

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



“Boot Camp at Cherith”
1 Kings 17:1-7

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 (Elijah), 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.-1 Kings 17:1-7 (NKJV)

With these principles in mind, here are some questions I ask myself as I study the Scriptures:

6 Questions to ask yourself as you study Scripture to help you apply it:

1. How does this passage apply to my life?
2. What changes must I make?
3. How will I carry out these changes?
4. What will be my personal prayer concerning this truth?
5. Which verse(s) in this section should I memorize?
6. What illustration or word picture will help me remember what I’ve read?

Some quick facts about Elijah that may help us understand something of his important in Scripture and to our lives...

Quick Facts About The Prophet Elijah:

- (1) The acts of Elijah are found in 1 Kings 17-22 and 2 Kings 1-2
- (2) He became a prophet in Israel after the kingdom divided
- (3) He is called Elias in the King James New Testament
- (4) He is identified as a “Tishbite” (thought to mean that he came from Tishbeh in Gilead)
- (5) He dealt with Israel's king Ahab and his wife Jezebel
- (6) He exposed and killed the prophets of Baal
- (7) He met with God on Mount Horeb, sometimes called Mount Sinai
- (8) He called upon Elisha to follow him
- (9) Like Enoch, Elijah did not die as normal men, but was taken by God into heaven in a whirlwind
- (10) Elijah experienced and performed many extraordinary miracles
- (11) New Testament writers, The Paul and James used him as an illustration in their writings (Romans 11:1-5 and James 5:16-18)
- (12) John the Baptist was likened to Elijah in the New Testament (Malachi 4:5, Matthew 11:12-14, Luke 1:17)
- (13) Elijah actually makes an appearance in the New Testament (along with Moses) when Jesus is transfigured (Matthew 17)



Elijah arrived on the scene at one of the darkest hours in Israel's history. Over six decades of wickedness had prevailed – open idolatry, political corruption, and moral decay. Suddenly, without warning, the prophet stood before King Ahab and declared the Word of the Lord in fearless fashion. His next instruction from God was *"Hide yourself by the brook Cherith,"* and that he did. The lessons learned beside that lonely and dried-up brook are of greatest interest to us. There he was prepared for a new task, as a soldier is when put through the grind of boot camp. The security and comfort once enjoyed were taken from him while God was at work refashioning his life for new usefulness. In theory, he was a prophet. But in practice, he wasn't yet the man God needed.

THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF DROUGHT (1 Kings 17:1)

Notice verse 1 of our passage, *"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.'"* There are two things about this pronouncement we want to notice

2 Important Parts to this Pronouncement:

- (1) **The source** – Scripture records for us Elijah's opening remarks to the king of Israel, *"As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand..."* The prophet, appearing before an unrighteous king and queen (who were already seeing that prophets of God were being executed... they

were bad and God had raised up Elijah to pronouncement of God's judgement on them), announced an upcoming catastrophe, identifying the Lord of heaven as the basis (source) of his pronouncement. And God doesn't go back on His word. What He says, He will do.

Read the following verse. What are these tell us about God's word spoken, and pronouncement that He makes:

- Joshua 21:45, *"No a word failed of any good things which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."*
- Joshua 23:14, *"Behold, this day I am going the way of the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; no one word of them has failed."*
- 1 Kings 8:56, *"Blessed be the Lord, who has given to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses."*

Not one word has failed. Joshua, as leader of God's people, had said this not once, but twice after God brought them safely into the land he promised (see above, Joshua 21:45 & 23:14). Several hundred years later, at the height of the earthly kingdom, in his benediction to the dedication of the temple, Solomon echoed Joshua's declaration: "Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. *Not one word has failed* of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant" (1 Kings 8:56). *Not one of God's words had failed.* It was an important reminder for the first readers of the book of Kings, as they found themselves at rock bottom (all too soon after Solomon's reign). Having fallen from those heights to the depths of exile, God's people were tempted to wonder, *Have God's plan and power failed?* Again and again, 1 and 2 Kings seeks to restore and strengthen the faith of God's languishing people, not with platitudes and generalities, but with specific details and concrete facts. God's people need to be confronted with the stark realities of what God had said through his prophets and how, without fail, he acted to fulfill his word.

