

“Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

-Matthew 28:10 NIV

I imagine that the last few days had become a blur for the disciples. There had been the triumphal entry into Jerusalem a week earlier. They had shouted that the Messiah had come. Their lives were filled with expectation and hope. They had celebrated the Passover with Jesus - they had heard his words of betrayal, it did not fit with their expectations. Then there had been the arrest, the trials and the cross. Peter had denied, they had run - it was the women who had remained faithful. Now comes the message of the women of resurrection - Jesus is going before them and will meet them in Galilee - there they will see him. Their hope had come, then it was crucified and taken away and now word of resurrection! What next?

Now, can you change your focus? Imagine the high priests and the religious authorities. They had gotten rid of another insurgent. They had broken out the best wine. They had found a good stash of cigars and are sitting around patting each other on the back drinking fine wine and smoking good cigars. They had had Rome take care of their problem. Oh, there may be a few of his followers trying to start something, but they know that with the charismatic leader out of the way - this will amount to nothing. Good work boys! Then the guards come rushing in, RESURRECTION. The grave is empty. They devised a plan, bribed the soldiers and started the cover-up, “His disciples came during the night and stole him away...” (Matthew 27:13 NIV). What next?

One group thought they had lost while the other thought they had won - both were wrong.

There are days when I wonder if anything has changed in the 2,000 years since. It depends on the day - the news cycle as to my answer. Maybe it is because most the “good news” stories get buried because of all the “bad news” stories. So, I wonder. For example:

As worship attendance declines we become more polarized against one another. Is there a correlation?

More and more people are seeking “spiritual” things - but never in the church. Is that a clue?

The prophets saw the demise of Israel because of their neglect for the poor, widows and orphans?

Are we following that path? One party in Congress wants to cut food stamp subsidies, care for our veterans, etc. And, yet build more bombs to produce more wounded.

A congregation delights that they have finally gotten rid of their prophetic pastor. He wanted them to care for the poor and needy. To welcome the oppressed. To be like Christ. They are in decline. Should that not say something?

Easter has become a secular day - bunnies, baskets, candy dominate the scene. Resurrection is a side issue. The cross continues to be a stumbling block. Better to celebrate bunnies.

Many congregations will be full at Easter and empty the Sunday following? Are they not willing to go into Galilee and there find the Living Christ and the mission of those who follow.

Should not the Sunday after be a greater Sunday?

I could ramble on - now that I have gotten some of your blood pressures higher! But, I do wonder. What is Christ's assessment of HIS church today? How does he feel about Easter and Resurrection? Have we changed the world? Yes, there are hospitals because of the Church. They are day-care centers, reading and tutoring programs, food kitchens, warm weather shelters, low-income housing, schools, and more. Yes, there still are a few brave prophets calling for change, calling for love and our coming together and caring and loving one another, for the whole world. But, is anyone listening? Does anyone notice? Many just expect that this what the church should do. We are expected to be able to care for the poor, the needy - but without funding and a prophetic voice.

One side thought they had lost but in reality they had won. The other thought they had won but in reality they had lost. Lost because they failed to understand the true love and depth of the God who created and called them into being. On this Easter, this Resurrection Sunday - are we listening? Are we willing to “go to Galilee and see Jesus”?