



## Reflection for October 16

By Tsuker Yang



*Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night. (1 Kings 19:3-8)*

Life is filled with experiences – high and low, joy and sorrow, win and loss. One of the natural laws in life is that life is like a roller coaster. When you experience a great height, the next plight will be your low, sometimes scary and frightened, even unpredictable. It is like climbing to a mountaintop only to see a glimpse of majestic for a moment, then the tumbling down experience sets in.

There is no exception for anyone in this roller coaster experience, even in the life of the great Prophet Elijah. In the preceding chapter Elijah was on the top of Mt. Carmel for a victory over 450 prophets of Baal. Afterward he prayed for rain and a thunderstorm came. In this chapter, the day after his victory in Mt. Carmel, he ran for his life in fear of Queen Jezebel. He was so afraid, depressed and thought that it would be the end for him.

What do you do when the height of your life is challenged by a new low? How do you get going when the going gets tough? Will there be a new height when discouragement, distress and despair set in? I learn from the Elijah story that God will never leave us. God will renew our strength and bring us to a new height in the midst of our despair. God will come closer to us, be present with us, help and restore us to strength and new possibility.

As God had renewed Elijah to health God will do the same for us. God sent a helper, an angel, to help Elijah in his exhaustion, to provide for his need: food to eat and water to drink. God even spoke to Elijah and gave him a new purpose and new task to move on. After Elijah had regained his strength, God said to Elijah, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.” (1

Kings 19:15-16).

Let me just conclude with a verse from one of our hymns. In the midst of our discouragement and despair, please know that God is our help and our hope:

*O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.  
Under the shadow of thy throne, still may we dwell secure;  
sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defense is sure. (UM Hymnal  
117, Isaac Watts, 1719)*

*May this devotion provide you with a moment of faithful reflection and care. You are involved in ministries of justice and witness, in ministries of standing up and standing with people working to create better systems and communities, in ministries of learning and searching and researching to become more aware and awakened, more technologically savvy and proficient, more virtually and personally present in your churches and communities and world. Each of us who serve as members of your Wisconsin Cabinet write these devotions in grateful prayer for you – for sustenance and buoyancy, for strength and courage, for safety and just actions, and for faith and love to be full and fulfilled in your daily lives. God's grace and blessings, God's challenge and healthy discomfort, God's Spirit and energy be with you, in the hope Christ offers us all.*

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