- (2) **The extent** – Elijah says in the second half of verse 1, "... *there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.*" The word "years" gave reason for alarm. Ahab would have been unsettled by such news.

THE COMMAND OF GOD (1 Kings 17:2-4)

Perhaps at this point Elijah was ready to hit the streets, maybe even chomping at the bits... and make his pronouncement public and go after a corrupt and evil Ahab/Jezebel regime that was pagan at best and leading God people way from God. Elijah may have been feeling like, "Let's go Ahab! It's on!. But God had other plans. Notice in verses 2-4 what God told Elijah to do instead, *"² Then the word of the LORD came to him (Elijah), 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.'"*

2 Things Elijah Was Told: Elijah was...

- (1) **Elijah was told what to do (vv.2-3)** – The Lord told His prophet, *“Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.”* The Hebrews term for “hide” suggest “concealment.” This command was in reality a provision for Elijah’s protection from Ahab. But more, it was God’s means of sending His man off for training, preparation for what is ahead... bootcamp.

How does God prepare us:

1. **Sometimes He prepares us through times of temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)** Jesus when through a time of preparation for His earthly ministry just after His baptism in the Jordan. God took Him to the dessert and there He was tempted. We read in *Matthew 4:1-3* *“¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”* ***How might times of “temptation” and especially our victory over it prepare us for living the Christian life and His purposes for our life as believers?***
2. **Sometimes He prepares us through times of trial (James 1:2-4)** James, the half brother of Jesus, reminded us that we may go through trial in our life to prepare us. He said in *James 1:2-4*, *“²My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* ***How might times of “trial” prepare us for living the Christian life and His purposes for our life as believers?***
3. **Sometimes He prepares us through times of teaching/training (Acts 9:1-30 [focus vv.19, 22, 28])** Follow Paul’s dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus, God/Jesus through him through a time of preparation, and in Acts 9 you can see that is was through the company of other saints/believers who encouraged, taught and helped to prepare Him for what was ahead. ***How might times of “teaching/training” in the company of other perhaps more seasons and mature believers prepare us for living the Christian life and His purposes for our life as believers?***
4. **Sometimes He prepares us through times of thorns (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)** That seems to have been a part of Paul’s story of preparation and keeping him useful in God’s instrument... at least that what he tell us in *2 Corinthians 12:7-10*, *“⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to ¹⁰buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* We don’t know exactly what Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was but it was given to him to remind him that he needed to be dependent on God and His strength and not his own. “Thorns” like this may sound a bit like a trial of some kind, but I think it is different in some way. Whereas, trails come and go and may be intense for a season; thorn seem to be more permanent (as in Paul’s case) and on-going. They aren’t going a way and they are there to keep us focused on the Lord and dependent on Him. I’m thinking more like a disability, or a handicap of some-kind, an acute illness or disease that you just have to learn to live with, blindness, deafness, etc. Remember Paul prayed “three times” for the Lord to

take it away, and the Lord essentially said, “Paul this is my training ground for you!” *How might times of “thorns” prepare us for living the Christian life and His purposes for our life as believers?*

5. **Sometimes He prepares us through times of tranquility [solitude/calmness] (Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12)** Throughout Jesus earthly ministry, He frequently and regularly withdrew for time of refreshing, solitude and renewal. In Luke 5:15-16 the Bible tells us, *“¹⁵ However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. ¹⁶ So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”* These are often times of great preparation and refreshing that make us ready to be used by God. They may represent times spent in prayer and contemplation before God, where He speaks to our heart, reminds us of who we are and how He desires to use us, comforts us, strengthens us, encourages us when we are discouraged. In Luke 6:12 Bible says, *“¹² Now it came to pass in those days that He (Jesus) went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”* *How might times of “tranquility/solitude” prepare us for living the Christian life and His purposes for our life as believers?*

