

What do you do when the brook runs dry?

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Hardships and trials come to everyone. How we respond to them determine the outcome. We will be overcomers or we will allow the circumstances of life to destroy our faith and we will become bitter, angry and refuse to seek God's will for the solution.

I read a wonderful story this past week of a man whose heart was set on being an actor in the movie industry. He auditioned for one part after another and was overlooked every time. He didn't give up but kept trying. Finally one day the director spoke to him and told him that he had a small part for him if he was willing to accept it. He was so excited and quickly accepted whatever it was as long as he could be in the movie. His enthusiasm soon vanished when he was told that he was to train a dog to be in the movie of "Orphan Annie". He had the responsibility of checking animal shelters, choosing and training the dog and bringing the dog to where the film was being made on the designated day. The man was a bit disheartened but was determined to do his best and give it a try. He did as he was asked and it was so successful that he was hired for that job and it has proven to be a lifelong career. He has enjoyed success and fulfillment as he has trained many animals for parts in movies and also has written books on how to train animals. He has made a name for himself as an expert on animal behavior. When he was hired for the job he was unemployed but had a dream of becoming an actor. Now he is happy to train animals to be actors and he is thrilled that he has chosen, trained and experienced the satisfaction of being responsible for some of his animals becoming famous. He is happy and content to be in the background. He surrounds himself with all different kinds of animals as his understanding of animals increase and his love and admiration for God's creatures continue to expand as he works with them. He is now glad that he didn't act on his first inclination to walk out and be angry with the part he was offered by the film director.

How often people miss blessings that would come to them because they are not willing to expand their horizons and look beyond what is at hand and dare to step out in faith believing that God has a purpose and plan for their future.

In 1 Kings Chapter 17, the prophet Elijah spoke to King Ahab concerning the sinful state that he and his wife, Jezebel, were responsible for in leading the Israelites into idol worship of Baal. The LORD spoke through Elijah and he told King Ahab that there would be no rain on the land until he spoke the word. Then he left the area and God told him to hide himself by Cherith brook that was before Jordan. For a period of time he would have water to drink and God sent ravens to feed him every meal. Elijah did as God had commanded him and he was content to stay there but it was not God's plan that he would stay there for the rest of his life. This was merely a transition period. The LORD had plans for Elijah.

In verse 7, we learn that in due time, the brook dried up because of lack of rain. God was looking out for Elijah and he was told to rise and go to Zarephath for God had commanded a widow to feed him. This is very interesting because there was quite a distance from where Elijah was to where God told him to travel. King Ahab had been sending out his men to seek Elijah and now Elijah was told to come out from hiding and travel to the next leg of his life's journey that God planned for him. Elijah obeyed the Lord and as he came into the town of Zarephath, he saw a woman gathering sticks by the gate of the city. He asked her for a drink of water and as she was heading back to get it for him, he called and asked her for some bread to go with the water. She shared with Elijah that she and her son were preparing to eat the last bit of food that she had and then they would die of starvation for she had no options left for them. He told her to prepare a cake for him first and then fix cakes for her son and herself. She would find that the flour would not be used up and the bottle of oil would not go dry until the days of the famine was over. She did as she was asked and Elijah stayed at her house until the three year time lapsed that God withheld rain from the land.

God then told Elijah that it was time for rain to return to the earth and he was to go meet Ahab. On the way, he met Obadiah, a godly man who feared the Lord more than he did King Ahab and Jezebel. He had hidden 50 prophets of God in a cave and provided for them during the time of famine. On this day, King Ahab had sent Obadiah to look for any grassy areas in the land that the animals could eat as the famine was so severe that he was afraid of them starving to death. He was on this mission when he met up with Elijah.

