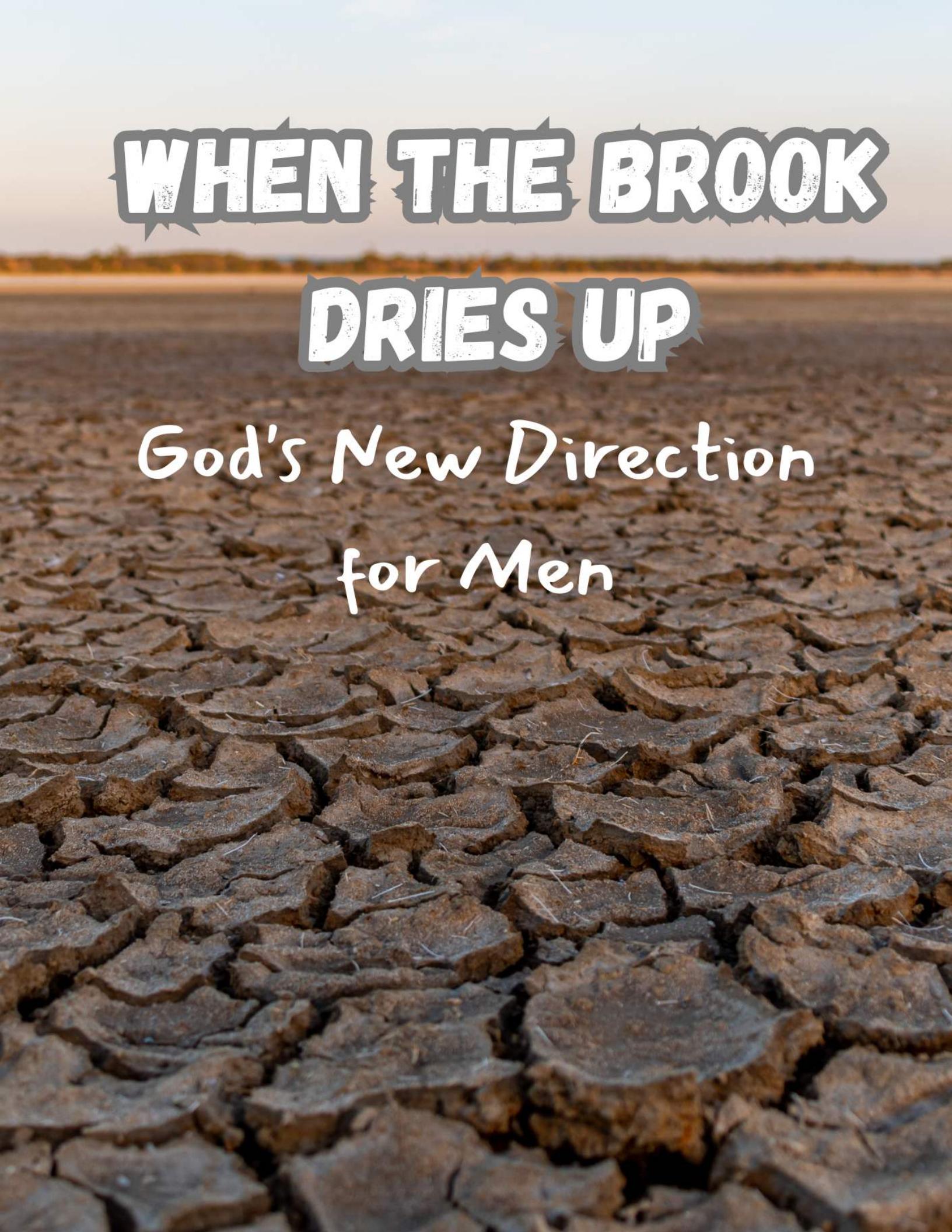


WHEN THE BROOK DRIES UP

God's New Direction

for Men



When the Brook Dries Up: God's New Direction for Men

A Comprehensive Sermon Outline from 1 Kings 17:1-16 (NASB)

Introduction: The Crisis of Dried Brooks

Men, we live in a culture that demands we be invincible. Society tells us to have our five-year plans mapped out, our retirement secured, our health optimized, and our families provided for without fail. We're taught that real men don't show weakness, don't ask for help, and certainly don't admit when they're lost or afraid. But what happens when the very things we've built our lives upon suddenly disappear? When our carefully constructed security systems crumble like sandcastles before an unexpected tide?