- (2) **Elijah was told how to survive (v.4)** – Verse 4 of our passage says, *“⁴ And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”* God said that Elijah was to drink the water from the brook and eat the food brought to him by the ravens. HE was about to see God’s hand in his life in a most extraordinary way. NOTE: Lessons were to be learned in the shadows, away from the noise and lights of the public, away from the applause and popularity of the crown.

God Will Take Care of You by Civilla Martin

Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you;
Beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.

No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon his breast, God will take care of you.

(Chorus)

God will take care of you, through ev’ry day, o’er all the way;
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.

The song is was written by Civilla Martin, the wife of a Baptist minister and know for some other popular hymns and gospel sons. She also wrote the text of **“His Eye Is On the Sparrow”** (1905), set to music by the well-known gospel song composer Charles Gabriel 3(1856-1932), and made famous by Ethel Waters (1896-1977), and later as a part of the Billy Graham Crusades. Another hymn by written the Martin was on you will be familiar with, “The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power” (1912), seems to have inspired Andraé Crouch (1942-2015) and his composition by the same name in 1962.

Here is the story behind this song that reminds us that “God Will Take Care of You,” just like He did Elijah. Around the year 1904 Civilla D. Martin was at home confined to bed due to illness. Her husband was reluctant to leave her that day due to her illness. He felt he should stay behind to take care of her in her sickness. Their young son reminded him that day, “Daddy, don’t you think that God can take care of her better than you can?” So Walter S. Martin went to his preaching engagement that day and left his at home to recover, and God to watch over her. While her husband was away that day preaching, she kept replaying her sons simple words to his father before he left... “Daddy, don’t you think God can take care of her?” While he was away, she wrote the hymn *God Will Take Care of You*. When he returned home, she gave the words to him. He sat down at his organ and wrote the music. I’m sure this hymn has impacted many lives, and to this day still does, including my own. One man in particular, about 25 years or so after this was written (1930), was hospitalized with a severe case of shingles. Prior business deals had failed, he was in physical pain as well as emotional pain, filled with despair and little hope. One morning while in his hospital bed, he heard this hymn coming from the hospital chapel. The man followed the music into the chapel and as he listened, he felt his burdens lift. All worries left him, as he realized just how much God loved him. He later recalled those moments in the chapel as the most dramatic and glorious twenty minutes of my life. Who is this man who was so filled with despair? Mr. James C. Penney, founder of the American Department store chain, J.C. Penney.

THE OBEDIENCE OF ELIJAH (1 Kings 17:5-6)

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.

How did Elijah take the instruction? We’re told in verse 5, “*So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith...*” His stay was perhaps for several years. His encampment meant solitude, loneliness, removal from any place of honor. He did his part... so did God. Notice it in verse 6, “*The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook*”... just as God had said would happen.

A Good Definition of Obedience = to go and do according to the word of the Lord (1 Kings 17:5)

I’ve given this definition of the “obedience” before, but it is maybe the best definition of obedience I’ve ever heard and it sounds an awful like Elijah’s definition of obedience.

Definition of Obedience = “Obedience is doing exactly what God tell you to do, when He tells you to do it, with the right heart attitude.”

