

**Sermon, Peel Cathedral, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021** Readings: 2 Kings 2 1-12; Mark 9 2-9

**NB This is the framework for an unscripted interactive talk to enable our choristers to engage with the material.**

Start with things that remind us of important people:

- The shell of a tortoise that used to be on the bottom step of the staircase in my grandmother's home

Any things you'd like to add?

Cloak – an important item in the story that Millie read to us. It belonged to Elijah.

What do you know about Elijah?

- Prophet
- Said it wouldn't rain
- Brought down fire from heaven on a very wet sacrifice
- Got discouraged
- Was fed by ravens
- ???

The story that was read for us is about the end of Elijah's life, and about how Elisha took on his role. A couple of things I'd like us to think about:

- 1) Elisha as a disciple – 1 Kings 19 v 19 – Elijah threw cloak around Elisha's shoulders to call him to be his successor
- 2) Elisha knowing Elijah was going
- 3) Elisha not wanting to talk about it
- 4) Elisha following even though Elijah discouraged it
- 5) Elisha witnessing miracle of the river parting
- 6) Elisha asking for Elijah's cloak
- 7) Elisha witnessing the end of Elijah's life
- 8) Elisha taking up the mantle/cloak and finding that Elijah's God, who parted the river, was in his own personal experience, his God too.

So, for us:

- 1) The importance of learning about God and following Jesus
- 2) When difficult things happen, we react in different ways. Some people want to talk; others aren't ready to
- 3) Following God's way is challenging.
- 4) People we love and respect will die, or move away. We will find it difficult. But we too can experience God for ourselves. And take what we've learned from others and pass it on.

Two final thoughts:

- 1) Just as there is a sense of mystery and wonder in the idea of Elijah being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, so our Gospel reading has a sense of mystery and wonder. Of three of Jesus' closest friends seeing two people, long dead – Moses and Elijah – meeting with Jesus, and hearing the voice of God. And Jesus appearing totally different – transfigured. When we are thinking about spiritual things, there will always be elements of mystery and wonder; things we can't always understand or explain. But I wouldn't want to believe in a God that was small enough for me to fully comprehend.
- 2) We've thought about a tortoise that reminded me of my grandparents and of things that remind you of others. We've talked about the cloak – how Elijah used it when he first called Elisha to be his assistant, how he used it to part the waters of the river, how Elisha inherited it and found that God had indeed given him his spirit when he found that the cloak parted the river for him too. We've mentioned the idea of mystery – how somehow Elijah and Moses met Jesus in the presence of three of Jesus' closest friends. And soon we'll be moving on to the Eucharist where we share bread and wine. Jesus gave his friends these simple, everyday items and told them to remember him.

Rosemary Clarke