

Dry Places #3 - Unexpected

This message is brought to us by Jehovah Jirreh - The LORD who will provide.

This characteristic of God was first mentioned in the first book of the Bible, Genesis 22:14 – when God asked Abraham to offer his promised son, Issac, as a sacrifice. On the mountain that God chose, God provided a lamb to take Issac's place. This story is one of Rescue and Relationship. It shows us that faith and obedience to God go hand-in-hand.

Choosing to read the Bible is never a waste of time:

70% of the New Testament is Old Testament quotes a reference.

It is said that the Old Testament is God concealed and the New Testament is God revealed

Today we will be in the book of 1 Kings Chapter 17. The whole book of Kings is a classic story of good vs. evil. It shows the failure of the kings, prophets, and priests of Israel and it reveals our need for Jesus the true reigning King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus whose word far surpasses that of any Prophet, Jesus the everlasting Priest whose priesthood is unchangeable, Jesus who is able save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us.

The role of a king was to be the supreme ruler responsible for leading the nation, administering justice, commanding the military, and overseeing the economy, **all while adhering to God's law.**

The role of the prophet was to act as God's representative, communicating His word to the king and people, delivering messages of warning or encouragement, and enforcing covenant promises. Covenant watchdog.

The man after God's own heart, King David has died and after a whole lot of family drama Solomon becomes king.

God made an "If You, Then I" promise to Solomon:

1 Kings 3:14... **if you** walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, **then I** will lengthen your days."

1 Kings 9:4... **if you** walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, *and* if you keep My statutes and My judgments, **5 then I will** establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

Solomon's heart was not loyal to the LORD his God:

- Solomon chose to intentionally disobey God by building places of worship to pagan gods
- Solomon failed to measure up to God's standard as a king. He went beyond God's set boundary. By building alters in high places for pagan worship.

Ephesians 6: 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

- Israel turned away from following God and did not keep God's commandments and God's statutes and worshipped other gods.

The Kingdom was split into two, 10 tribes to the North (Israel) and 2 tribes to the South (Judah).

After a long succession of unholy kings, Israel is now in the reign of King Ahab, who did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all the kings who came before him.

*** 1 Kings Chapter 17 finds Israel in the middle of a mess**

1 Kings Chapter 17: 1-9

1 And **Elijah** the Tishbite, **of the inhabitants of Gilead**, said to Ahab, "**As the Lord God of Israel lives**, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

2 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, **3** "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. **4** And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. **6** The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. **7**

And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, **9** "**Arise, go to Zarephath**, which *belongs* to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Today's message is titled "Unexpected". In 1 Kings Chapter 17 the main characters in the chapter find themselves in unexpected circumstances and in return God provides in unexpected ways. The prophet Elijah and an unnamed widow women find themselves in the middle of a dry place. More specifically a drought brought on through the word of God spoken by Elijah.

*** God is teaching us not to be afraid when we find ourselves in the middle of difficult times. Significant things happen in the middle.**

1. In OT:

- a) The Tree of Life is found the middle of the garden of Eden
- b) God commanded the Hebrews to place the Tabernacle in the center of their camp, so He would be in the center of their community

2. In NT:

- a) Jesus taught in the middle of the temple courts during the Feast of Tabernacles
- b) The disciples were in a boat in the middle of a storm when Jesus came to their rescue
- c) Jesus died on a cross in the middle of two thieves
- d) In the New Jerusalem, the River of Life flows down the middle of the street

3. God is always found in the middle

4. As believers in Jesus Christ we are made for the middle

The psalmist and song writers of today express it this way:

Statement of truth:

Can't go back to the beginning /
Can't control what tomorrow will bring /
But I know here in the middle /
Is the place where you promise to be /

Confession:

I'm not enough /Unless you come

Request:

Will you meet me here again?

5. In the middle is where decisions are made

Dry Places of Obedience come with unexpected blessings

1. God's Judgment and Provision for Elijah (17:1-7)

A. Elijah's Prophecy (v. 1): Elijah declares to King Ahab that there will be no rain or dew in the land for years, as a judgment for Israel's wicked ways and worship of Baal.

- Elijah is an outsider. Showing up unexpectedly from Gilead. In the Bible, Gilead symbolizes healing and restoration.
- God is setting Elijah up for success by showing King Ahab who is truly in control of creation, and more specifically the weather.

B. God's Command to Hide (v. 2-3): God commands Elijah to hide by the brook Cherith.

- Cherith is a place of isolation. Where Elijah will solely be dependent on God as his provider.

C. Miraculous Provision by Ravens (v. 4-6): Ravens are sent by God to bring Elijah bread and meat in the morning and evening, with the brook providing him with water.

D. Provision dried up (v.7) And it happened after a while that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

- By moving His provision God tests Elijah's willingness to say "yes".
- God's provision did not dry up with the brook Cherith.
- God is showing Elijah that He won't take him out of the drought, but that He will be with him and provide for him in the middle of a dry place.

2. Provision from a Widow at Zarephath (17:8-16)

A. God Directs Elijah (v. 8-9): When the brook dries up, God directs Elijah to Zarephath in Sidon, to a widow who will provide for him.

- Zarephath was in Sidon, the center of Baal worship, which King Ahab promoted in opposition to Israel's God.

B. A Widow's Desperation (v. 10-12): A widow is found preparing her last meal of flour and oil for herself and her son, expecting to die afterward.

- Elijah's faith was tested as he trusted God to provide

C. Elijah's Assurance (v. 13-14): Elijah assures the widow that she has nothing to fear, and God's word says her flour and oil will not run out until the rain returns.

- The widow's faith was tested by her obedience in sharing her last meal.

D. The Miracle of the Flour and Oil (v. 15-16): The widow obeys, and the jar of flour and jug of oil are supernaturally replenished, providing food for all of them for many days.

- The miracles performed by Elijah in Zarephath were a bold declaration of God's supremacy over the false god Baal.

3. Resurrection of the Widow's Son (17:17-24)

- A. The Widow's Grief (v. 17-18): The widow's son becomes sick and dies.
- B. Elijah's Prayer and Raising the Child (v. 19-23): Elijah takes the boy to an upper room, lays on him, and prays to the Lord, who brings the boy back to life.
- C. Confession of Faith (v. 24): Elijah confirms that God's word is true, leading the widow to believe that the man who speaks God's word is a true prophet of God.
 - Both Elijah and the Widow's faith were tested by believing God for a healing miracle.

Who do you identify with in this story?

Remember Hebrews 11:6...without faith no one can please God. We must believe that God is real and that He rewards everyone who searches for him.

God can be known. God through the person Jesus Christ desires to have a personal relationship with you. Romans 5:6-8 says - " [6](#) For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7](#) For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8](#) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.