

Life Group Notes

Sunday 7th June 2020

Speaker: Scott Taylor

Title: Elijah: Under the broom tree

Passage: 1 Kings 19: 1-9

The next part of Elijah's story sees him encounter problems with his mental health. It's his journey and not ours but we do see how God responds when we find ourselves in these situations.

On the Run – Elijah finds himself on the run. He has had these great triumphs in God and is no doubt pumped as he continues to smash it!!! However, that moment comes when he faces opposition. And it comes from Jezebel, the sophisticated powerful intimidating wife of the King. She threatens his life. It is from her that he runs – he is fearing for his life. He runs as far away as he can as fast as he can. So he runs, but the broom tree moment is not just caused by fear but also exhaustion.

Remember the intense period of work he had been in before this, remember the distances he has travelled on foot, running and walking. As he gets to that broom tree, he is no doubt exhausted, fearful and alone.

Under the broom tree – the broom tree gives 'just enough' shelter in the desert. It is a low bush that has incredibly deep roots but does not provide much shelter. You have to lay under it. So, Elijah goes from mountain top experiences to now laying under a broom tree asking God to take away his life. It's his lowest moment caught in depression and suicidal thoughts.

How God responds – Instead of answering Elijah's prayer to take his life away, God does the complete opposite he send an angel to bring him relief to sustain his life. God loves Elijah and in time, still has purposes for him. Elijah has breakfast with an angel of bread and water and then lays back down again to rest.

As much as we may want to rush back to activity, or how much the world or family or friends might expect us to get over it and on with it, God is happy for us to rest in Him and receive from Him. Elijah wasn't ready yet and God wasn't rushing him. When Elijah is ready he is taken on a 40 day and night journey to mount Horeb or Sinai as its also known. God deals with Elijah with grace and mercy. He may find himself under the broom tree, but he ends up back on a mountain top hearing from God.

So what for us? – we are like Elijah, just as James reminds us. We have high moments and low moments. We can take hope. God hasn't provided us with a broom tree which gives just enough shade, he has provided us with a tree, the cross, that is abundantly more than we will ever need to take shelter under. He invites us to come and take shelter there and remember all Christ has done.

Christ – the one who didn't take shelter under a tree, but died on it; the one who didn't have his life taken, but gave it up for us; the one who ran towards his enemies so we wouldn't be alone when confronting the things we fear.

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear on Sunday that was new or encouraging?
- 2) What things are you afraid of? How have you handled that fear?
- 3) In your broom tree moments – how has God shown his love to you? (people may need help here and this could well be an emotional moment. In preparing for this ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom to approach this.)
- 4) Who could you be the 'angel at the broom tree for' in this coming week?

