

5/8/2011

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

You Will See Him in Galilee Mark 16: 1-8

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome arrive at the tomb where the remains of Jesus were laid. They plan to anoint his body with oils. They are worried about how they will move the large stone that was used to close the entrance to the tomb.

But as they approach they see that the stone has already been rolled away. Puzzled, they go into the tomb and find a young man in a white robe sitting there. He says to them, "Jesus is not here. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him."

The women are told that to see him again they should return to Galilee where Jesus taught the multitude, healed the sick, empowered the poor, and broke bread with despised people of the land. Where do you meet the resurrected Jesus? You meet him only by going to Galilee.

What does that mean? Why Galilee?

In times of peace and tranquility, the people of Galilee professed that God was gracious to them. But when they faced difficulties and experienced suffering, they complained, "Where is God? Does God know that I exist?" It is this human fickleness that characterized the people in Galilee.

To them, Jesus taught, "What your naked eyes can see is not everything there is. Look again through the eyes of faith. You will see God's guiding hand in your lives. Not just in good times but bad times, too. Not only joyous times but sad times as well.

This is the point he emphasized when he healed the sick, restored the lame, and empowered the poor.

In Jesus' time, being sick and afflicted and poor were regarded as signs of divine curse. We can imagine how desperate and lonely those people must have been all their lives.

Jesus absolutely denied this cruel theology of divine curse. For him, God was a gracious God. Therefore, the sick and afflicted and despised were objects of God's infinite love, and never ever objects of his curse.

The true meaning of Jesus healing the sick and afflicted is this. Jesus enabled those despised people to realize once and for all that no matter what horror they would face or hell they would descend to, God in Jesus Christ would be coming with them. God in Jesus Christ embraced them as precious human beings with dignity and worth.

Now we can understand the meaning of the angel's saying to the three women, "Jesus is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him."

Galilee is our everyday life here and now. We are the Galileans. Jesus is saying to us, "You are to look beyond what your physical eyes can see. Clean the eyes of faith. They will empower you to see the truth that nothing, despair, loneliness, even death, can ultimately defeat you, because God in Jesus Christ stands with you."

So Let us discern the leading hand of God in whatever we go through in life. Our world is Galilee. We are the Galileans. Jesus is going ahead of us into Galilee. We will meet him today here and now.

Thanks be to God.