

## Mark 8: 27-30

27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' 28 And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' 29 He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

**Commentary:** Jesus has been teaching and healing now for some time. He has come to a very important point in this gospel. He confronts the disciples and challenges them to reflect on who he is based on the evidence and their experience. Most people think him a prophet, like the great prophets of old. But Peter, speaking on behalf of Jesus' closest followers, answers quite differently: 'You are the Messiah.' Jesus accepts this claim for himself, but at the same time, orders Peter and the others not to tell anyone else. We have already introduced the idea of the 'Messianic secret' earlier. Jesus knows palpably well how popular hopes and conceptions of the messiah have clouded the minds and hearts of most everyone around him, including even his disciples, preventing them from being open to the true revelation of his messiahship. But Peter's confession is an important moment in the gospel. It marks a turning point. Even if they do not understand the full implications of what they are confessing, the disciples know that Jesus is no mere prophet but the one promised of old to bring about God's liberating salvation to Israel and to the world.

Is Jesus a mere prophet for you, or is he the messiah? Does he offer some wisdom for you and a good moral standard, or does he offer much more: a key to transformation?

There are times of life that are turning points for all of us. We don't choose those times. They come upon us. What we choose is how we will respond, how we will absorb what's happening, pay attention and trust where the journey will take us.

Is this season of Covid-19, a critical time, a turning point for you? Will it be a time of transformation in some way yet to unfold? Turning points are times when what we feel is so big, with little precedent in our lives, that the full implications of what it all means and the possibility in it all has yet to unfold. How will your life change not only on the outside, but the inside because of what you're having to live through right now?

**Prayer:** May we trust the journey, O God, as we follow Jesus our messiah. May we trust where we are going even if it's not clear yet. May we open ourselves to what you want to teach us so that we sanctify this time as a time of spiritual growth, and ultimately, transformation; Amen.