

Elijah at the Brook Cherith

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Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service and as we come together in this act of worship around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing upon his word. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we give thee thanks that we have access into thy nearer presence and that because of the merits of thy Son, the one who ever liveth at thy right hand, the one who continually ministers on behalf of those that were given to him by thee and whom he has redeemed by going to the cross of Golgotha, that he is the one who died and was buried and who rose again, that he is the one who ascended to thy right hand and that he is the one who is coming back, coming back to bring his redeemed people to be with himself forever.

And we give thanks that through him that we have this boldness and confidence to come into thy presence, that a throne of grace has been set up for us, that he is in the midst of the throne.

And therefore we come, O Lord, before thee, confessing your sins and seeking the grace of repentance, to sorrow over our sins and to seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

We give thanks that we come to our mercy seat today, that we come to a place that has been sprinkled by the blood of the everlasting covenant.

[1 : 5 8] A blood that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. For the blood of Abel spoke of vengeance, but the blood of Jesus Christ speaks of forgiveness.

That through the blood of Jesus Christ, that we can have peace with God, that we can be reconciled to our God, and that the peace of God can flow into our hearts.

That we may have peace of heart, and peace of conscience. Oh, we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, for the great work of salvation, that thou didst look upon us when we sinned against thee, that thou didst hand out thy mercy to us, that the hand of thy mercy, the hand of thy love, the hand of thy compassion and pity, was stretched out to us.

And grant to us the grace, O Lord, to take hold of that hand, and to know that we are reconciled to our God, to know that we have peace with our God, to know that we have tasted and know thy salvation.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the preaching of the gospel, that preaches that salvation is of the Lord, and that invites sinners such as we are, to come and to taste and see that God is good, that the one who trusts in him is blessed.

[3 : 4 0] Oh, may we know that blessing today, and we pray, O Lord, that thou would, through thy Spirit, stir up the hearts of many and draw them to experience that salvation and to know the joy of that salvation in their hearts today.

Oh, Lord, we pray that thy gospel may be accompanied by the power of thy Spirit, that it may go forth in the power and demonstration of thy Spirit, in convicting and converting sinners, and in the upbuilding of thine own church here on earth.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless our communities. Oh, may thou come in a day of thy power. May the right hand of thy salvation work among us.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless our homes and our families. Oh, that thine everlasting arms would be around them, and that thou, to the riches of thy grace, would meet with them at every point of need.

We pray, O Lord, for those who are ill. May thy healing hand be upon them. Bless those who take care of them. Bless, we pray thee, those who mourn the passing of loved ones.

[5 : 05] We pray that thou, O Lord, would fill up the open heart that finds such emptiness. Oh, Lord, that they may open it to thee, that they may open their hearts and know the comfort of the Lord in their hearts today.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would be with those who are lonely, those who feel the day so long. O Lord, that thou would be near to them, that they may come to see that there is one that sticketh closer than any other, the one who has promised that he will never leave nor forsake all those who will put their trust in him.

Remember the careless and the indifferent. Draw them through thy spirit to thyself. We pray, O Lord, we pray, O Lord, for all nations of the earth. O Lord, we pray for all thy servants who have gone forth with thy word to all places of the earth.

We pray that they may know the help of thy own spirit, that they may know the unction of thy spirit upon them, or to proclaim thy truth with all boldness and with all confidence.

O Lord, we pray, O Lord, that thou would bless all those who have a desire to hear thy word. O Lord, may we be like the Queen of Sheba that we studied earlier on in the day, or that she came, one who was outside the place of covenant blessing, blessing of covenant privileges, and yet she heard, and she resolved to come and to hear of the wisdom of Solomon.

[6 : 55] But behold, a greater than Solomon is presented to us in the gospel today. And may we, O Lord, make use of the covenant blessings and privileges that is ours, and that we may indeed come to the feet of Jesus, that we may hear, see, and experience his salvation for ourselves.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us as we come to wait upon thee. Bless our children, bless our young people, so many things in the world to entice and draw them away from the gospel.

O Lord, raise up a generation for thyself, a generation that will fear thy name, a generation who will serve thee faithfully in this world.

