



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Second Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2017

On the Way

Matthew 28:1-20

“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee.” How many times does “Galilee” appear in Matthew 28? Let me save you the count. Three times. That is significant because of the angel’s message and charge to the women, Jesus’ appearance to and charge to them, and the obedience of the 11 to the call.

This much we know about Galilee...

- ✠ it means “region” to the north near Mount Carmel;
- ✠ it was the land of the tribe of Naphthali in the history of the 12 tribes;
- ✠ more so, it is where Jesus came after His baptism, after He heard that John had been arrested;
- ✠ it was here, last of all places you would expect Messiah to minister, better in Judea or Jerusalem;
- ✠ but, it was in Galilee, geographically distant from the holy city, a place known as a nest of revolution, that Jesus would settle in Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, that He preached His first sermon (“Repent, here comes the kingdom of God!”), He would call His disciples, teach, preach, and heal “every malady of the people.” (Matthew 4:23). Later, a charge would be made against Him for doing His work there (John 7:41-42, 52) which would lead to His crucifixion.

On this Lord’s Day, we are “On the Way.” We have kept the Time of Lent, walked through Holy Week and have celebrated—

1. The Resurrection, Matthew 28:1-10 the first full paragraph. You know the story, graphically illustrated on the cover of your bulletin: the women. Earthquake, angel, lightning, clothing white as snow. Apt to get your attention and it did! The message would be jolting, “No fear, He is not here. He has been raised. He goes ahead to Galilee...GALILEE...you will see him there.” Can you imagine? Far away place to meet Him. They ran (“with fear and joy”) to the disciples to tell them. Eye witnesses!

On the way, can you imagine? They are met by Jesus. “Hi.” Their response? Held His feet, worshipped! He said: “No fear, go and tell my brothers...go ahead to Galilee and they will see me too.” Don’t forget that after He kept Passover with them, shared the first Lord’s Supper, with betrayal at hand, he said, “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” Now, a deepening call to be witnesses! But, in the meantime...

2. The Counter-mission --- Matthew 28:11-15, second paragraph. The women went to advance the gospel, the guards (who were afraid and “became like dead men.”) began the first wave of resurrection deniers. The priests plotted a plan to bribe the soldiers to charge that the disciples of Jesus took the body. Say, “Christians lie; their gospel is a fraud, they sneaked in, stole the body. Everything they say is a fraud, a confidence game. The criminal was not raised!” Guards bought it and another message is proclaimed that says. “Didn’t happen, no way.”

{Only Matthew reports that there was a time when you had to pay people to disbelieve the resurrection. In time sense, more do not, than do!}”]

In the meantime, 100 miles away from Jerusalem, Jesus meets up with the 11 disciples who have made the trek. IT may have been that Jesus’ call “Come to Galilee” is a like their first call in Galilee to “Follow me.” It is then that they receive...

The Great Commission --- Matthew 28:16-20. They come to Jesus, at the mountain (may sound like the site for the Sermon on the Mount; this may be continuing education), meet Him, worship him, though some doubt. One writer even suggests a new Beatitude which reads “Blessed are those who worship the Risen Lord and who still struggle with doubt; they are the people he uses in world mission.

Only in Matthew are the Witness-Marching Orders of those who would follow along the Way with Jesus.

Authority. The Mission of the Christian rests in these words: “I, Jesus, am in complete charge around here, in heaven, on earth. There is NO competition. With all authority, move out to all the nations.”

Mission. “So, you go: disciple, baptize and teach.” Get wet. “Into the possession” of the God we know as one in three persons. We remember our Baptism whenever we begin, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, as our branding of beginning that we are who we are because of whose we are! From the Jordan, to the Font, into the world that we might teach/witness/grow ever more deeply into Christ as one people. Teaching that leads to obedience to all, ALL, that I have taught. Discipleship is never occasional, not like a booster shot or topping off, it must be a WAY OF LIFE IN COMMUNITY!

Commanding Presence. “I, Jesus, will support you as you do, all the time, so relax and enjoy!” Mission is not future tense, it is now, in this place, April 23, 2017, “I will be with you.” The Holy Spirit is the “withing” of Jesus as we go with him to the ends of earth with each other in mission.

Beloved in Christ, on this day, in this time, the mission of God in Jesus Christ is in our hands, our hearts, our lives.

As a congregation, we are given charge and call, authority and power to believe, trust, and confess that as Jesus is Lord, we are the servants who reach out in love that others might hear and believe, trust and engage with us in the only news that can save and renew the world, the world that God loved in Jesus and died for that life might prevail and that ALL IS WELL.

On Easter Sunday, I asked “Where will you meet Jesus in the new week? Did you? I know you did! Where was that? What did you say? How did you act in His name/”

I commend a turn-around question to circle us back to the The Great Commission: “Where did Jesus meet YOU?”

Jesus met me yesterday at Bellevue College. I helped register over 100 persons for whom English was not a first language. Follow the metaphor for a moment. As they lined up they were given number and a simple index card on which they wrote their name. As they entered the room anxious to learn a new language, a new way, they walked towards me. I took the card and pronounced their

name (Most often incorrectly, but they seemed to think I knew it). I took the card and handed them a green folder which simply became for them an entry into a new path of life, new language learners leading to new days. In each case, it seemed as if they had a brand new beginning and I thought of the path of discipleship!

In Jesus' name, we are told to go; in Jesus' name we are empowered in witness to a new way; we are named anew in the waters as we learn of Jesus and His love. It is the Cross and the renaming that paths us to a new life each day and we are named anew "Child of God." To go and grow; grow and sow the good news that "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... mercy...new birth...living hope...our inheritance...revealed in Jesus Christ. And here is the seal on the way --- "ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE NOT SEEN HIM, YOU LOVE HIM; AND EVEN THOUGH YOU DO NOT SEE HIM NOW, YOU BELIEVE IN HIM AND REJOICE WITH AN INDESCRIBABLE AND GLORIOUS JOY, FOR YOU ARE RECEIVING THE OUTCOME OF YOUR FAITH, THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS."

Here are the operative words: "GO. You will see and be seen by me. LO. I am with you, in you, within those you meet along the way. Count on it! I love you, you are mine." Amen.