Elijah told him to tell Ahab that he was going to meet with him that day. Obadiah asked, "What, have I sinned that you would send me to tell Ahab that you will meet with him today? Ahab has sent men everywhere looking for you and if I tell him that you are here, God will move you somewhere else where you cannot be found and when that happens, he will slay me." I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. I don't dare to tell Ahab you are here." Elijah told him that he didn't have to worry for God had told him to meet with Ahab that day. Obadiah went back and told Ahab where the prophet was and Ahab went to meet him. This story is fascinating as Ahab and the Israelites as well as 400 prophets of Baal are on one side and Elijah is alone on the other side in a contest of which God answers by fire to burn up the sacrifice. Baal's followers went first and cried, prayed, chanted all day long for Baal to hear them. Elijah made fun of them and chided them by saying, "Shout louder for perhaps Baal is hard of hearing; perhaps he is asleep; perhaps he is on a journey." When the evening hour arrived, Elijah made an altar to the Lord, put a sacrifice on it, and had the prophets of Baal cover the whole area with water. He then said a simple prayer and the Lord heard from heaven and fire came and licked

up the water and consumed the sacrifice and only ashes were left. The people believed and said "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!" The rain came down the same day.

In this book, you find people in crisis. Jezebel goal was to kill all the prophets of God and to wipe out the worship of Jehovah by destroying the people who proclaimed his name as holy and worshipped Him. She spread her prophets among the people and caused the Israelites to sin against God by turning to idols. God used Ahab's right hand man, Obadiah, to hide many prophets in caves and provided for them. God hid Elijah and regardless of how many search parties was sent out; Elijah was not found until God's time was up. Ahab sent Obadiah on a mission to find food for the animals and God planned for him to meet Elijah. The widow prepared herself to eat one last meal with her son and then they would die of starvation; God had other plans for he sent Elijah to live at her house and her food supply was ample until the days of the famine was over. She had faith to believe the words of the prophet and she and her son were saved from death.

When the brook dried up, God moved Elijah to the next level of his ministry. Elijah believed God and moved with Him always following his direction. He didn't fear the king or his servants, for God was his protector and provider. The famine had no effect on him or on God's prophets for they were hidden by God and the king's right hand man provided safety for them.

We live in troublesome time but as I study the word of God, I find many Scriptures that give me strength and comfort. Look at Proverbs 18:10. It says

"His name is a (fortified) strong tower; the righteous runs in and are safe."

In 2 Peter 2 it deals with the false teachers that try to turn God's people away from the right path. They will bring in damnable teachings that will try to turn people away from faith in God for they will deny the Lord. This will bring swift destruction onto themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. Their greed will cause them to exploit people with fabricated stories and they will bring condemnation onto themselves. God didn't spare the angels who rebelled against Him but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment. He didn't spare the ancient world but brought floods to destroy the unrighteous but he spared Noah and his family for he was righteous before the Lord. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of homosexual behavior and wickedness by fire and saved righteous Lot, who was distressed by the lawlessness all around him, and his daughters. Verse 9 says that if these events took place, then God knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the Day of Judgment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desires of the flesh and despise authority.

God knows the hearts of men. See Acts 15:8. He knows those who desire to serve Him.

The Bible says that there are wicked people who would even dare to attack angels though angels are much stronger than they are. (Read the account of the angels that went to Lot's house. Men tried to break the door down to force the angels to submit to their sexual advances). These people blaspheme in matters that they don't understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct born only to be caught and destroyed and like animals they too will perish. They will be paid back for the harm they have caused for others. They are experts in greed; they have eyes for adultery and they never stop sinning and they seduce the unstable. They have left the straight path and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam, son of Brezer who loved the wages of wickedness.

God used a donkey to rebuke him giving the animal a voice to speak to Balaam to restrain the man's madness. They promise freedom while in fact they are slaves to depravity. People are slaves to whatever masters them. Those who have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, if they become entangled again and overcome by it, they are worse off in the end than they were in the beginning. It is better never to have heard the message than to hear it and turn your back on the holy commandments that have been passed on to them.

Peter prophesies that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed with fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since this is going to happen one day, what kind of people should we be?

Live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the coming of the LORD. We are to look forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. Make every effort to be spotless from the world's influence, be blameless, and make peace with God. Bear in mind that God's patience means salvation and this is also what Paul taught. Peter said that some of the things that Paul wrote are hard to understand and ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do other Scriptures to their own destruction.

Peter exhorted us that since we have been forewarned we should be on guard so that we don't get carried away by the lawless and fall from our secure position in Christ. We are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen!

We don't know the day or the hour that the Lord Jesus will call us home to be with Him. Be diligent in making straight paths for our feet that we might be saved from the things that are coming to this earth. See Luke 21:34-37