



## The Ministry of the Messenger

### Key idea:

Like Elijah and John the Baptist, we are called to be messengers proclaiming the King is coming, understanding that this often leads to opposition and suffering for the messenger.

### Key text:

Mark 9:9-13

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what “rising from the dead” meant. <sup>11</sup> And they asked him, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?” <sup>12</sup> Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.”

### Key points:

1. After the mountaintop experience of the Transfiguration, Jesus reminds the disciples that He is going to be put to death and then be resurrected - and they still can not grasp that this will happen to Jesus.
2. The disciples knew it was believed that Elijah would come to prepare the way for the Messiah, but they misunderstood what would happen, thinking that Elijah would be well received in his ministry and message.
3. Jesus indicated that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of the messenger preparing the way of the Lord, but that he had been rejected and put to death. The disciples did not understand this yet, but the Scripture is clear that this is almost always the fate of the messengers of the Lord.
4. All of this is a preview of what will happen to the Son of Man/Messiah - He will suffer many things, be rejected, and put to death. But the Transfiguration showed that God would raise Him from the dead and exalt Him in glory.

## Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why does Jesus have this conversation with the disciples right after the Transfiguration? What is the link between the Transfiguration and the teaching about suffering?
3. If I had been on the Mount of Transfiguration, would I have wanted to tell everyone what I saw? Why would I want to do this? Why did Jesus tell the disciples to not tell anyone?
4. Jesus told the disciples to not tell anyone about the Transfiguration. Does this apply to believers today? Are we to keep quiet about the Gospel or are we commanded to tell others? What is the difference?
5. Why did Jesus keep teaching about His coming rejection, suffering, and death? Why was this so hard for the disciples to understand?
6. When I think of God sending a messenger, what is my default expectation of how the messenger will be treated? Why?
7. When I think of "great heroes of the faith" in Scripture, were their lives generally easy or difficult? Did their obedience to the Lord make their lives easier or more difficult?
8. In what ways is John the Baptist similar to Elijah? In Mark 9:13 Jesus indicates that John is the Elijah who was to come, yet in John 1:21, John the Baptist said he was not Elijah. How do I reconcile these two statements? (See After Hours this week for some possibilities).
9. As a disciple of Jesus, I am called to be a messenger of the King and His Kingdom, preparing the way for the Lord. In light of Elijah and John, what sort of reception should I expect? What can sustain me through the difficulties of rejection, suffering, and even possible persecution?
10. Who can I reach out to this week to share the Gospel or strengthen their faith?