

Theme: 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.

## I. Intro - Hard Life of Great People

- A. A few years I was teaching church history here at BRCC
- B. Reading biographies of some great heroes like Athanasius, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards
- C. We often think of their fame and great accomplishments
- D. Their lives were often difficult, full of illness & rejection!
- E. We can do the same with great biblical heroes like Elijah
- F. The people of Jesus' day had done this with Elijah too!

## II. Down the Mountain

- A. Peter, James, and John had a mountaintop experience!  
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. Mark 9:9
  - 1. We covered this last week
  - 2. They had seen the Transfiguration!
  - 3. They saw Jesus in His Glory!
  - 4. They saw Moses & Elijah - the time of fulfillment!
  - 5. We can also imagine they are bursting to tell others!
- B. Jesus brings them back to reality  
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. Mark 9:9-10

- 1. Don't tell anyone about this until the Resurrection
  - a. This command was just "until the Son of Man had risen from the dead"
  - b. Once the disciples receive the Spirit, they and all Christians are sent to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world.
  - c. This is why it is important we properly interpret Scripture to properly understand how God's Word applies in each stage of redemptive history.
- 2. The disciples' confusion: what is "rising from the dead"?
  - a. Risen from the dead is not an obscure phrase!!
  - b. The confusion was not over the resurrection - they believed the resurrection would happen on the final day.
  - c. The problem is why would Jesus the Son of Man need to be raised from the dead?
  - d. Jesus is the King and the time has come!
  - e. Jesus is going to be accepted, adored, and installed as King soon!
  - f. They can not understand what Jesus is saying!
  - g. This is one good reason for them not to tell others yet - their operating assumptions are all wrong!
  - h. I have seen this problem in my own life and that of others - we have a great experience with God, but we jealously rush out to tell others when we do not really understand yet!
- 3. Jesus is continuing the disciples training - the ministry of the messenger.

### III. The Ministry of the Messenger

#### A. A question about Elijah

And they asked him, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?” Mark 9:11

1. The appearance of Elijah brings this question to the forefront of their minds.
2. Many people had an expectation that Elijah would come before the day of the Lord, the arrival of the Messiah.  
See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” Malachi 4:5-6
  - a. Many Jews took this to mean Elijah would come to prepare the way for the Messiah to come.
  - b. This is why some people thought Jesus might be Elijah (Mark 6:15).
3. The disciples are not bible experts (yet!) but they have heard this and they just saw Elijah!
4. But won't Elijah appear to everyone so they know Jesus is the Messiah?

#### B. Elijah and John the Baptist

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.” Mark 9:12-13

1. Jesus says Elijah does come and restores all things

2. But if Elijah restores all things, why does the Scripture say that the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected?
  - a. Notice that Jesus continues to prefer ‘Son of Man’ because of all the wrong understandings surrounding ‘Messiah’
  - b. The teachers of the law said that Elijah would prepare the way and the Messiah would be gladly received and enthroned, rejecting the idea that the Messiah could suffer, be rejected, and die.
  - c. But the Old Testament is replete with teachings that the Seed to come, the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord must suffer. This is seen from the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15, through the history of Israel, the prophets, and the Psalms.
  - d. It is clearly seen in the Servant Songs of Isaiah  
He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isaiah 53:3
  - e. This was what the teachers of the law refused to see - and what the disciples still did not understand.
3. Elijah has come - and they rejected and killed him too! (Mark 9:13)
4. This is a clear link between Elijah and John the Baptist
  - a. Gabriel said John would come in the spirit and power of Elijah  
Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Luke 1:16-17

- b. Mark 1:2 quotes Malachi 3 and Isaiah 40 about preparing the way of the Lord - and then introduces John! (see last week)
  - c. Elijah and John were rough men of the wilderness
  - d. Elijah and John are sent to call a wayward people back to God
  - e. Elijah and John both have conflicts with a wicked King and Queen.
  - f. Elijah and John the Baptist both have powerful ministries, see some people turn to the Lord - and ultimately are rejected by many.
5. This is a consistent pattern for the Lord's messengers

a. Old Testament prophets experienced this

Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord. Zechariah 1:4

- 1. This is God's summary of Israel's response to the prophets
- 2. The generation after the exile was in danger of repeating this with Zechariah and Haggai!

b. Jesus said this would be the fate of His people

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:11-12

- 1. Jesus tells His followers they should expect the same treatment as the Old Testament prophets!

- 2. But they can still rejoice - for they know that an eternal reward awaits them!
- 3. Jesus had said the same thing in Mark 8:38, and then gave a glimpse of glory in the Transfiguration!
- 4. This is what sustained Elijah and the other prophets, the apostles, and it is what will sustain us in being faithful!

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Do I see I am called to be a messenger of the King?

- 1. All Christians are called to share the Good News with others - this is a universal call!
- 2. This is not just a gift; it is a responsibility.
- 3. The Gospel is GOOD NEWS! Your family, friends, and neighbors need it!
- 4. Everything they long for and restlessly seek is found in Christ - point them to Him!

### B. Do I see my call is to be faithful, not successful?

- 1. Modern Americans think in terms of success, but the Scripture focuses on faithfulness!
- 2. This is important because if we focus on "success" who would want to be a messenger of the Lord?
- 3. Elijah and John the Baptist were not "successful" by modern standards, but they were faithful and will be rewarded eternally for their faithfulness!
- 4. Ahab and Jezebel and Herod and Herodias were successful in their day but were unfaithful to the Lord - and you don't want their "reward"!
- 5. Our task is not to make people believe and embrace Christ, it is to proclaim the truth and the Gospel and to live a life in accord with the truth and worthy of the Gospel.

6. Am I being a faithful messenger of the Lord, regardless of the response of others?
  - a. This is hard - even Elijah and John wavered!
  - b. But we have been given the message of life that the people around us desperately need!
  - c. Our call is to share the truth as compassionately and clearly as we can!
  - d. Only the Spirit can raise the dead - we are simply to share the message.
  - e. One great way is simply to invite friends to a worship gathering - "Come and see!"

7. Am I sustaining faithfulness by regular glimpses of glory?
  - a. Without this, we will waver and be silent!
  - b. This is why the disciples were allowed to see the Transfiguration!
  - c. This is not about our strength or resolve, but rather being transformed as we behold Jesus and contemplate eternity - which will open doors for us to share.

Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:17

1. Messengers will face suffering and rejection
2. We are sustained by regularly remembering we are heirs of God and will share in the glory with Christ!

### C. The Table of Suffering and Glory

1. Here we taste and see Christ's suffering and glory

2. Here we remember it is Christ's suffering that saves us, not our own works, and that He is bringing us to eternal glory!
3. Come taste and see!

### The Ministry of the Messenger

Mark 9:9-13  
 January 21, 2024  
 Communion  
 1 Peter 5:8-10

Teaching keywords: prophets; evangelism and missions; suffering; eschatology; biblical characters

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:8-10

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." Mark 9:9-13