

**“Rendezvous in Galilee”**  
**(Matthew 28:1-10)**  
**Pastor Peter Yi**  
**April 4, 2010**

**Introduction:**

**NIV Matthew 28:1-10**

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

<sup>2</sup>There 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. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup>The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

<sup>5</sup>The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>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."

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

**Galilee**

Let me give you a little geographical background that will hopefully help you as you hear this message. If you have a bible with a map near the back cover, you can turn there now. Large body of water down south is the Dead Sea. Jordan River goes up about 100KM and there is a significantly smaller body of water called the Sea of Galilee. Jerusalem is just west of the Dead Sea. So are the towns of Bethany, Bethlehem, Emmaus, Jericho. If you've grown up with the Bible, those cities are probably very familiar to you. Then as we travel up the Jordan River we reach the Sea of Galilee, which is shaped sort-of like the African continent. On the northern half of the Sea of Galilee are the following cities. Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Gennessaret, Cana. Near the bottom of the Sea, half way between it and the Mediterranean is the Nazareth, Jesus' home town. This whole area was known as the region of Galilee.

Galilee was a very significant place in the ministry of Jesus. The town of Capernaum was his home base, his headquarters, from which he launched his ministry. It was in Galilee that Jesus performed his first and second miracles. The first one, turning water into wine, was performed in Cana, and the second was the healing of a boy that was dying. Galilee was where Jesus made one of his most important decisions—the selection of his rag-tag group of disciples. So Galilee was not only the place where Jesus grew up, but also the place where his disciples lived and worked. It was in Galilee that most of the great teachings and miracles were performed by Jesus. The famous sermon on the mount that includes perhaps the most famous ethical statement known to humankind, “do unto others and you would have do unto you”, the golden rule, was preached in Galilee. His most famous, most noted miracle, that all four gospel writers included, the feeding of the 5000, was performed in Galilee. And the list of his works can go on and on.

For his twelve disciples as well, everything that was familiar about life was in Galilee. They were raised in Galilee. Their families were in Galilee. Their old jobs were in Galilee. Their three

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unforgettable years of life and intimacy and ministry with Jesus, was lived out in Galilee. This was where they witnessed everything I had just mentioned. In addition, this was where Jesus gave them their first ministry assignment. To the disciples Galilee was home.

And just when everything seemed to be going well for them, their world came crashing down when their fearless leader was betrayed by one of their own, was arrested, tried in a Jewish, then a Roman court, sentenced to death, and then executed on a wooden cross. All of their hopes and dreams were dashed. They really didn't know what to do. They sort of went into hiding.

I believe for many of us, our spiritual journeys are like that. At some moment in our past, we were doing really well. We were flying high with Jesus, praying and reading the bible, doing the church thing, battling sin, and even telling a couple friends about Jesus. Things couldn't have been better. But for some reason that all came crashing down. Our spiritual lives are now nowhere to be found. Going to church is not really in the game plan as much today as it was before. Perhaps we've fallen into sins and a lifestyle that we promised to God and ourselves that we'd never allow ourselves to do. So we conclude that our best spiritual days are behind us. It was good when I was a kid, a teenager. But things are different now. I have a career and a spouse and kids. I have a mortgage. And I've spiraled so far out of tune with God I don't have a clue as to how to get back.

For some of us, for whatever reason, faith in Jesus has always been pushed to the periphery of our lives. It's really never taken root or at least not deeply. It never seemed that important, or as important as people say it should have been.

For some of us, over the years, we've just made some poor lifestyle choices, that instead of cultivating our faith, it instead uprooted our faith. Perhaps it was the friends we decided to associate with, the philosophies and world views we decided to believe. Whatever it was, we just aren't that in-tune with God.

So our spiritual lives may be little more than memories from the past so all we can do is reminisce back to the good old days, when our faith was pure and innocent.

But all of us have little snippets from our past that still guide us today. A piece of a powerful sermon. A bible verse that you've always hung on to. An unforgettable and perhaps emotional experience with God that's been etched upon your soul. We all have those, and for whatever reason they're still there and they can't be erased. Friends, they're there for a reason.

The eleven disciples of course had tons of those moments. Which one do you choose? For example, when a loved one dies, one of the things you remember are the last words that were shared. You often times save the most important stuff for the end. One of the last things Jesus said to his disciples was this. During the Last Supper, Jesus says to his disciples that all of you will fall away on account of me. Every single one of you will let me down and fail miserably. What terrible words to hear from Jesus. And so what do they do? They deny it. No stinkin way. That's just not going to happen. Jesus, I promise you, I will not fall away from you. But Jesus isn't convinced. He knows already that it's going to happen.

