

No Turning Back- Living the surrendered life  
Lesson 21

**Go Home!**

**Mark 16:1-8**

- When I get this cast off my leg and go through physical therapy the first I'm going to do is get on the basketball court and school someone.
- "When I get out of the hospital and get moving again, the first thing I am going to do is play that golf course I've always wanted to play."
- "When I get my braces off, the first thing I am going to do is chew a whole pack of gum."
- When I retire from work, the first thing I am going to do is to take that cruise I've always wanted to take."

Have you ever wondered what the first thing Jesus did upon exiting that tomb on resurrection Sunday?

Last week we witnessed the death of Jesus on the Cross. And we know that at any time Jesus *could have called twelve legions of angels to destroy the world and set it free. But he died alone for you and me.* Jesus predicted this would happen. Jesus told his followers back in Mark 14:28, "**I will go before you to Galilee.**" Hmm...But why Galilee?

In going first to Galilee, Jesus was returning to the main place of his ministry. It was the location of the 12 apostles stumbling failures. It was also the place of both Jesus' and his followers' homes. Galilee is a fitting symbol for Jesus' mission to the world. Galilee was known as the "region of the nations." It was a place of great diversity – political, ethnic, racial, and religious. In Galilee, Jesus comes in contact with people, everyday ordinary people. It only seems fitting that Jesus would go to Galilee.

**Galilee is this regular, silent character in Mark's gospel. (NLT)**

1:9 One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and he was baptized by John in the Jordan River.

1:14-15 Later on, after John was arrested by Herod Antipas, Jesus went to Galilee to preach God's Good News. **15**"At last the time has come!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe this Good News!"

1:16-18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother, Andrew, fishing with a net, for they were commercial fishermen. **17**Jesus called out to them, "Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!" **18**And they left their nets at once and went with him.

1:38-39 **38**But he replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too, because that is why I came." **39**So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and expelling demons from many people.

9:30-31 Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus tried to avoid all publicity **31**in order to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead."

14:28 But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."

16:7 Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died!"

Mark's gospel begins and ends in Galilee. And Galilee is the home of his disciples. I like home. I like being on my own turf. Galilee is their home turf. It is a place of familiarity. It is the place of their daily routine.

It's at times like mine, having a cast on your leg that you really appreciate your daily routine. Right now I miss it.

But it's here in Galilee that daily life intersects with the Kingdom of God. So, it should be no surprise on resurrection Sunday, when the women find themselves in front of an empty tomb and in conversation with an angel, that they would hear the angel say, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he has told you." (Mark 16:7)

Have you ever wondered what the first thing Jesus did upon exiting that tomb on resurrection Sunday?

I'm afraid that I'd be tempted to stride triumphantly back to Jerusalem. Imagine what a stirring sight that would have been. I could go right back to the palace and speak to Pilate. "Pilate, you made a very big mistake."

Or perhaps I would go to the religious authorities and stride right into their little church meeting. "Guess, you guys missed this one, didn't you."

Or I could go to the temple, stand on the steps, and address the crowd. I could show them who I really was!

Thankfully, Jesus does none of these. Rather, he goes home. He goes on ahead of his own disciples, promising to meet them back in Galilee where it all began.

We believe Jesus to be where the action is, where important stuff is happening. What was so great about Galilee? What sort of important business was going on in Galilee...I wonder?

**In a word....NOTHING.**

That is...nothing until Jesus got there. That was the way it was out in Galilee. It was a dusty, out-of-the-way kinda place. But then one day, Jesus came to Galilee...calling fishermen to follow him. People in Galilee began leaving their homes, walking away from good paying jobs, trying to act like disciples.

Jesus comes to Galilee and shakes things up a bit. Jesus doesn't go to the big city to work. His childhood wasn't spent around Jerusalem. Most of his life and ministry began here, in Galilee. And on this morning of resurrection Jesus goes back to where it all began. Jesus goes to Galilee, where it begins again.

## **It's a new beginning...**

That's the unique thing about the resurrection...

- Jesus doesn't meet his disciples in the cemetery.
- Jesus doesn't meet them in the sanctuary of the temple.

Instead, Jesus is going to Galilee. He is going home. Jesus is out in front. He will meet them in a rather ordinary place, a place where it all began. Jesus is on the loose and he is going home... and He's going to their home.

