the Prophets place...It's been months that Elijah was at the Ravine. Now it dries up. In my mind I start thinking... “Did I do something wrong? Did I stay when I should have gone. Didn't you God supply the brook? How could it dry up?”

“Why would God's source dry up?”

He's going to learn that the God who gives water can also take it away. Because often God may cause the brook to dry up to give us the motivation to go where he now wants us to be.

Some of you, you may now be saying, “Oh my gosh, my brook is drying up.

- I used to trust in my job, but I'm not sure I can trust it anymore.
- I had a 401k, now it's a 201k. I had all these friends, now they're gone.
- I used to believe I had a good marriage, but now it now going so well.”

Saying: “God guides by what he provides.” True.

But sometimes he guides by what he does NOT provide. The same God who gives water may cause the brook to dry up to cause us to take a step of total obedience.

God said “go to *Zarephath of Sidon*”? “but God I don't understand what your doing?”

(Karate Kid? “Teach me to fight.” “Ok, first Paint my fence.” “Wax my car.” “ Scrub my floor.” What is this!!!...)

So then God causes Elijah to go to this new place

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So the story goes on.story we read earlier.... Elijah meets this widow. "I'm hungry. Can you feed me?" "Man are you the only one who doesn't know – It hasn't rained!! ...We're dying!... one last meal, we're going to eat and then we're going to die!"

But because of what God has done in Elijah's life, he speaks trusts and faith into a hopeless situation. "*The flour and oil will not run out. God back and bake me some biscuits!*" And they ate for months as the drought continued. God provided.

Then one day tragedy strikes. Son dies suddenly. Mom freaks out...

But now Elijah trusts God and raises a dead boy to life.

Why did this happen?

- Because God took him to the Kerith Ravine where he was cut down and isolated.
- God took him through a season of total dependency, where he could only depend on God alone.
- Then God dried up the brook, so he would leave where he was and go to the place God wanted him to be and to use him to do an amazing miracle.

Next week will see as God gives him the courage to stand down 450 false prophets and ask God to send fire from heaven. How could Elijah have such faith? Because he had been through God's Training Program.

In verse 1 Elijah is known only by where he is from *Elijah the Tishbite*. Now, 23 verses later look at for what he is now known: **1 Kings 17:24** *Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."*

God may allow you to go through the KR, so someone can look at you and say, "you are a woman of God" "you are a man of God". I pray that when people look at me or you today they won't say, "Oh there is Dave from Manchester Connecticut." But rather, "There is Dave. He's not perfect, but we know He is a man of God."

CONCLUSION

WERE GOING TO PRAY IN JUST A MOMENT
-bow your head.

- Some you out there, you're in a season of deep pain. You're in the Ravine.
- Some of you are realizing the things you trusted him, they are not there anymore, and you can only trust in God.
- Some of you are saying, "The brook dried up in I can no longer stay where I was comfortable, and I've got to go somewhere new.

God may just be doing something in you so he can do something through you.

If that is you, would you lift your hand so I can pray for you?

Prayer: *Lord, I pray for those who are in the Ravine. God when you break us away from those things we would trust in, God would you help us to trust ultimately in you. Lord would you use these things to perfect us and make us more like your son. God give us perseverance to endure any tests, any trials.*

Lord we pray that the trial will not hurt us but instead burn away all the impurities in our life and make us more like you. God we pray that you would be enough comfort for today for everyone who needs comfort. God I pray that you would be enough peace for today. I thank you that you provide for us our daily bread.

And God when the brook dries up I pray that we will be faithful to hear your voice. And if you tell us to go to a new place may we be obedient to follow. And in doing so may we see your supernatural work. I pray in Jesus name, amen.

Some of us here may be separated from God completely. You need to know that Jesus is the only son of God, who died for your sins and who rose again on the 3rd day in victory. Today I challenge you to call on the name of Jesus who can literally make you a new person spiritually. He is the only name by which a person may be saved. Today I challenge you to call in the name of Jesus. To experience the resurrected power of Christ in your life.