Remember our Queen and the Royal Household. Remember our Prime Minister and all those set up in authority over them. O Lord, we pray that thou would grant them wisdom, that they would look unto thee for guidance.

O that thou, O Lord, would have pity upon us as a nation, that thou would have compassion upon us. In the midst of our failures, O Lord, that thou would remember us in mercy.

[8 : 12] We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us now, as we wait upon thee, and all that we ask with the forgiveness of our sins. It's in Jesus' name, and for his sake.

Amen. Let us now read the word of God, as we find it in the book of Ecclesiastes, and chapter 11. Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.

And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree followeth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

[9 : 20] In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand. For thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing. It is for the eye is to behold the sun. But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.

All that cometh is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.

But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word. And now seeking his self and blessing, let us turn to 1 Kings chapter 17.

[10 : 29] 1 Kings chapter 17. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of history liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Kerith, that is, before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord, for he went and dwelt by the brook Kerith, that is, before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. As we saw last week, Elijah had just delivered a message of judgment to King Ahab.

A judgment that the Lord was going to bring upon Israel, because of their idolatry and wickedness. But what was to happen to Elijah, after he had delivered his message to King Ahab, and declared to him the judgment of the drought?

[11 : 58] Well, we are told, that the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Kerith, that is, before Jordan.

And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. Undoubtedly, the Lord's instruction for Elijah would be for his protection, because his life was going to be in danger.

But I think there is a lot more happening here than a mere physical or bodily protection. Although it is true that the Lord provides physical or bodily protection, for instance, in Psalm 91, we read, He that dwelleth in the sacred place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. Because He hath set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver Him. I will set Him on high, because He hath known my name.

The Lord does provide physical or bodily protection. However, I think that there is not only that physical protection, but there is spiritual training or schooling going on here.

[13 : 14] Elijah's physical and material needs are met at Kerith, but Elijah also has spiritual needs. And both need to be met if he is going to continue serving the Lord.

The Lord not only takes care of our body, but He also takes care of the soul. The Lord sometimes leads us into paths that we would never have chosen for ourselves.

And yet upon reflection, we can say that it was good for us to have trodden those paths. For instance, Joseph would not have found it easy, sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers, a man who was wrongly accused, a man who was in chains in a dungeon.

And yet here is verdict. God has sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be eerie nor harassed.

And God sent me before you to preserve your prosperity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.

[14 : 28] In Psalm 105 we read, He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters. He was laid in iron until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.

You see, what we see there in the story of Joseph, among other things, is the sovereignty of God. And going back to Elijah, we are also made aware of the sovereignty of God, that God is in control.

And that is a lesson that Joseph was taught, and that Elijah is being taught, and that every child of God is being taught. The sovereignty of God, that God is in control.

And how often we find ourselves in situations and circumstances that we cannot explain. And this is where we find our rest.

This is where we find our peace. In the sovereignty of God, that God is in control. Even tonight, we live and we move in strange times.

[15 : 44] And yet, in the midst of the strangeness of our times, we know that God is sovereign. We know that God is in control. We know that God is working out his purpose.

And although there is much to date that we cannot explain, yet we know that there is no confusion with God. To the human reasoning, the word of the Lord that came to Elijah seems rather bizarre.

Hide thyself by the brook, that is before Jordan, and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. This was not a place of Elijah's choosing, but it was the place of the Lord's choosing.

The Lord says through his prophet Isaiah in chapter 55, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The words of Psalm 46 could be applied to Elijah at this time, for there we read, Be still and know that I am God. Elijah believed in the sovereignty of God.

[17 : 14] Elijah knew that God was in control, and he knew that the Lord's way is always a perfect way. Elijah did not doubt or question the word of the Lord.

He did not begin to argue or to offer other suggestions, which I and you might be prone to do so. He did not say, Lord, what in the world are you doing with me?

I have just stood before wicked King Ahab, putting my own life in danger, giving him the words of your judgment for their wickedness, and now you are telling me to go aside to Carith, the place of seclusion?

But you see, Elijah did not complain or argue. He simply obeyed. In Psalm 37 we read, The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, Elijah's steps were truly ordered by the Lord, and the Lord found delight in the way of Elijah, but at the same time Elijah delighted in the way of the Lord.

