

## Mark 9: 9-13

9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. <sup>11</sup>Then they asked him, 'Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' <sup>12</sup>He said to them, 'Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup>But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him.'

**Commentary:** In this difficult-to-read little section of the gospel we are given a glimpse at how Jesus understands his place in the larger scheme of biblical prophecy and divine timing. First, the disciples are urged once again to keep the messianic secret and what they witnessed happen on the mountain, until after the resurrection (which explains, according to the gospel, why scarce anyone confessed Jesus as Lord until after his resurrection). But then, the disciples want to understand how the destiny of the 'son of man' (code word for Messiah) is linked to prophetic expectation of an Elijah like figure coming to prepare the way for him. Elijah's coming in no way cancels the way of suffering and rejection of the messiah Jesus has just revealed to the disciples. In fact, Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist, but no-one has truly perceived John in this way. This also explains the persistent blindness and hard-heartedness of the people around Jesus. They refuse to see. They refuse to be open to the possibility unless they see the kind of evidence that dazzles or scares them into seeing and then following.

What would it take for you to be motivated to see something, change something or give up something that is not good for yourself or someone else? What would it take to follow Jesus in this kind of way? In this time of Covid-19, there is a new kind of urgency and fear all around us and in us too. Sometimes, fear can paralyze us, make us act in ways that are more a reaction than well-thought-through, or motivate us to change something we've put off changing, out of fear. But even good change done out of fear is not a good thing. Jesus wants followers who will be motivated to change and engage out of the energy of compassion and care. What do we need to happen for us to get more of this kind of energy flowing through us?

**Prayer:** This is a time where much is shaken up for us, O God, much is evaluated and re-evaluated. Change is difficult, O God, especially change that we feel pressured to make because we're afraid or anxious. Fill us with your energy of compassion and care. May we find a new kind of fullness and peace even in such a time of anxiety, fear and an uncertain future. May we find new courage to follow Jesus through this time, even as we must pass through our own kind of cross to get to resurrection; Amen.