

Continue our teaching on the life of Elijah, someone who was willing to stand in the gap: His name: The Lord is my God

His journey becomes our journey.

Last session we looked at "what happens when the brook dries up"

James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

The dried up brook was as a direct result of Elijah's own prayer.

The dried up brook was just an indication that the very thing that Elijah prayed for was in fact beginning to happen.

Your wilderness experience right now may very well be an indication that God is beginning to answer your prayer.

Lord make me a Godly man,

Lord make me a woman after your own heart

Lord, teach me faith, make me strong lord.

And then we add conditions, But don't let it hurt too much, or take away too many comforts. O and by the way, don't make me suffer too much. Just a bit OK. And Lord as I pray for patience, make these things happen quickly!!

No, when we pray for change, we must be prepared to go to the brook.

Four Lessons from Cherith:

1. We must be prepared to be set aside if we want to be used to make a difference.
2. Gods direction will always include Gods provision.
3. We need to trust God one day at a time
4. A dried up brook is often a sign of God's pleasure, not disappointment in your life.

Poem: *Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams*

Bridged over by our broken dreams

Behind the misty caps of years,

Beyond the great salt fount of tears

The garden lies, strives you may,

You cannot miss it in your way.

All paths that have been or shall be,

Pass somewhere through Gethsemane

All those who journey, soon or late,

Must pass within the gardens gate;

Must kneel alone in darkness there,

And battle with some fierce despair.

God pity those who cannot say,

"Not mine but thine" who only pray,

"Let this cup pass" and cannot see

The purpose in Gethsemane.

Boot camp and it's obstacle courses is not a one off experience for the Christian. It becomes part of our lives and periodically we go through the obstacle course.

Pride Fear Resentment habit Submission

Through it all God is in control!!

Elijah continues his journey

Out of the frying pan and into the fire

Sometimes that's how we feel. Just gone through what we feel is the worst ever, and then it gets worse. Well as we look at the stage of Elijah's life, we can see that the training gets more intense.

1 Kings 17: 8-16 Read

Advanced training at Zarephath

Zarephath: To melt or to Smelt

From Noun: Crucible

Elijah was being led to a place where God would refine him further for the demanding tasks ahead of him.

There is a very important lesson to learn here:

We need to fully understand that sometimes we go through difficulties so that God can prepare us for what's AHEAD not for what we have done in the past. It's preparation and not punishment.

God says " I know you and know what you need"

Isaiah 49:16 Behold I have written your name upon the palms of my hands and your future is continually before me.

1 Kings 17:8 "Then the word of the Lord came to him"

God knows you and what you need. He sends His word to you tonight.

In the journey God sends His word,

In the furnace God sends His word.

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined you, but not with silver, I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.

Old Chorus: Crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the lord tests the heart of His child.

Crucible: A large round bowl that is exposed to the outside elements. Not shut off.

Furnace: For Gold. Sealed off for increased temperature.

It's as if God is saying " I need to cut you off, shut you away and turn up the heat. It's the only way I get rid of all the rubbish out of our lives!!

At this we have a choice:

Do I go to Zarephath or not?

I want to have a look at three men who had the same choice.

Daniel 3:12-30 **Read**

This truly is a remarkable story of Courage, Faithfulness, Trust, Grace, Salvation, Victory.

How God's heart must have leapt for joy when he heard the words of these three friends (V 17)

Three men who were willing to stand in the gap for what was right.

Refining Process: Special furnaces were necessary for smelting metal ores. Finely ground ores were mixed charcoal and fluxes of limestone or seashells and placed into the fire. Bellows kept the fires hot enough to melt the ore. As it melted, the liquid metal sank to the bottom of the furnace, allowing the waste slag to float to the top. This waste was removed through a pipe. The metal was allowed to cool and then re-melted for purification. It was then cast into molds to be shaped into many useful items.

Just as in this process something is put into the raw metal, so God places something special into our lives, into our furnace.

Verse 25 He answered and said, look I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The Son of God, Jesus, has been placed into our lives to draw all the mess to the surface and to cast us into something useful, instruments/vessels

Quote: cast into molds to make useful items.

If you are here tonight feeling useless, then I would suggest that you get to Zarephath and ask God to change you.

Tonight the word of the Lord comes to us and Says:

" Arise, go to Zarephath and stay there"