The evidence for us to say that is Elijah's obedience. For so he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.

[19 : 04] He obeyed because he delighted in the way of the Lord. Elijah, Elijah, this man of action, who had just stood in the king's court and pronounced God's judgment upon the land of Israel.

The Lord was sending him to Carith, which was the place of seclusion. He would be isolated and he would be lonely. But Elijah knew that how bizarre this was, that God would be with him.

Sometimes the Lord leads us into situations and circumstances which is the exact opposite of what we would naturally desire for ourselves.

Because we often prefer to be in a more affluent surroundings and circumstances. But the Lord takes us aside and he puts us into the place of seclusion in the place of isolation and loneliness.

Carithas, we have already noted, was not only the place of the Lord's protection for Elijah's physically, but it was also his school of spiritual learning.

[20 : 25] At Caritha, Elijah would come to know more of the Lord's protection and care. And it was the place of the Lord's groundwork for Elijah so that he could serve him in the future.

We find that that is true of many of God's servants. Moses spent 40 years on the backside of the desert to become equipped to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

David spent much of his time alone in the wilderness shepherding his father's sheep before he became king to shepherd Israel. It was a profitable time for him for in his solitude he learned lessons that had passed to us especially in the book of Psalms.

For instance, in Psalm 23, the shepherd learned that he had a need of a shepherd to guide, protect, and care of him and to lead him home. The shepherd came to learn that he himself needed to be shepherded.

How often that psalm has become a comfort for us and yet it was penned not in the royal court but out in the hills and in the valleys of Palestine.

[21 : 42] Paul, we believe, spent much time alone in Arabia before getting started on his great missionary work. And in places of solitude and loneliness, many a Christian has found themselves nearer to God than in the midst of a great crowd.

Now here we are not at all promoting recluse lifestyles but the Lord sometimes puts us on our own.

but we must also remember that solitude is not forever. Neither was it going to be for Elijah. It was only a means to an end.

It is like a refuelling station, a time to prepare the heart for the future. Carith was an arrangement for Mount Carmel.

Elijah has just come from an amazing performance before a wicked King Ahab.

[22 : 50] He has done something that 7,000 in Israel dared not to do and he could easily have become puffed up with pride.

But the Lord is going to protect him from becoming proud. So he sends him to the brook Carith. Carith was a place that taught humility.

It was a place that taught Elijah to wait upon the Lord. Elijah was made to trust in the Lord and in the Lord's promise.

Thou shalt drink of the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according to the word of the Lord for he went and dwelt by the brook Carith that is before Jordan.

Elijah was a man who lived his life by the word of the Lord. The Lord of God was the standard by which he lived. He was a man who trusted in the Lord's sovereignty and the Lord's protection and the Lord's care.

[24 : 00] Carith was a humble place. It was a brook and not a river. It was before Jordan but it was not Jordan.

You see the Lord sometimes gives us a brook instead of a river in order for us to be more dependent upon himself.

if Elijah wanted to experience the Lord's promise he had to be where the Lord wanted him to be.

God will supply all our needs. Paul could write in the New Testament but my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus.

but he will supply all our needs not without some responsibility on our part. The Lord's word to Elijah was thou shalt drink of the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

[25 : 09] No, not there, the word there. Thou shalt drink of the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

The word there is a condition of for supply. The ravens were to feed him at Kerith not in Samaria not in Jerusalem but by the brook Kerith.

He will supply our needs but we must be where he wants us to be. If Elijah wanted to experience the Lord's provision he had to be where the Lord wanted him to be.

Not in Samaria not in Jerusalem not in any of another city of Israel but he had to be by the brook Kerith. The shallowness and the leanness found in our spiritual life is due to the fact that we are found outside the will of God.

We are found outside where God wants us to be. We so often complain of disappointments and dryness and barrenness in our spiritual life and it is all due to the fact that we are outside the will of God.

[26 : 39] the Lord wants us to be exercised in his word and reading and studying and listening but sadly we become so distracted by other things or perhaps we feel that we know better ourselves.

but when we are where God wants us to be we shall see God working for us in wonderful ways for Elijah that meant that he had to dwell by the brook Kerith.

