

Sunday 24th February 2013

What happens when the brook dries up.

We have been looking at what took Elijah (the spokesperson) to Elijah the Man of God. The one who was prepared to stand in the gap.

His Boot camp experience at **Cherith**: To cut off or to Cut Down

God had to get Elijah away and alone to deal with him. To get him ready to stand in the gap for a nation.

Sometimes we need to get away from everything to allow God to change us, to strip away everything that is not of Him.

Ice Sculpture: Horse

1 Kings 17:6 And the ravens brought him flesh and bread in the morning , and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

What an incredible experience this must have been. Bread and meat in the morning and a subway sandwich for the evening and throughout the long hot day, as many cool drinks from the fresh brook.

No worries, food and drink as promised by God. Almost too good to be true. Remember this is boot camp, a hard time of training and testing and character building. This will not come when everything is handed to us on a plate.

We cannot always live by bubbling brooks, be waited on and everything is just right.

1 Kings 17:7 And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

One morning, Elijah wakes up and noticed the brook was no longer gushing and bubbling. Over the next few days, he watches it dwindle down to a trickle. Then the cracked river bed appeared, no more water.

In life we experience similar situations. They are not as punishment, but God allows them as a means for us to draw close to him.

Psalm 63:1 *O God, you are my God; early will I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*

David's experience. A psalm David wrote when he was in the wilderness of Judah, hiding and running for his life from king Saul.

David knew God was the answer and looked to him early and not as an afterthought.

" My flesh longs for you"

From times of Joy to times of nothing.

From a constant supply to nothing.

When the bank account dries up

When relationships fall apart

When job prospects dry up

When your health deteriorates rapidly

When the brook dries up, what to you do?

David did not blame God for his situation,

Elijah did not blame God for his situation,

Dried up brooks do not cancel out Gods plan for your life, they often cause them to emerge.

Human nature tells us that we feel abandoned, why has God forsaken me. Tonight, allow the words of the Father to comfort and encourage you.

Isaiah 49:14-16

I have shared these words many times and been comforted by them constantly. Why? Because God knows how I feel.

Like Israel, we sometimes say the words, " Why have you abandoned me Lord, forgotten about me"?

This next bit we need to remember how long ago it was written and see how relevant it is today. In answer to our feelings. God challenges us how we feel.

" can a mother forget her nursing child"

It's a very realistic and powerful statement that demonstrates the difference between the heart of man and the heart of God.

Stories we hear of babies being abandoned by their mothers on doorsteps, inside bins and at hospital doors. Babies abused, even tortured and murdered.

Mothers and fathers who raise their children with no compassion. No relationship.

The answer is yes, these things do happen, however hard it is for us to consider. In the scripture God does not answer His question, he puts it out to us to think about what we are saying.

I can almost hear the unspoken word of God saying " where on earth did you get that opinion of me? Are you putting me in the same category. Don't you know me better.

I don't know about you but I would begin to feel a bit embarrassed and probably want to retract that statement. (No I didn't really mean it like that, it's just that Well you know)

Yes He does know, and it's because He knows that He is able to overlook and say I still love you.

Hebrews 13:5 I will never leave you or forsake you.

Never: oo-may Not at all, Anymore, By any or No Means
In no case. Ever.

Romans 8:38-39 **Read**

The world may abandon you, leave you out in the cold, dump you on a doorstep, chuck you on the rubbish heap, even kill off your soul.

God says " that's not me" I'm not like that.

Isaiah 49:16 Amplified version

I have indelibly imprinted (Tattooed) a picture of you on the palm of each of my hands, our ways are continually before Him.

Not one moment of our lives goes by without Him knowing exactly where we are and what we are doing.

Andrew, game I used to play with the boys. Where is he gone now!!

God never needs to worry that He's lost you, or misplaced you because you are right there in the palm of his hand.

And when you end up in a dry river bed he never has to say, " How on earth did you get there, No that's exactly where he placed you and where he wants you.

To finish:

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.