Listen, that is Elijah in our passages. Perhaps after God’s call and then God pronouncement to Ahab and Jezebel through Elijah, he felt empowered, hyped and boosted up, and was ready to go. Instead God said, “It’s not time Elijah! Shut it down. God retreat by the brook and let me take care of you for a while and prepare you for battle ahead.” And here is what Elijah did (even though he may not have wanted to)... he went and did exactly what God said to do, when He said to do it,

with the right heart attitude. Verse 5 of our passage says, *“He went and did according to the word of the Lord.”*

3 Parts to True Obedience:

1. Obedience is doing exactly what God tell you to do -
2. Obedience is acting instantly when God tells you to -
3. Obedience is obeying with the right heart attitude -

As we think about Elijah and the lessons we can learn about his life that apply to our... how to “Elijah Your Life” a key characteristic of Elijah’s life early on was complete and thorough obedience. If you want to be like Elijah, you must begin to practice instant obedience.

THE LESSONS OF CHERITH (1 Kings 17:7)

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

All was fine until the stream began dwindling to a trickly which soon dried up completely. The drought which affected Ahab also impacted Elijah. Do pass by that statement too quickly... *“The drought which affected Ahab also impacted Elijah!” What might this tell us about the difficulties, hardship, trials we face in this world? What might it say about the effects of God’s judgment when it falls? Why might this be important to remember? What might this be saying to us today as believes/Christians in our current world and cultural situation?*

No rain... no brook/stream. Now what? That which the prophet was dependent on ceased to be, and his security dried up.

The Lessons the Lord Wanted Elijah to Learn When the Brook Dried Up:

- (1) **The same God who gave water took it back** – Our human inclination is to feel that once God gives water (or a mate, a child, a business/job, a home...), He should never withdraw it. But that’s not always the case. The prophet had to understand that God still loved him and held him in the hollow of His hand, even when the water was gone. In Isaiah 49:14-16, the Bible says, *“¹⁴ But Zion said, ‘The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’ ¹⁵ ‘Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.’”* We see the record of how Zion expressed feeling of being forgotten, to which God replied, *“... I will not forget you...I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.”* This is precisely what God’s prophet had to learn.
- (2) **The dried-up brook was a direct result of his own prayer** – James 5:17 tell us, *“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.”* James tells us that Elijah prayed that it might not rain. Result? No rain for 3 ½ years. He suffered during the drought, but his suffering resulted in effective training. Obedience is often learned through the context of suffering. Hebrews 5:8 says, *“Though He (Jesus) was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.”* *How is obedience learned through suffering? What do you think that means and can you cite examples?*