Central Text: *"It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land."* (1 Kings 17:7, NASB)

The Universal Experience: Every man will face seasons when his "brook dries up"—when the familiar sources of provision, security, and identity that he's depended upon suddenly fail. This isn't a sign of God's absence; it's often the evidence of His deeper work in our lives.

Preview: Today we'll walk with Elijah through one of the most instructive passages in Scripture about how God works in the dry seasons of a man's life. We'll discover that when God allows our brooks to dry up, He's not abandoning us—He's redirecting us toward something far greater than we ever imagined.

I. THE BROOK REPRESENTS OUR FAMILIAR PROVISIONS (1 Kings 17:2-6)

A. God's Initial Provision Was Perfect (vv. 2-4)

"The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.'" (1 Kings 17:2-4, NASB)

The Context of Divine Provision:

- **Perfect Location:** Cherith means "cutting" or "separation"—God was cutting Elijah away from worldly dependencies
- **Perfect Protection:** Hidden from Ahab's murderous intent during the drought
- **Perfect Provision:** Fresh water and daily bread delivered by ravens—natural impossibilities made possible
- **Perfect Peace:** A place of rest before the greater work ahead

Theologian's Insight:

"The brook Cherith was not merely a hiding place; it was a holy place where God taught His servant the fundamental lesson of faith—that divine provision often comes through the most unlikely means." - F.B. Meyer

B. Our Modern "Brooks" - What Men Depend Upon

1. Career Security and Professional Identity

- The corner office that defines our worth
- The title on our business card that gives us significance
- The steady paycheck that provides our sense of security
- The industry expertise that makes us feel indispensable
- The professional network that opens doors

Biblical Parallel: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal"* (Matthew 6:19, NASB)

Modern Reality: In today's economy, the average man will change careers 5-7 times. Corporate downsizing, technological disruption, and economic volatility mean that career security is increasingly an illusion.

2. Physical Strength and Health

- Our ability to provide and protect our families
- Our athletic prowess and physical capabilities
- Our sexual vitality and masculine energy
- Our mental sharpness and cognitive abilities
- Our independence and self-sufficiency

Scholar's Observation:

"For the Hebrew male, physical strength was not just personal—it was theological. It represented God's blessing and favor. When that strength failed, it challenged not just their bodies but their faith." - Kenneth Mathews

Biblical Truth: *"Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day"* (2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB)

3. Financial Stability and Material Success

- Our investment portfolios and retirement accounts
- Our property values and real estate holdings
- Our business ventures and entrepreneurial success
- Our ability to provide for our family's needs and wants
- Our financial independence and wealth accumulation

Warning from Scripture: *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow"* (James 4:13-14, NASB)

4. Relationships and Social Standing

- Our marriage and family stability
- Our friendships and social networks
- Our reputation in the community
- Our children's success and respect
- Our church position and spiritual recognition

Puritan Wisdom:

"God will shake everything that can be shaken, that we might cling only to what cannot be shaken —Himself alone." - **Richard Sibbes**

C. Why We Cling to Our Brooks

- 1. They Provide Identity** We answer "Who are you?" with "I'm a doctor" or "I'm a successful businessman" rather than "I'm a child of God."
- 2. They Offer Control** Brooks give us the illusion that we're managing our own destiny and security.
- 3. They Promise Security** We believe that if we can just accumulate enough, plan enough, work hard enough, we'll be safe.
- 4. They Deliver Recognition** Our brooks often determine how others see us and how we see ourselves.

Biblical Corrective: *"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ"* (Philippians 3:7, NASB)

II. THE DRYING UP IS ORDAINED BY GOD (1 Kings 17:7)

A. The Sovereign Timing of Divine Interruption

"It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land." (1 Kings 17:7, NASB)

Key Hebrew Phrase: "After a while" (Hebrew: *miyamim*) suggests a complete season—enough time for Elijah to get comfortable, to establish routines, to perhaps think this was his permanent situation.