And guess what? He knew that about us too. When you and I fall away from Jesus, it's no surprise to him. He knew already that was going to happen. Sure it's a big deal—any sin, any failure is a big deal, but it isn't the end of the world. And Jesus knows that as well.

So after these predictive words of failure, listen to what Jesus says.

<sup>32</sup>But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." (Mat 26:32)

What does that mean? It means the story isn't over. It means this isn't the end of the road. It means that they will meet Jesus again. It means that they'll return back to what's familiar. It means there will be a second chance. And so much more that that's all Jesus can say for now. They won't be able to take it all in until they meet again in Galilee.

You and I can easily get stuck in our spiritual and life failures, not being able to rebound from them. We may have thought that we've strayed too far, and now we're lost, and have no idea how to get back to the main road. You may think that you've sinned far too much and far too greatly, having passed the point of no return. And if you're stuck and if you've been stuck, Jesus is inviting you to meet him again in Galilee.

So the crucifixion happens. Jesus dies for the sins of the world, for your sins and my sins, for the sins and failure of his disciples, taking upon himself the wrath and judgment of God that should have been ours. He's then placed in a known tomb and lies there, dead and lifeless for three days. But on the first Easter morning, Jesus conquered death, he conquered the grave, he conquered sin, and rose again. He literally, really, came back to life.

And two women who were close to Jesus, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to the tomb. And instead of encountering an enclosed tomb and a dead body, to their shock and amazement they encounter an angel and the angel says the following words.

<sup>5</sup>"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>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."

<sup>8</sup>So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

<sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to **Galilee**; there they will see me."

Why Galilee? The angel tells the ladies to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. Then Jesus himself tells the two women to relay the message to the disciples. What's the significance of Galilee? Sure Galilee is going back to their hometown, HQ for ministry, it's where the most significant events occurred. But more important than all of that, is that this will be the place where they meet Jesus on the other side of the resurrection. The Galilee encounter in a sense, is so much more important than any of the other encounters that the disciples had before Jesus died and rose again. This was meeting Jesus as conqueror over death and sin. This was meeting Jesus as now having disarmed the powers of Satan. This is meeting Jesus has paid the penalty for our guilt and sin. This is meeting Jesus, mission accomplished. This is meeting Jesus soon to ascend to his place of glory and authority at the right hand of God. This is meeting Jesus days before he sends the Holy Spirit to empower the church for a revolution. This is the Jesus you and

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I must meet. And he invites you today to meet him on this side of the resurrection. Meet him for the first time. Meet him again.

Let's look at how the story ends.

<sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to **Galilee**, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What did the disciples do? They went to Galilee. It was over 100km on foot, but they went, because they wanted to see Jesus again. They went to their rendezvous point. And they saw Jesus, and they worshiped him, but some doubted.

You and I can do the same. You and I can go to our Galilee and meet Jesus and worship him **or** we can continue living in doubt. We can convince ourselves that we'll never be spiritual; Jesus won't meet me; I don't think I could ever return to him. We can live that way, or we can by faith return back to Jesus.

You know folks Jesus doesn't want you to be stuck in our pasts thinking and believing that our best years are behind us. He wants us to look forward. The Easter event is not about getting stuck in the past, no matter how good or bad the past was. Easter is about the future. It's about meeting Jesus, risen, alive, real, and powerful.

Where do I begin? It's real easy. You begin with repentance. You say sorry to Jesus. And by faith you receive his forgiveness. And by faith and with all of your might, you commit to live your life with him and for him.

When Jesus was with his disciples in Galilee before his death and during his ministry what was he up to? He was training them to be his followers. It was basically three things Jesus was doing in their lives. 1) To be with Him. 2) To be like Him. 3) To lead others to Him. Right? Wasn't that what he was doing with them? Isn't that the same today with all of Christ's followers? Isn't the goal that Jesus has for us the same? To be with Christ. To be like Christ. To lead others to Christ. Well, when your leader dies, that can really throw a wrench into your life plans. And for many of us, we've allowed Jesus to die. We've forgotten the reason we became Christians in the first place. And so when Jesus says to his disciples that they'll meet him again in Jerusalem, what he's essentially saying is, "we'll pick up where we left off" but it'll be different. Jesus is essentially saying, "nothing has changed, the goals I have for your lives are still the same." "I want you to be with me. I want you to be like me." I want you to lead others to me. Listen to the final words of this book.

<sup>8</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

To be with Jesus, to be like Jesus, to lead others to Jesus.