

# “Dry Brook Academy”

1 Kings 17:1-7

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Rev. Brian T. Smeal; [pastorsmeal@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsmeal@gmail.com)

All Scripture quoted from ESV unless otherwise noted

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What do you know about Elijah? HE was a prophet who experienced the conquering power of God, who withheld rain from a nation and sent fire from heaven in response to the prophet's prayer; yet he also trudged through the depths of despair and hopelessness, facing rejection and isolation. God used Elijah to raise a man from the dead, to provide food for a starving household, and to confront an evil king. Aside from what we know from 1 and 2 Kings, he is mentioned several places in the NT. In fact, after Moses, Abraham, and David, Elijah is the most frequently mentioned Old Testament figure in the New Testament.[1]

At the time Elijah bursts onto the scene, Israel is in a dark place, having had 19 consecutive evil kings – not just ineffective, but downright evil – spanning 200 years. Whoa, right? By way of comparison, the U.S. has only had a president for 233 years. Then along comes Ahab, who was the worst of the worst. So, what did God do? He raised up an individual, not an army. Elijah addresses the king, saying, ‘There won't be any dew or any rain for years, until I say so.’ Of course, it was God who would hold back the rain, but Elijah was His messenger.

Then, surprisingly, God tells Elijah to hide. God says, ‘there is so much more I can do through you, but first there are some things I need to do for you.’ And so, God calls Elijah to go to the Brook Cherith (Kerith Ravine), where he will drink from the stream and be fed by ravens. It seems that the seasons of *greatest productivity often follow seasons of most intense preparation – ‘dry seasons,’ if you will.*

Dry seasons often involve total separation (v.3). If God was going to use him, there are things in Elijah's life that God was going to have to deal with, and sometimes that happens best in isolation. *Sometimes you have to go through a season of breaking before you can experience a season of blessing.*

*What is there in your life that needs to be broken, in order for you to be more useful to God? A habit, an attitude, a secret sin, perhaps? Today, God wants to use you to advance His kingdom, but before you can be part of what God's doing, there's something in you that needs to be broken, and the sooner you recognize what that is, and allow it to be broken, the sooner you can fully experience the blessing of being part of what God wants to do in you and through you.*

Dry seasons lead you to absolute dependence (v.4). Drinking from a brook might not be too bad, but being fed by ravens . . . now that's a different story. Ravens are scavengers – eating road kill and picking at the rotting flesh of dead animals or fish. The Jews considered ravens to be unclean, so a Jewish prophet being fed by these animals is unconventional *at best*. But *God is capable of using unconventional means to achieve uncommon results.*

Elijah didn't have any way of providing for himself. And did you notice? God didn't provide a week's worth of groceries for him, or even a day's worth; He provided only that which was needed for the moment. That's not usually a comfortable place to be in. God provides for His own. You may not have much, but God will bring you enough for right now. He will be your strength, your friend, your provider. But sometimes that means enduring a dry season; a season of utter isolation, total dependence, and unconditional obedience.

Dry seasons call for unconditional obedience (v.7). The brook, Elijah's only source of water had been slowly diminishing and at last, it finally had dried up. I wonder, did he wonder if he was in the right place? When things look bleak, it's hard to hang in there. Was Elijah nervous? Did he ever question what God was doing, or start to wonder if maybe he misunderstood what God wanted?

*Sometimes God guides by what He doesn't provide.* Sometimes a dry brook is the only thing that will give you the courage to leave where you are and go to where you're supposed to be. What brook is there in your life that is drying up? Relationships? Employment? Finances? When you see the things that you once counted on beginning to dry up, it can be scary. Elijah's brook was a literal brook, and it dried up. So, the question becomes, what is he going to do?

Verse 8 is the hinge that this whole episode swings on – **“Then the word of the Lord came to him.”** Elijah watched the stream gradually slow to a trickle and finally dry up; only THEN did the Word of the Lord come to him. God hadn't forgotten about him – Elijah obeyed God by going out to the ravine; now God had a new adventure for him. That adventure always means obeying God, whether He calls you to the dry brook or to the lush meadow – listen for God's voice; hear His instruction; obey without hesitation.

The call of Elijah shows us that God sometimes raises up an individual, not an army. Elijah shows up with no backstory and with very few qualifications, yet he spoke the Word of God boldly before one of the most evil men in all of history. Even still, God had even greater things in store for Elijah than that. But first, Elijah had to be prepared. He had to learn total separation, absolute dependence, and unconditional obedience.

Sometimes when you have nowhere else to go but to God, you're in exactly the right place. Is that you today? In your dry season, where are you looking for your provision? Are you looking to God? Maybe you're counting on your own abilities, or on other people. *The burning theological question throughout the book of 1 Kings is, “Has God failed?”* Maybe you're asking that question today. If so, you've probably asked, “Why hasn't God answered me? Why am I enduring this dry season? Has God failed me?”

In Elijah's day, people were praying for rain. Ahab (and the priests and many other people) would have been praying to Baal for rain. But remember that God's people, the Israelites, had no water either – what about their prayers? Was God failing them? No; God hadn't failed the Israelites. He would answer their prayers, but first, there was some prep work to be done.

God hasn't failed you, either; but maybe there's some prep work needed in your life, too. Sometimes the seasons of greatest productivity follow seasons of the most intense preparation. It's time to get your focus on God, and on God alone. Allow Him to break that which is needed, so He can build you into something greater. Trust God to provide all that is

needed for today. Sometimes the brook has to go dry, and only THEN will the Word of the Lord come. Trust Him today, and watch Him work in you and through you.

[1] <http://www.thywordistruth.com/class-elijah/elijah-11.pdf>

## Takeaways from this message.

The call of Elijah shows us that God sometimes raises up an INDIVIDUAL, not an ARMY.

Seasons of greatest PRODUCTIVITY often follow seasons of most intense PREPARATION.

Dry seasons often involve total SEPARATION.

✓ *Sometimes you have to go through a season of BREAKING before you can experience a season of BLESSING.*

Dry seasons lead you to absolute DEPENDENCE.

✓ *God is capable of using unconventional MEANS to achieve uncommon RESULTS.*

Dry seasons call for unconditional OBEDIENCE.

✓ *Sometimes God guides by what He doesn't \_\_\_\_\_.*

The burning theological question throughout the book of 1 Kings is "Has God FAILED?"

## DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. What was most surprising, unexpected, or helpful from today's passage/message? Why?
2. If a fellow Christian asked you how they can identify any signs of worshipping other gods (materialism, success, money, etc.) in their own life, what would you say?
3. If ravens brought you food, would you give them a tip?
4. God has created each of us with a purpose. How are you seeking to learn more about the purpose God has for you right now?

5. **What conclusion do you draw from the fact that the king's response to Elijah's dire warning is not recorded in Scripture?**
  
6. **What do you suppose made Elijah so courageous? (HINT: See verse 1) Is this same 'resource' available to you? Why or why not?**
  
7. **What have you learned through your personal time of Bible reading this week?**