Kerith was not only a place where to learn humility and for waiting upon the Lord but it was also the place of testing.

It is not revealed to us how hard it was for Elijah to stay at Kerith but it could not have been easy. His life was in danger but he was in the place of God's appointment and he knew that God would be with him there for we read that he came to Kerith and that he dwelt there.

we have the promise of God but we have also our own responsibility. The promise of God was that he would care for him and protect him that he would provide for him but it was Elijah's responsibility to be found at Kerith not in Samaria not in Jerusalem but by the brook Kerith.

[28 : 20] You see it is always to our good to dwell in the place of God's appointment. Let us never look down upon places of God's appointment especially in regards to the preaching of the word.

Let us not go from place to place because that never brings a blessing but spiritual leanness upon the soul. it is really a sign that we are not happy with the place of God's appointment and can the Lord be delighted with such?

Elijah at Kerith was in the place of God's appointment and he stayed there for he knew that God would stay with him. Was Elijah trusting in the brook and the ravens?

No, he was not trusting in the brook but in the God who made the brook. He did not put his confidence in the ravens but in the God who sent the ravens who commanded the ravens to feed him there.

He was taught at Kerith not to trust in the outward circumstances of his provision but in the God who provides. From a human standpoint ravens would certainly not be the most likely creatures to bring one his food but God chose such to supply the needs of his servant.

[29 : 52] We read in Psalm 50 For every priest of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills I know all the fowls of the mountains and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

You see that is a vital lesson for us to learn to trust in the Lord. To put out confidence in the Lord.

Not to trust in the outward circumstances of his provision but to trust in the God who provides. God is not limited in in socia from which he can meet our needs.

We read in the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening and he drank of the brook. Ravens are birds of prey, they are scavengers and according to the law of Moses an unclean bird.

But here was a bird who acted contrary to their natural disposition and brought bread and flesh to Elijah twice a day in the morning and in the evening.

[31 : 08] Seeing the worst scavengers people would not think anything as they saw them flying away with bread and flesh. Later on we shall see that Elijah was better fed by the ravens than the hundred prophets who were hidden by Obadiah in a cave for they only had bread and water.

But Elijah had bread flesh and water. You see if we are obedient to the word of the Lord if we are found in the place of his appointment then the Lord will provide for us and he may do so in unexpected ways.

Maybe you're here tonight and you can recall an experience in your own life where the Lord provided for you in an unexpected way.

Elijah had to believe that God would provide for a morning and evening according to his word of promise. The food brought by the ravens were certainly miraculous for the Lord said I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

But if Elijah was to survive there was also work for him to do. There was also this part of his own responsibility. He was not forced into a time of inactivity.

[32 : 40] The Lord did not work a miracle to supply water for Elijah. The brook was beside him. It was provided for him but from there he himself was to draw water.

You see the Lord's provision for Elijah did not mean that Elijah was released or excused from activity. He had to go to the brook and he had to drink from the brook.

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening and he drank off the brook. We know that if we are to see a revival in the church or an awakening in the community that it is only the Lord that can bring such about.

It's only the Lord that can bring a revival into his church and it is only the Lord that can bring an awakening into our communities. We are totally dependent upon his spirit to work such a work.

Nevertheless we are not instructed to fold up our hands and do nothing. We have a responsibility to evangelize. We have a responsibility to gossip the gospel.

[34 : 02] Elijah was dependent upon the ravens as commanded by God in accordance to his word and promise to bring him bread and flesh. But it was the responsibility of Elijah to draw the water from the brook.

Elijah was the kind of man that he was because he was still conscious as we saw last week that God is a living God and that God always keeps his word.

Remember his words to Ahab. As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand there shall not be June or rain these years but according to my word.

Here at Carith his faith was been tested but his faith was to be tested more for we read and it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

Now this was a severe test to Elijah's faith. At the beginning all was well but slowly for a brook does not dry up overnight slowly the water was dwindling away day by day.

[35 : 33] Think of it as he went every morning to the brook and he noticed that there was not so much water as the day before and soon it all became a trickle and one morning there was nothing at all.

Although God had worked a miracle and commanded the ravens to bring in bread and flesh in the morning and evening God did not work a miracle to keep the brook flowing. F.B.