**Now that's a message for us today.**

Listen...the resurrection is not just something that happens once out at the cemetery. That would be too easy. The resurrection is something that happens on ahead of us, something that meets us...in the world...in our world...in Galilee...at our home.

In Mark's gospel, the resurrection is not primarily a belief about life after death, but rather it is about life--now! It is about following Jesus here and now!

In Mark's gospel the point of the resurrection is not so much to believe that we will live forever, as we are to follow Jesus where he goes now. And right now, He is out in front. Right now He's gone ahead of us.

**The two questions are, "Will we follow?" And "Where will we follow him?"**

When you leave this gathering today...guess what?

- Jesus is out ahead of you.
- Jesus has already beat you out of the building.
- He's already made it to the car and out the driveway.
- He's already down the road.
- He's ahead of you.
- And where do you think he's he going?

**-He's going to your home.**

Remember that in Mark's gospel he shows Jesus' followers to be failing-- disbelieving--and stumbling. On one hand--the disciples give each of us hope. But on the other hand the disciples also give us something to do after Easter.

The women who come to the tomb come looking for death. On this early Sunday morning these women leave their homes to do what loved ones do when death comes. We also do the same thing. When death comes we call the undertaker and then visit the funeral home where it is unmistakably the place of death. The whole process is beyond bizarre, but we do what's necessary whenever death comes.

In Mark 16, these three women come to do what's necessary. What seems to trouble them most at this time is how they will move the stone from the entryway into the tomb. These women come prepared to anoint his body for burial.

But anyone who has read Mark's gospel knows that this presents a problem. Three times in Mark, Jesus has told his followers that He would die and be raised on the third day. And you'll remember that just before Jesus enters Jerusalem a nameless woman enters Simon's house and does what these three women who come to the tomb to do... prepare him for burial.

Notice the last verse of the reading, **Mark 16:8**. "Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid."

The women didn't tell anybody. So that means the ball is in our court. If the women won't tell anybody what they have seen and heard, the question is left for us, "**Will we? Will we tell?**" In my first lesson in Mark 1, I spoke about Jesus' baptism. I spoke about how in Jesus God is on the loose. Many of us love the story of what happened to the curtain in the temple. You remember... **Mark 15: 37-38** "With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."

When Jesus dies, the temple curtain rips.

- We know what Jesus was doing ... God would no longer be separated from his people.
- Because of what Jesus did, God was saying that you no longer have put up a curtain; you no longer have to seek me out only one day a year through the high priest.
- God was saying "you can seek me out yourselves, whenever you want."

**Look at what Mark says about Jesus:**

- Jesus is the one who touches and holds lepers!
- Jesus is the one who parties with those cheating tax collectors and stealing sinners!
- Jesus is the one who lets the woman that the church fathers thought was a prostitute stroke and anoint him at a dinner party in a leper's house.

This is the kind of stuff that happens when God breaks loose.

When God gets on the loose inside of you, you start to do things that turn your world upside down and inside out!

Here's the good news! The good news we see is that the God who runs loose in Jesus' life wants to run loose in your life. When we allow God to run loose in our lives, we are letting a Tiger run in us. And this is good news! God is loose in your life and in our church. Do everything you can to run after God, so that you can run loose knowing that the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit will empower everything you do and to bring change to every situation you face in life.

These series of lessons "**No Turning Back: living the surrendered life,**" underscores that God has come near. Our story says that God has come near.

If we buy into the idea that there's "No Turning Back" and that we are called to "Live the Surrendered Life," we'll find ourselves going to all kinds of people with the message that God is near.

When we respond to God's call by leaving the old life behind (repent) and following Jesus into a new life for God (believing) we open ourselves to the Tiger. Make no mistake, this new life for God will be one dedicated toward the goal of transforming others.

And this transforming stuff begins with these words: **v. 16:15-16**

Listen to how Matthew (28) says it: **18**Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. **19**Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **20**Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (NLT)

The women ran away--amazed, yet afraid. They were silent. And now like the women at the empty tomb, you have also come. And today, you get to go home. Remember, Jesus is out ahead of you. He is in your life. He is at your work. He is with 24/7. Go home and tell somebody. He is alive and he has made all the difference in the world!

**Church, this is where it all begins. Decide today that for you: There's no turning back... and live the surrendered life... and go home!**

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