

Focusing In . . .

by Faye Reynolds

He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you. (Mk 16:7)

Galilee: The story of Jesus begins and . . . well begins again in this strange little place called Galilee. Galilee is the land that was given to the tribe of Naphtali. “From the tribe of Naphtali, they gave Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands . . .” records the book of Joshua. Galilee is mentioned again in Isaiah 9 before the great promise of the coming Messiah: “In the past he humbled the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles . . . “

Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention Galilee in the resurrection narrative; a place that was home to fishermen and shepherds; a refuge for murderers and for those outside the Jewish faith. These were the kind of folk that Jesus liked to hang out with during his earthly life and then in his post-earthly life. “Go to Galilee”, the angels said, “There you will see him”.

Where is my Galilee? Where will I see him? In my humble, realistic moments, I am so very glad that Jesus hangs out with the ordinary and the faithless and even the downright “bad” people of this world. I can always be assured that I will qualify for his company. On the other hand, if seeing Jesus means going to and finding him among the “less than lovely”, the thought isn’t quite so comforting. I’d rather find him in the pew than in the pub – in the quiet rather than amongst the rabble.

Where will I see him? I believe that I will see him wherever he calls me to be. He may call me to the altar, but he may also call me to the street. “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:3) And there lies the greatest comfort of all. The power of the resurrected Lord goes with us and in fact has gone before us. “Do not be afraid”, the angels said, “. . . he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.”

Is Galilee this strange dark, scary place that Jesus might call us to bring his light? Not really. Jesus basically tells the disciples to “go home”. Galilee was their home base. He called them to return to their everyday lives and there they will see him in all his resurrected glory. It is kind of returning to “normal” yet nothing is ever the same. There is no going back to “just fishing” when you’ve witnessed death turning into life and experienced a visit of the once dead but very alive Jesus in your own neighborhood. By his resurrected presence, the ordinary has become the extraordinary and everything is changed.

The absolute best promise of all is that we will see him and have the promise of sharing in the power of his resurrection as we follow his lead into our Galilee where we are invited to be part of his extraordinary story in the making – the story that turns mourning into dancing!

By grace alone,

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