



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “The Broom Tree or the Mountain: Where Are You Running To?”

Ps. Jim Laffoon - July 19, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What do you like to do to relax?
- What helps you deal with stress?
- What was one of your favorite vacations?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

1 Kings 19:1-5 ESV

*Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.*

Elijah had just experienced an extraordinary demonstration of God's power. Although much had been accomplished, no permanent change had taken place in the power structures of the nation. Furthermore, Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah within the next 24 hours. In response Elijah fled.

Elijah was running toward God in fear, not in faith. He knew he needed to get a hold of God. But he was not in the right state of mind and heart to encounter God and hear from him.

As he came to a broom tree, he was exhausted and was ready to die. He had done everything he knew to do, but it didn't seem to do any good. His life's work and mission seemed to be in vain.

1 Kings 19:5-8 ESV

*And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.”*

Just as God fed Elijah through the angel, so also we need to be fed by God through his Word. Just as Elijah needed to eat more than once, so also we need to feed again and again of God's Word. We need to do this in rich measures.

Elijah also drank. Likewise, we need to drink of God's Spirit; that is, we need to drink of God's presence. We do this through prayer and worship. Like the reading of Scripture we need to do this in rich measures and repeatedly.

In the strength of that double portion of food and drink, Elijah was strengthened and was able to travel 40 days to seek God at Mt. Horeb where God had met Moses (Exodus 3:1-6ff). When times are tough and we desperately need to lay a hold of God, it is necessary that we set aside more time to search the Scriptures and pray and worship. This will propel us into a place with God where we can encounter him in a profound, transformative way.

1 Kings 19:9-18

Elijah did indeed encounter God at Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah wound up hearing what was needed to give him perspective, self-awareness, and fresh insight and understanding. He also received a new clear, specific set of instructions to fulfill God's mission. He was renewed. Those who earnestly, repeatedly seek the Lord will lay a hold of God, because God will lay a hold of them.

When we are experiencing times of great pressure, distress, and concern, we must respond well. We could respond in fear, and in our eventual exhaustion slip into depression. Or we can respond by doubling our investment in God's Word and in prayer and worship. If we do, we will find the strength we need to continue our pursuit of God, which will prepare us to truly encounter God. Those who earnestly and diligently seek him will find him and will be rewarded by him.

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- What pressures and concerns are you carrying in your soul?
- How are you dealing with the pressures and concerns in your life?
- How could you increase and improve your times of reading and studying Scripture? What about praying and worshipping?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray for God to strengthen you as you seek him in Scripture and prayer and worship.
- Pray for God to give you perspective, insight, and understanding regarding your pressures and concerns.
- Pray for God to renew you and give you fresh, specific instruction on how you are to continue to fulfill his mission.