Divine Methodology:

- 1. God First Establishes the Blessing** - The brook flowed perfectly for months
- 2. God Allows Full Dependence** - Elijah learned to count on this provision
- 3. God Then Removes the Blessing** - Not gradually, but completely
- 4. God Uses Natural Means** - The same drought He commanded now affects His provision

Theologian's Insight:

"God's timing is never arbitrary. He allowed Elijah to drink deeply from Cherith until the prophet had learned the lesson of dependence, and then—only then—did He introduce the lesson of faith in the impossible." - **Charles Spurgeon**

B. The Theological Significance of Divine Orchestration

- 1. God's Sovereignty Over Natural Processes** The same God who commanded the drought (v. 1) used that drought to dry up the brook. Nothing in creation operates outside His control.

Supporting Scripture: *"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span?"* (Isaiah 40:12, NASB)

- 2. God's Perfect Timing in Our Lives** God doesn't remove our brooks too early (when we're not ready) or too late (when we've become idolatrous). He waits until we've learned to depend, then teaches us to depend on Him alone.

Modern Scholar's Observation:

"The drying of the brook was not divine neglect but divine design. God was weaning Elijah from earthly streams to prepare him for heavenly rivers." - **Warren Wiersbe**

3. God's Educational Methods Every dried brook is a classroom where God teaches us deeper spiritual truths about His character, His provision, and His purposes.

C. Why God Allows Our Brooks to Dry Up

1. To Shatter Our Illusion of Self-Sufficiency

The Male Temptation: Men are particularly susceptible to believing we can handle life through our own strength, wisdom, and resources.

God's Response: He allows circumstances that make it impossible to continue in our own strength.

Biblical Example: King Uzziah was blessed and successful until "his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong. But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly" (2 Chronicles 26:15-16, NASB).

2. To Expose Our Idolatrous Dependencies

The Subtle Shift: What God provides as blessings can gradually become our functional saviors.

Divine Surgery: God must sometimes remove good things that have become ultimate things in our hearts.

Reformer's Insight:

"We never know that Christ is all we need until Christ is all we have." - **Corrie ten Boom**

3. To Increase Our Capacity for Faith

The Faith Principle: Faith muscles are only strengthened through resistance training. Easy provision produces weak faith.

God's Process: He allows us to experience need so we can experience His sufficiency.

Scripture Support: *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance"* (James 1:2-3, NASB).

4. To Prepare Us for Greater Ministry

The Leadership Principle: God never gives us influence over others until He has established His influence over us.

Elijah's Preparation: The dried brook prepared him to minister to the widow, raise her son, and later confront 450 prophets of Baal.

Contemporary Application: The businessman who loses his company and learns dependence on God is being prepared to counsel other executives facing similar crises.

D. Common Mistakes Men Make When Brooks Dry Up

1. Panic and Hasty Decision-Making We rush to find new brooks instead of waiting for God's direction.

2. Digging Deeper in Dry Places We try to revive what God is clearly ending.

3. Blaming God or Others We become bitter instead of seeing God's loving purpose.

4. Abandoning Faith We conclude that God has failed us rather than seeing His redirection.

Biblical Wisdom: *"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way"* (Psalm 37:7, NASB).

III. THE DRIED BROOK REVEALS OUR NEED FOR TOTAL DEPENDENCE (1 Kings 17:8-9)

A. God's Surprising New Direction (vv. 8-9)

"Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.'" (1 Kings 17:8-9, NASB)

The Shocking Command Analysis:

- 1. Geographic Challenge:** Zarephath was in Phoenicia, enemy territory during wartime.
- 2. Cultural Challenge:** Moving from Jewish to Gentile territory, from the familiar to the foreign.
- 3. Social Challenge:** From divine provision through ravens to human provision through a woman.
- 4. Economic Challenge:** From a flowing brook to depending on a poverty-stricken widow.
- 5. Gender Challenge:** In ancient Near Eastern culture, men didn't typically depend on women for provision.

Biblical Scholar's Insight:

"Zarephath means 'refinement' or 'smelting place.' God was taking His prophet from the brook of basic provision to the furnace of refined faith." - John MacArthur

B. The Humbling Process of Divine Dependence

1. From Natural to Supernatural Dependence

At Cherith: Ravens brought food (supernatural means, but consistent and predictable)

At Zarephath: Flour and oil would never run out (supernatural means that required daily faith)

The Lesson: God progressively increases our need for faith-dependence rather than sight-dependence.

