

Cycle 2 *Traveling With the Psalmists and Prophets*

Introduction

Welcome to the continuing journey. If this section were to have a title of its own it might be ***“Bread for the Journey.”*** One of my favorite stories of transformation is that of Elijah (I Kings 19) who after defeating the priests of Baal, and ushering in the end to the drought which was plaguing the land, became so frightened of Jezebel and perhaps what he had done through God’s power, he ran far into the wilderness. When he became exhausted, he lay down to rest under a broom tree, a shrubby sort of tree well suited to the dry climate. It provided some shelter, but certainly wasn’t a great shade tree. There he was awakened by an angel offering him bread and water. After a second sleep, the angel again awakened him and said, *“Get up and eat or the journey will be too much for you.”* He then had the strength to journey forty days and forty nights to Mt Horeb, the mount of God.

The middle time of transformation is often a difficult time. We’re not where we were, but we’re also not where we’re going. At the beginning there is the excitement of getting ready and setting off. And then reality starts to set in. You can’t go back but on the other hand the road ahead seems to stretch on forever and often seems very uncertain. Getting out of Egypt was exciting, but forty years of wilderness living must have at times been very trying, especially when the future was both uncertain and unknown. Would they find a place? Would the future match their dreams?

After the initial excitement is gone, the mid-journey gives way to learning to live in new ways. This takes courage, commitment, and consistency as people learn to rely on God in deeper ways, take risks, sometimes have to back up and go in another direction. There are many gifts waiting in the middle of the journey, but we have to discover them. A key element is a deepening of relationship with God and fellow travelers. However, this doesn’t just happen. It has to be nurtured and encouraged. It will take both time and effort. The scriptures in these seven sessions come from the Psalms and the prophets. They aren’t so much about the “how to” of transformation as they are resources to help you on your journey, reminding you God provides sustenance for our journey. Like the Israelites gathering manna, we will have to be willing to pick up the food of God’s abundance.

If you have received this material in time, during your prayer time focus on the scripture for the first session using the pattern suggested under Practicing the Presence in each session. The focus for Session 1 is Psalm 33.