Lessons We Must Learn Today: *(there are four)*

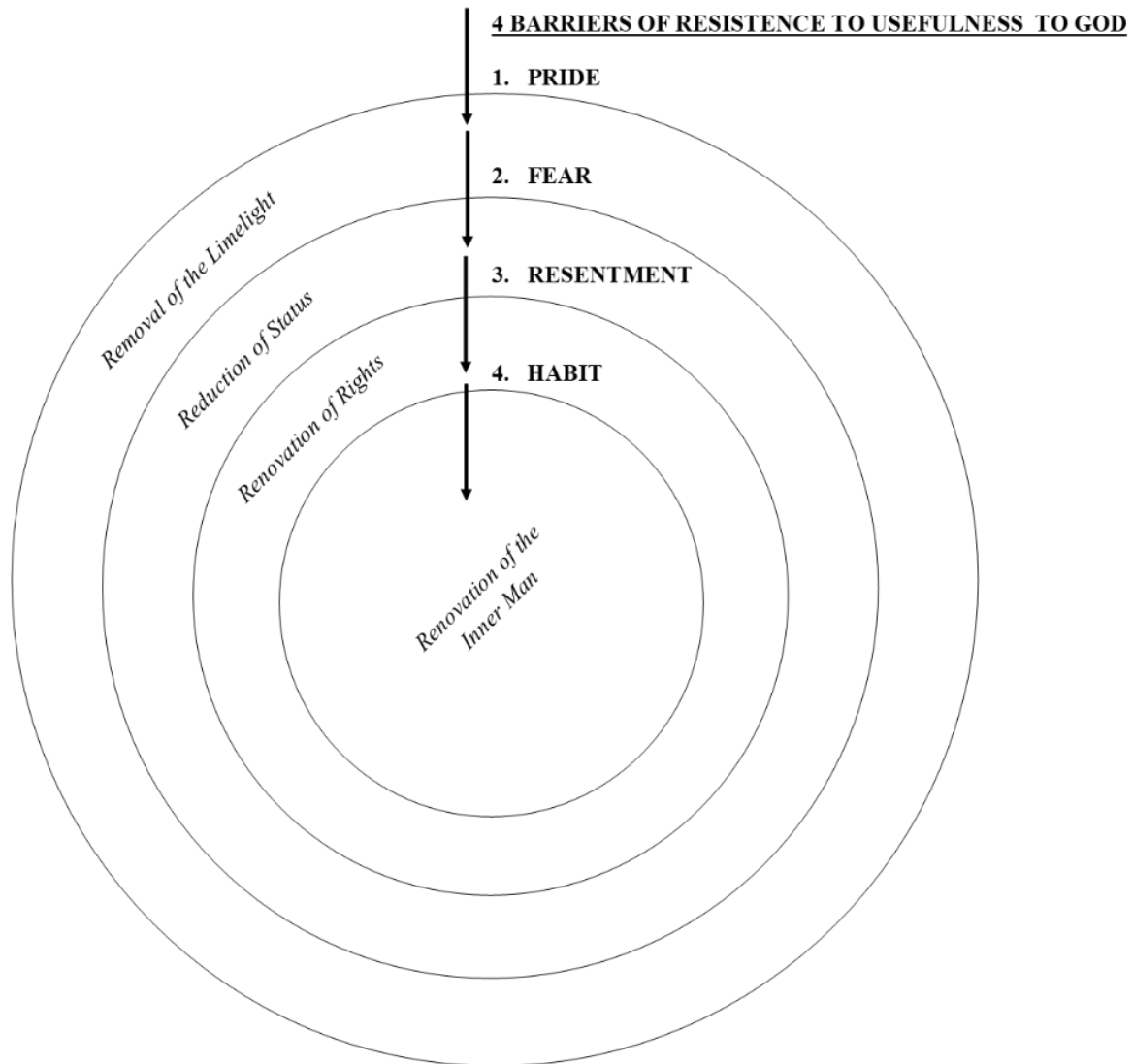
- (1) We must be as willing to be set aside as to be used –**
- (2) God's direction include His provisions –**
- (3) Trusting God must be done one day at a time –** Elijah's example is worth remembering... He went to Ahab (and Jezebel), not knowing the next step... then he went to the brook Chereth, not knowing the future... then he watched the brook dry up, not knowing how to survive.
- (4) A dried-up brook is often a sign of God's pleasure, not His disappointment –**

Consider the following...

- **Abraham** – While trusting God, he was told, “Take now your only son, Isaac...”
- **Joseph** – While walking in integrity, he as imprisoned on false charges...
- **Elijah** – While he was obedient, his brook disappeared...
- **Paul** – While faithfully evangelizing, he was stoned in Lystra... imprisoned in Philippi... chased out of Thessalonika... etc.

A TRAINING METHOD TO BE OBSERVED

The chart below represents four steps God takes us through to prepare us for Himself... His work. NOTE: Each line represents a human barrier of restraint to God's instruction; each space represents a stage of development God takes us through once the barrier is broken. This is the method God used in Elijah, and the one He will use in your life as He prepares your life for us. Some miss this. There no short cuts, secret passages, or easy paths...



Some Questions to Consider: *(as you look at this chart)*

- (1) Which stage do you think might be most painful? Why?
- (2) Which stage is perhaps the easiest? Why?
- (3) How can this chart help you better prepare for the week ahead?

Consider this... has your brook dried up? Is God pleased with your walk with Him? Are you taking it one day at a time? Do you really believe God will provide for you? Describe what it's like to be "set aside" from the limelight. Are you experiencing the "hidden life"?