

*Under a Broom Tree*

*1 Kings 19:4-8*

**KEY VERSES**

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." <sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." <sup>6</sup> He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. <sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." <sup>8</sup> He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.*

In our lectionary passage from 1 Kings, we find the prominent prophet Elijah taking shelter under a broom tree in the desert, ready to give up. After defeating an army of the prophets of Baal, this man of courage who has trusted God no longer wants to live. **When have you experienced this feeling of burnout or letdown, after a big event in your life that has required a lot of preparation and anticipation?**

Victor Frankl notes in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, after his time in a concentration camp, that hope is what helps a person avoid despair. It is easy to feel hopeful when we can see our future. But when circumstances or our own inadequacies cloud the path ahead, it is easy to fall into despair. **What do you think about when you hear the word hope? When have you discovered hope even in moments of suffering?**

During Elijah's encounter with God under the broom tree, He tells him to return to his job as a prophet, strengthening Elijah through sustenance to regain his strength for the journey ahead. Like Elijah, each of us will journey in and out of discouragement. When we remember where we've been and how God has continued to rescue us, though, we become less anxious as we remember God's faithfulness. **What fears do you currently have that make you want to run and hide?** Think about our ancestors throughout scripture who seemed severely unqualified, whom God lifted up to their task. **As you enter this new school year, pray about it and talk with others about what God is uniquely calling you to do - as you remember His faithful equipping of you in the past.**