2. From Isolation to Community Dependence

At Cherith: Elijah was alone with God—comfortable but limited in ministry

At Zarephath: Elijah would serve a family in need—uncomfortable but expanded in purpose

Modern Application: God often moves us from independent success to interdependent ministry.

3. From Strength-Based to Weakness-Based Ministry

Puritan Insight:

"God's greatest servants are not those who never experience weakness, but those who learn to find their strength in their weakness." - John Owen

Scripture Foundation: *"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB).*

C. What Total Dependence Requires from Men

1. Admitting We Don't Have All the Answers

The Male Struggle: Men are socialized to be problem-solvers and answer-givers. Admitting ignorance feels like failure.

The Faith Response: True strength acknowledges limitations and seeks divine wisdom.

Biblical Model: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5, NASB).

Modern Illustration: The 45-year-old engineer who gets laid off and must admit to his family, "I don't know what comes next, but I believe God does." This vulnerability often becomes the foundation for deeper family relationships.

2. Accepting Help from Unexpected Sources

Cultural Challenge: Men are taught to be providers, not receivers. Accepting help can feel emasculating.

Divine Perspective: God's provision often comes through channels that humble our pride but heal our souls.

Historical Example: During the Great Depression, many proud men had to accept government assistance or church help. Those who did so with grateful hearts often emerged with stronger character and deeper faith.

3. Embracing Vulnerability as Strength

Modern Misconception: Vulnerability equals weakness.

Biblical Truth: Acknowledged weakness becomes the channel for divine strength.

Counselor's Observation:

"The strongest men I've counseled are not those who never fell, but those who learned to fall well—with faith, humility, and openness to God's redirection." - **Larry Crabb**

4. Trusting God's Unconventional Methods

Divine Pattern: God rarely works through our expected channels or timeframes.

Faith Challenge: Will we trust God's methods even when they don't make sense to our natural reasoning?

Biblical Precedent: "*'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares 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'*" (Isaiah 55:8-9, NASB).

D. The Blessings Hidden in Dependence

1. Deeper Intimacy with God Self-sufficiency creates distance from God; dependence creates intimacy.

2. Authentic Community Vulnerability allows others to minister to us and creates genuine relationships.

3. **Increased Compassion** Our own need makes us more sensitive to others' needs.
4. **Greater Testimony** Stories of God's faithfulness in weakness are more powerful than stories of our strength.

IV. THE DRIED BROOK LEADS TO GREATER PURPOSE (1 Kings 17:10-16)

A. The Encounter at Zarephath (vv. 10-12)

"So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, 'Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.' As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.' But she said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I do not have a bread cake, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.'" (1 Kings 17:10-12, NASB)

The Divine Appointment Analysis:

1. **Perfect Timing:** Elijah arrived exactly when the widow was at her point of greatest need.
2. **Mutual Desperation:** Both the prophet and the widow were at the end of their resources.
3. **Cross-Cultural Bridge:** A Jewish prophet and a Gentile widow brought together by need.
4. **Faith Test:** Both had to exercise faith—she to give from her lack, he to receive from her poverty.

Theologian's Observation:

"God's providence is most clearly seen not in our abundance but in our extremity. When human resources are exhausted, divine resources are most gloriously displayed." - **Matthew Henry**

B. The Miracle of Multiplication (vv. 13-16)

"Then Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel, "The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth." So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah." (1 Kings 17:13-16, NASB)

The Miracle's Deeper Meaning:

- 1. Faith Before Sight** The widow had to act on God's promise before seeing the miracle.
- 2. Giving Before Receiving** She had to give to the prophet before experiencing God's provision.
- 3. Daily Dependence** The flour and oil didn't multiply into abundance but renewed daily—requiring daily faith.
- 4. Community Blessing** The miracle blessed not just Elijah or the widow, but her entire household.

C. How God's Greater Purpose Unfolds for Men

1. From Personal Provision to Ministry Multiplication

At Cherith: God provided for Elijah alone through ravens.

At Zarephath: God provided for Elijah, the widow, her son, and her household—a ministry community.

The Principle: God's greater purposes always involve blessing others through us.

Modern Application: The executive who loses his high-paying job but finds his calling in mentoring young entrepreneurs, impacting dozens of lives instead of just accumulating wealth.

