**Pastor Tim Message Notes 4-9-2023
Back to Galilee - Easter (10:10AM Service)**

There is a phrase or saying that I have heard a few times in recent years that I never remember hearing growing up. The phrase is this – ‘run it back.’

Raise your hand if you are familiar with this saying?

Where I have seen and heard this spoken was during sports celebrations. The Kansas City Chiefs even made a song about it.

The phase refers to returning to do something again. In the cases of sports celebrations, it is one way of saying, this is not the end, we are going to do this again next year and win the championship. As this is conveyed in the statement ‘run it back.’

Today is the most important day of the year and the biggest celebration. It is Easter Sunday. It is Resurrection Sunday. It was a Sunday like today, at this time of the year, that Jesus was raised back to life on the 3rd day, following His death on a Roman cross for the sins of the world.

He had told his disciples multiple times that He would rise on the third day, but they were all shocked when He did rise. They were stunned.

But shock turned into celebration. The cross and the empty tomb were suddenly transformed into symbols of victory because of Jesus. Just think about the beautiful flowers at the foot of the cross here in the sanctuary today.

Let us hear these words of victory and celebration found in Matthew 28:1-10:

**1After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.**

**2There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**

**5The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”**

**8So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

Truly, at dawn on the 1st day of the week things looked grim. The disciples were in hiding. A group of Jesus’ female followers were seeking to anoint Jesus’ body for proper burial. And then the unexpected happens.

A violent earthquake. Terrified guards at the tomb who run away in fear. An angel of God rolling the large stone away.

This all happens before the women arrive at the tomb. And when they arrive, they quickly become confused and afraid, but the angel comforts them and brings them very good news.

**“Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”**

Maybe you can picture the women walking into the tomb in amazement and excitement.

The angel goes on to say, **“Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”**

The message was conveyed and the angel had told the women to be on their way, to go quickly.

There is a sense of urgency here. Go tell the disciples that He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.

But why the sense of urgency? I believe that Jesus was excited for His closest friends to learn that He was alive again. There is an urgency to good news. Good news is meant to be shared.

And so the women hurry away from the tomb, carrying a mix of excitement and fear. Before they had gone far, though, Jesus is there. “Greetings,” he says. And their reaction is to fall at His feet and worship Him. Such a beautiful response.

I think that will be how all of us will be when we see Jesus face to face. Just falling on our knees and worshipping Him.

But then Jesus interestingly says words very similar to the angel. He states, **“Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

The question I pose for all of us today is what is the significance of Galilee? Why does Jesus tell the women to tell the disciples to go to Galilee to see Him?

We know from other gospels that the disciples did not leave for Galilee the moment the women shared the words of the angel and Jesus with them.

On Easter night, the apostles had locked themselves in a room in Jerusalem somewhere. This was because they were afraid for their own safety from the Jewish leaders.

And we read that Jesus comes to them and fear and sadness are overcome with joy and celebration.

But eventually Matthew tells us that the 11 disciples went to Galilee and it was actually on a mountain in Galilee that Jesus commissions them to make disciples of all nations.

Again, though, what is the significance of going back to Galilee? Galilee was the place where everything began. Galilee was the place where the disciples were first called to follow Jesus. Galilee was where the disciples’ training began as Jesus launched into public ministry.

The fact that Jesus wanted His disciples to go back to Galilee is really important. It was like they were going back to the beginning. They would be in familiar places, but under different circumstances.

Jesus knew that He would only be among them for 40 days before He was taken into Heaven and I believe Jesus wanted to pour into His disciples in places that were familiar. In places where they had already learned so much.

Jesus knew that as significant as His resurrection was, the victory of His victory was not the end. Jesus wanted His disciples to ‘run it back,’ and continue to advance God’s Kingdom on earth with the help of His Spirit and the grace of Jesus, who was now reigning from heaven. The will of Jesus was that His disciples would run it back every year, as they would spread the good news of Christ to the four corners of the world.

So as we reflect on this morning’s passage and its significance, what is the main takeaway for us today? **And I believe that it is this – we are to not stop with celebrating the victory of Christ in His resurrection, but we are also to go back to Galilee as well.**

Now, I have never literally been to Galilee, let alone anywhere in Israel. Have any of you? While I would love to someday literally go to Galilee, I believe that every day that we choose to practice intentional discipleship is a day that we go back to Galilee.

To go back to Galilee for us means to let the resurrection of Jesus energize you to ‘run it back’ and be all-the-more committed to growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

While we are to celebrate this day of days with great joy, please remember that Jesus did not view this as the end of the story, but as the beginning. Jesus is continuing to build His church from heaven and through His Spirit to continue to be undergoing training and discipline to become stronger followers of the Lord.

What does going back to Galilee look like for you?

First, I believe it involves remembering Christ calling you to Himself. Maybe you were very young or perhaps it was as an adult. But remember the Lord inviting you to follow Him and to find peace with God and forgiveness of sin through Him. This should cause us to be very thankful for God’s mercy towards us in Jesus. So remember Christ calling you. So let us go back to Galilee as we remember Christ calling us out of darkness and sin and self-centered living and into light and freedom and living to bless God and others.

Second, going back to Galilee reminds us that we are to always be students of Jesus. Jesus taught His disciples so much in Galilee and the word disciple means “learner.” Friends, Jesus wants to teach You. Jesus wants to equip you. Jesus wants us to mature in Him.

Being a student takes time and effort. And we are to never stop learning and growing. One of my professors in seminary, Dr. Robb Palmer, said to us “**always a student, sometimes a teacher**.” This is coming from someone that has many degrees and letters before his name. He is still a student.

All of us are students of Jesus. How is He teaching you? What are ways that He is calling you to mature as a student or disciple of Jesus?

This may be through practices that the Lord has done so much in your life already or it may be through a new spiritual discipline. But let us all go back to Gailee as we remember that we never stop being students of Jesus.

And third and finally, Galilee was the place of commissioning and calling. It was there that Jesus told them to make disciples of the nations. Friends, like the first disciples, you are also called to ministry in this world. Every Christian is called to be a minister in some way, shape, or form. It may look different for everyone, but God has assignments for every one of His children.

What are the ministries that He has called you to? What assignments has he put on your heart? If you do not have a sense of calling and ministry, I invite you to please share some time in prayer with the Lord. Ask Him what are some of the things that He has called you to do.

Every one of us who follows Jesus has a spiritual gift. What are some of the things that stir in your heart or cause you great sadness? These may be ways the Lord is seeking to help make those callings better known to you. And if we are employed, God wants you to view that as one of the ministries He has for you, at least during this season of time.

As we close, I just want you to picture Jesus and the disciples when they did eventually meet up in Galilee. Maybe they are walking by the Sea of Galilee. And they’re laughing and smiling and celebrating all that Jesus has accomplished in Jerusalem. And Jesus then gathers the 11 into a holy huddle and He begins to lead them in a chant. “Run it back! Run it back! Run it back!”

Maybe those would be His words for us today as well. Chestnut Grove Church, “run it back!” Sisters and brothers, let’s go back to Galilee and get working on running it back. Jesus will lead us through the Holy Spirit. And as we seek to run it back, we cannot help but live into our vision statement of being that light on a hill sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray…

Resources: [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com)

lectures from Dr. H. Douglas Buckwalter & Dr. Robb Palmer – Evangelical Seminary