

TAKEAWAY:

God sometimes allows the brook to dry up so our hearts will wake up.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- Have you experienced a time when your spiritual "brook" dried up? Share what took place and how the Lord renewed your water source.
- When a source of security and comfort runs dry, is your first reaction typically to rely on your own resourcefulness or to rely on God?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read 1 Kings 17: 1-7

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- Elijah was commanded to "go" and "hide" by the brook, and he obeyed. In times of crisis or personal "drought," we often feel pressured to be busy or act quickly. What does Elijah's period of forced waiting and hidden obedience at the brook teach us about the spiritual importance of pausing and listening to God's specific direction, even when our instincts tell us to immediately hustle for a solution?
- Why might God have sent a famine on the land?
- Elijah rises out of obscurity, and God essentially sends him into the wilderness. Would he have been more productive if God had sent him into a city center? Why or why not?

APPLICATION:

- The ravens fed Elijah in the wilderness. During times of widespread difficulty or "drought" in our community (e.g., economic hardship, spiritual apathy, social division), how can our church/our Life Group, be an unconventional "raven" of unexpected, God-given provision and hope?
- How can you choose trust instead of panic when things run low?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

- **The Result of a Wake-Up Call:**

- What does a truly awakened heart look like in daily practice? What is the practical, observable difference in a person's life after they've had their old source of comfort removed and have learned to trust in God alone?
- Read Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4. Nascent Israel, Elijah (1 Ki 17:6), and Jesus were all supernaturally sustained, tested, and trained prior to their next season of life. With this sermon's main point in mind, discuss this concept and the following quotes, e.g., How and why have you seen afflictions have the potential to both strengthen faith and destroy it? What hardships in your life have drawn you closer to God? Matured you in Christ? Perpared you for future steps?
 - "Afflictions are not in order to wound, but to instruct us" (John Chrysostom).
 - "The more the body is afflicted, the more the soul is purified" (Athanasius of Alexandria).
 - "The Lord often permits us to be severely tried in order to shake off our sluggishness, and to humble us by making us perceive the vanity of all our blessings" (John Calvin).
 - "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (C. S. Lewis).
- **A Crises Can Expose the Idols of Our Heart.** The brook Cherith was a temporary, tangible source of provision for Elijah. What are the subtle "brooks" in our lives (e.g., comforts, securities, achievements, or even spiritual disciplines) that we unconsciously can begin to worship or rely on more than God, making it necessary for God to dry them up? With the main point of this sermon in mind as well as this subpoint on idolatry, discuss the following quotes:
 - "An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give" (Tim Keller).
 - "We must constantly be on guard against letting God's gifts, whether material or spiritual, distract us from the Giver" (J. I. Packer).
 - "The moment the Christian forgets that his only ultimate resource is the personal, infinite God, he will begin to rely on the gift rather than the Giver. The drying up of the Cherith water was a surgical strike against the prophet's potential idolatry of the brook itself" (Francis Schaeffer).
 - Augustine's thesis statement in *Confessions* is "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." This book (one long prayer, written toward the end of the 4th century) still informs our ideas of spiritual formation. Read it!
 - For further exploration on idolatry, consider reading Kyle Idleman's *Gods at War: Defeating the Idols that Battle against Your Heart* (written to the average Christian); G. K. Beale's *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (written to the biblical scholar).
- **Other Quotes:**
 - "The measure of our spiritual maturity may be taken by the way we react to the 'dry brook' seasons of our lives. When the brook Cherith fails, do we quietly wait for the next word from the Lord, or do we start to despair and look for a new source of water on our own terms" (J. I. Packer)?
 - "God sends us to the brook Cherith not to stay, but to learn to lean. And when the brook runs dry, we are forced into deeper dependence. The lesson is not in the water; the lesson is in the Word of the Lord that brings us the next command" (A. W. Tozer).
 - "It is a wonderful way of God to sustain His people by a passing stream. But when that stream fails, He does but prepare His servant for a more glorious demonstration of His power. The drying up of Cherith is not the end of Providence, but a fresh summons to faith" – namely, in this case, God's provision through the widow at Zarephath (Charles Spurgeon).
 - "Elijah had to learn that God's presence and provision were not tied to one location or one means. His comfort at the Brook Cherith was removed to teach him that the source of his life

was God's word, not a stream or a bird. When your 'brook'—your career, your health, your relationship—runs dry, God is shifting your reliance to Himself" (Tim Keller).

PRAYER:

Ask God to provide opportunities for our church to be a blessing for others in droughts. Ask Him for provision when seasons of drought come (physically and spiritually) as a way to rely on Him and not your own strength.