2. From Comfortable Isolation to Risky Mission

The Comfort Zone Trap: Success often isolates us from real ministry opportunities.

God's Solution: He moves us into situations where we must depend on Him and serve others simultaneously.

Biblical Pattern: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8, NASB).

3. From Finite Resources to Infinite Supply

Human Mathematics: We think in terms of scarcity and limitation.

Divine Mathematics: God specializes in multiplication and abundance.

Contemporary Scholar's Insight:

"The miracle at Zarephath was not just about flour and oil—it was about discovering that God's resources are inexhaustible when we align with His purposes." - **David Jeremiah**

4. From Temporal Impact to Eternal Significance

Career Success: Often measured in quarterly reports and annual reviews.

Kingdom Success: Measured in lives touched, faith strengthened, and God glorified.

The Greater Story: Elijah's ministry at Zarephath not only sustained life but later included raising the widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24), demonstrating God's power over death itself.

D. Recognizing God's Greater Purpose in Our Dried Brooks

1. Career Transitions as Ministry Preparation

Case Study: The corporate lawyer who loses his partnership due to industry changes but discovers a calling to provide legal aid to the poor. His "dried brook" of corporate success leads to the "Zarephath" of public service.

Spiritual Principle: God often removes us from lesser callings to position us for greater callings.

2. Health Crises as Compassion Development

Example: The athletic man who faces a chronic illness and becomes a counselor to others facing similar health challenges. His physical limitation becomes the foundation for emotional and spiritual ministry.

Biblical Truth: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction"* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NASB).

3. Financial Losses as Priority Realignment

Illustration: The successful businessman whose real estate investments collapse, leading him to reassess his values and dedicate more time to his family and church ministry.

The Transformation: What seemed like financial failure becomes spiritual success.

4. Relationship Challenges as Character Refinement

Application: The man whose marriage struggles force him to confront his selfishness and pride, ultimately making him a better husband, father, and mentor to other men.

Puritan Wisdom:

"God breaks our will that He might remake our character. He empties our hands that He might fill our hearts." - **Thomas Watson**

V. THE BROOK DRIES UP TO TEACH US TO WAIT AND OBEY (1 Kings 17:5, 7, 10)

A. Elijah's Model Response Throughout the Process

1. Initial Obedience (v. 5) *"So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan."* (1 Kings 17:5, NASB)

No Recorded Hesitation: Elijah didn't question, negotiate, or delay.

Complete Compliance: He went exactly where God said, stayed exactly as long as God provided.

2. Patient Endurance (v. 7) *"It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land."* (1 Kings 17:7, NASB)

No Recorded Panic: When the brook began to fail, Elijah didn't frantically search for alternative water sources.

No Recorded Complaint: He didn't accuse God of forgetting him or failing to provide.

3. Immediate Response (v. 10) *"So he arose and went to Zarephath..."* (1 Kings 17:10, NASB)

No Recorded Argument: Despite the seemingly impossible command to depend on a poor widow, he obeyed immediately.

No Recorded Fear: Moving into enemy territory during wartime, he trusted God's protection.

B. The Spiritual Disciplines Required During Dry Seasons

1. The Discipline of Waiting

Hebrew Concept: *Qavah* - to wait with expectant hope, like a rope that maintains tension.

Modern Challenge: In our instant gratification culture, waiting feels like punishment rather than preparation.

Biblical Foundation: *"Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary"* (Isaiah 40:31, NASB).

Practical Application for Men:

- **Resist Hasty Decisions:** Don't make major life changes while in emotional distress
- **Maintain Spiritual Routines:** Prayer, Scripture reading, and worship become more crucial, not less
- **Seek Godly Counsel:** Connect with mature believers who can provide biblical perspective

Contemporary Illustration: The middle manager who gets demoted decides to wait six months before looking for a new job, using the time to pray, get counseling, and evaluate what God might be teaching him. This patience leads to discovering a calling in nonprofit leadership.

2. The Discipline of Listening

Divine Communication: God spoke to Elijah three times in this passage—before going to Cherith, when the brook dried up, and when directing him to Zarephath.