Mayer asks why did God let the brook dry up? And he answers he wants to teach us not to trust in his gifts but in himself.

The Lord often brings his people through a brook drying experience. But drying brooks is not an indication of God forsaking us.

It can be a hard lesson and a difficult situation to experience. But we must remember that we are in the presence of a living God. There is no drying up of God's power and help.

[36 : 56] Why did God let the brook dry up? He wants to teach us not to trust in his gifts but in himself. Maybe Elijah became complacent.

Maybe he became self satisfied. And that is something that can happen to us so easily. We are the children of habit. Every morning and evening the ravens came and every day he went to the brook to draw water and he may have concluded well this is the way that it will continue.

And he may have taken his eyes off the Lord. Is that not we enjoy the gifts of God physically and spiritually.

The brooks of daily living and the brooks of spiritual living. And we go on as if this is going to last. Possibly becoming less thankful as time goes on.

And possibly taking our eyes from off the Lord. But the Lord is going to teach us. And he will make the source dry up.

[38 : 05] So that we shall become more focused on himself. He will make the brooks of daily living to dry up. So that we can become more focused on himself.

He will make the brooks of spiritual living to dry up. So that we shall become more focused on himself. however as the brook dried up day after day Elijah did not go looking for a new source.

As the water began to trickle and dwindle away he did not leave Carith but he waited upon the Lord. Is not Elijah a good example for us?

When we feel that our spiritual brook is drying up we wander looking for new sources of supply instead of waiting upon the Lord.

We see people moving around from one congregation to another congregation from preacher to preacher instead of waiting upon the Lord at Carith. Such impatience is a sign of the weakness of our faith.

[39 : 19] It took faith in the Lord to stay at Carith as the brook dried up. The brook dried up because there was no rain.

This was Elijah's message to King Ahab as the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand. There shall be no dew nor rain these years but according to my word.

This was God's judgment upon the land because of their Baal worship. And although Elijah was a prophet of God, he was not going to be exempt from the suffering which had brought upon the land of Israel.

It reminds us that when God judges a nation because of their sin, God's people are not exempt. If the Lord brings a plague upon a nation because of their sin, God's people are not exempt from suffering and death.

But Elijah waited upon the Lord and I am sure that all the time he was praying to the Lord and the Lord answered his prayers and the word of the Lord came unto him.

[40 : 34] He was to leave Caritha and go up at a hundred miles to the city of Saraphat. Now as we noted last week since we live in a day that resembles the days of Elijah wherein there is little regard to the claims of God when people serve other gods when sin is looked upon as a trivial thing wherein God is not relevant however God speaks to us and we can see that at the very present day our lives are disrupted our economy is dwindling away death rates are rising the brooks of daily living are drying we all suffer what should be our behaviour what should our behaviour be well I think that the lessons of Caritha are important for us to learn the most urgent thing for us all is to repent and turn back to

God but the lessons of Caritha is to humble ourselves and however isolated and lonely we may feel to wait upon the Lord to live in accordance with his word to be still and know that he is God to take these words of the psalmist to our heart be still and know that I am God he is sovereign he is in control he is working out his own purpose for me and you he is working out his purpose for our nation even when the brook is drying up and we suffer the pain of our nation let us be patient let us wait upon him let us trust in the Lord our living God may the lessons of

Kareth be some form of comfort for us today may the lessons of Kareth even be an encouragement for us today and if we feel weakened in our faith if we will feel weak in ourselves let us be strengthened by the lessons of Kareth may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord thou art the living God thou art the one who rule out in heaven and on earth thou art our sovereign God thou art the God who is in control thou art the God who's working out thine own purpose and we pray oh

Lord that on this day that we may find our strength and our peace in the very fact that thou art the God who has revealed himself to us as a true God as the living God and we pray oh Lord that the lessons of Kirith it may be lessons that would strengthen our faith this day in the living God that it may be a comfort to us in some measure oh Lord we pray that we would indeed wait upon thee and that thou would speak to us in mercy in grace we pray oh Lord that thou would continue with us during the coming days that as thou didst meet with the needs of Elijah that thou out of the riches of thy grace would meet with the needs of each and every one of us may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen