Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Jesus rebuked them” (Luke 9:20).

Hg 2:1-9; Luke 9:18-22

Jesus must have seen the inevitable clash of expectations as his miracles and preaching attracted large crowds and the attention of the religious establishment. He knew the crowds were asking, “Might this be the Messiah?”, but what may have concerned him most was the response of his own disciples. They were just as caught up in the speculation and excitement as the crowds, acting more and more like insiders eager to share the glory of being close to Jesus.

So, after a night of prayer, he confronts them: “Who do you say that I am?” Peter, speaking for the rest, confirms his suspicion that his closest associates are part of the campaign to declare him to be the long-awaited messiah who will fulfill the dream of liberation from foreign domination and restore Israel to its former glory under King David. “Wrong,” Jesus told them, “I am not *that* messiah. I am God’s suffering servant from Isaiah, ready to fulfill the Law and the Prophets by being rejected and crucified in Jerusalem.” Luke tells us that Jesus “rebuked” Peter and the other disciples for taking part in expectations that were vastly complicating his

true mission and setting them all up for a huge misunderstanding and crisis of confidence in who he really was.

Every life of faith must go through successive moments of disillusionment to get the truth that God’s way to glory does not avoid suffering but embraces it head on, heart exposed. Conversion requires that we turn our expectations upside down to pass again and again through the paradox of apparent weakness that begets strength, suffering that brings endurance, loss of self that enlarges us for love. First fervor must give way to hard choices, discipline and perseverance. Following Jesus all the way means accepting the whole journey, from the sweet joy of being called to the bitter cup of self-surrender for the sake of love. Blessed are those who suffer rebuke so they might know the one, true God, not an idol of their own making.

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