The Pattern: Wait → Listen → Obey → Wait → Listen → Obey

Modern Obstacles to Hearing God:

- **Noise:** Constant media, entertainment, and digital distractions
- **Hurry:** Rushing from crisis to crisis without quiet reflection
- **Pride:** Assuming we know what God wants without seeking His word
- **Fear:** Anxiety drowns out the still, small voice of the Spirit

Spiritual Practices That Enhance Listening:

- **Solitude:** Regular times alone with God without distractions
- **Scripture Meditation:** Slowly reading and reflecting on God's word
- **Journaling:** Writing down thoughts, prayers, and potential divine promptings
- **Fasting:** Reducing physical appetites to increase spiritual sensitivity

Scholar's Insight:

"God's voice is not usually heard in the whirlwind of our activity but in the whisper of our stillness." - **A.W. Tozer**

3. The Discipline of Trusting

Faith Definition: Acting on God's promises even when circumstances suggest they're impossible.

Trust Development: Faith grows through use, not through understanding.

Biblical Truth: *"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6, NASB).

Trust Challenges for Men:

- **Control Issues:** Men are conditioned to manage and direct outcomes
- **Analytical Nature:** We want to understand before we obey
- **Responsibility Pressure:** We feel accountable for results, not just obedience
- **Pride Barriers:** Trusting implies we need help, which challenges masculine self-image

Trust Builders:

- **Remember Past Faithfulness:** Journal God's previous provisions and answers to prayer
- **Study Biblical Examples:** Learn from men like Abraham, Joseph, and David who trusted through difficulty
- **Start Small:** Practice trust in minor areas to build faith muscles for major challenges
- **Community Support:** Share struggles with other believers who can pray and encourage

C. Common Mistakes Men Make During Waiting Seasons

1. Premature Action

The Problem: We act on our timeline rather than God's timeline.

Example: The man who gets laid off and immediately takes the first job offer, even though it's not a good fit, rather than waiting to see what God might provide.

Biblical Warning: "*The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord*" (Proverbs 16:1, NASB).

2. Attempting to Restart the Old Brook

The Problem: We try to resurrect what God is clearly ending.

Example: The businessman whose company fails but who goes into debt trying to save it instead of accepting that God may be closing this chapter.

Wise Counsel:

"Never try to explain what God is doing. God does not explain Himself. He tells us to trust Him." -

Oswald Chambers

3. Abandoning Spiritual Disciplines

The Problem: When we're discouraged, we often stop doing the very things that would help us hear God's voice.

Example: The man facing marriage problems who stops attending church, reading Scripture, or praying because he feels God has let him down.

Biblical Corrective: *"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary"* (Galatians 6:9, NASB).

4. Isolating from Community

The Problem: Men tend to withdraw when struggling rather than seeking support.

Example: The executive who faces bankruptcy but is too proud to tell his men's group, missing the opportunity for prayer, practical help, and accountability.

Biblical Model: *"Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2, NASB).

D. The Rewards of Faithful Waiting and Obedience

1. Deeper Character Development

The Process: Waiting and obeying in difficulty builds character that success cannot produce.

Biblical Principle: *"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope"* (Romans 5:3-4, NASB).

2. Greater Ministry Effectiveness

The Pattern: God uses our seasons of dependence to prepare us for seasons of service.

Historical Example: Charles Spurgeon's battles with depression and physical illness equipped him to minister to thousands facing similar struggles.

3. Increased Faith Capacity

The Growth: Each season of trusting God through difficulty increases our ability to trust Him in greater challenges.

Contemporary Example: The man who learns to trust God through unemployment becomes the one others turn to during their career crises.

4. Enhanced Intimacy with God

The Relationship: Desperation often drives us to depths of communion with God we never experienced in comfort.

Puritan Testimony:

"I have learned more about God in my seasons of loss than in all my seasons of gain combined." -

Thomas Brooks

Conclusion: When Your Brook Dries Up

A. The Three Essential Responses Every Man Must Master

1. Don't Panic - God Hasn't Forgotten You

The Promise: *"Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands"* (Isaiah 49:15-16, NASB).

The Practice:

- **Breathe deeply** and remind yourself of God's past faithfulness
- **Resist the urge** to make major decisions while in emotional turmoil
- **Reach out** to trusted friends or counselors for perspective and prayer
- **Review Scripture** promises about God's care and provision

Modern Application: When the pink slip comes, when the diagnosis is serious, when the marriage is struggling—your first response should be worship, not worry.

2. Don't Try to Refill the Brook - God Is Moving You Forward

The Principle: God closes doors to direct us to better doors, not to trap us in hallways.

Biblical Truth: *"Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert"* (Isaiah 43:18-19, NASB).

The Practice:

- **Accept the loss** rather than fighting to restore what God is ending
- **Look forward** to what God might be preparing rather than backward to what He's removing
- **Stay open** to possibilities you've never considered before
- **Trust God's timing** even when it doesn't match your preferences

Life Example: The 50-year-old accountant whose firm downsizes him discovers a passion for teaching math to struggling high school students—finding more fulfillment in his second career than his first.

3. Look for God's Next Direction - He's Preparing Something Better

The Promise: *"For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope'"* (Jeremiah 29:11, NASB).

The Practice:

- **Pray specifically** for wisdom and direction about next steps
- **Seek counsel** from mature believers who know you well
- **Pay attention** to recurring themes in your conversations, reading, and thoughts
- **Take small steps** of obedience as God reveals His direction
- **Be willing** to move outside your comfort zone like Elijah going to Zarephath

B. The Ultimate Purpose of Dried Brooks

God's Goal: To transform us from men who happen to believe in God into men whose entire lives demonstrate God's reality and power.

The Process: He removes our secondary supports so we learn to find our primary support in Him alone.

The Result: We become men who can encourage others when their brooks dry up because we've learned that God's faithfulness transcends our circumstances.

Final Theologian Quote:

"God allows our brooks to dry up not to destroy us, but to redirect us to His rivers of living water. What seems like the end of provision is actually the beginning of a deeper relationship with the Provider." - A.W. Tozer

C. A Prayer for Men Facing Dried Brooks

"Heavenly Father, we come before You as men who have built our lives around brooks that now run dry. Our careers, our health, our relationships, our financial security—the things we counted on have proven insufficient. We confess that we have often found our identity and security in Your gifts rather than in You, the Giver.

Like Elijah, we need Your word to guide us from our dried brooks to our appointed Zarephaths. Give us the faith to wait when You call us to wait, the courage to move when You call us to move, and the wisdom to recognize Your voice above the noise of our fears.

Help us to see that what feels like loss is often Your loving redirection toward greater purpose. Make us men who trust Your timing, embrace Your methods, and serve Your kingdom with the same faithfulness You show to us.

When other men face dried brooks, use our experiences to encourage their faith. Make our stories testimonies of Your goodness, our struggles stepping stones to deeper trust, and our lives living proof that You are faithful even when our circumstances are confusing.

We surrender our dried brooks to You and ask for grace to follow wherever You lead. In the strong name of Jesus, Amen."

D. Discussion Questions for Men's Groups

Personal Reflection:

1. What "brook" in your life might God be allowing to dry up right now?
2. How do you typically respond when your carefully laid plans don't work out?
3. What secondary sources of security do you cling to besides God?

Spiritual Growth: 4. What keeps you from fully trusting God's provision and timing? 5. How has God used past disappointments to redirect you toward better purposes? 6. In what ways might God be preparing you for a "Zarephath" experience?

Practical Application: 7. What would change in your daily routine if you truly believed God was in control of your circumstances? 8. How can you better support other men who are facing dried brooks? 9. What spiritual disciplines help you hear God's voice during difficult seasons?

Ministry Vision: 10. How might your current struggles be preparing you for future ministry opportunities? 11. What would it look like to depend on God daily rather than just in crisis moments? 12. How can your dried brook experience become a testimony that encourages others?

Additional Resources for Further Study

Recommended Books:

- "When God Doesn't Make Sense" by James Dobson
- "A Grace Disguised" by Jerry Sittser
- "Trusting God" by Jerry Bridges
- "The Valley of Vision" (Puritan Prayers)

Related Scripture Passages for Personal Study:

- Job 14:7-9 (Hope for a cut-down tree)
- Psalm 23:4 (Walking through the valley)
- Isaiah 55:8-11 (God's ways vs. our ways)
- Romans 8:28-29 (All things working together for good)
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (Temporary troubles, eternal glory)
- Philippians 4:19 (God's supply according to His riches)

Memory Verses:

- "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight*" (Proverbs 3:5-6, NASB)
- "*Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord*" (Psalm 27:14, NASB)