

*Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent.*

(Jeremiah 20:9)

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***"Go Back"—the Resurrected Rabbit (Word/Experience)***

At first, this might not seem to be very prophetic but stay with me; I won't send you down a rabbit hole.

I love rabbits. I think they are one of the cutest animals created by God, with their noses that seem to always twitch and their white, fluffy cotton tails. I often imagine God smiling as He put the finishing touches on the rabbit. He must have stood back and said: "This is good!" Call me a dreamer, if you will, but I imagine rabbits hopping around the throne of God and bringing delight to His heart. I have no doubt that the Lord has used rabbits to encourage me over the years. When I have been down in my soul, it seems that on many occasion rabbits have appeared in my path, as if the Lord was telling me all is well.

Well, on December 7, 2008, around 5:30 pm, I was driving home. The sun had gone down and I was driving through our community. I was probably going about 30 mph when this little rabbit ran in front of my car. I tried to avoid the critter, but it ran right into my path. The next thing I heard was a thud. I looked in my rearview mirror and saw the poor rabbit lying in the road. I began to cry out to the Lord. It went something like this: "Oh, Lord, please raise up the rabbit. You know how I love rabbits, please, Lord, don't let it die; don't let it be hurt." I could picture the rabbit, which, from its size, appeared to be from that year's crop, all mangled on the road. I know for a fact that it was lying in the road on its side.

I was about a mile from my home and continued on because I could not bear the sight of a dead rabbit. However, after going about a quarter of a mile from the accident scene, I heard the Lord speak to me very directly and clearly: ***Go back!***

At this point, I began to argue with the Lord. The argument went something like this:

Lord, I can't go back. You know I love rabbits. I can't stand the thought of looking at a dead rabbit. Or, even worse, what if it is crippled and lying in the road unable to move, what will I do then? How can I take care of a crippled rabbit? I continued along this line, but to every point, the Lord responded: ***Go back!*** The conversation was getting pretty intense on my part to the point that I was willing to be disobedient. I was on the verge of just telling the Lord I refuse to go back to see a dead or mangled rabbit. However, the Lord's persistent word to go back would not let me go, so that by the time I had reached my driveway, I knew I had to go back. So, I turned in the cul-de-sac and proceeded back to the accident site, fully expecting to see what I feared. As I was driving, I continued to imagine what I might see and what I might do. A dead rabbit was one thing, but an injured rabbit was an entirely different matter. I kept arguing: What if the poor thing is lying in the road with its back broken and its little eyes staring at me? What will I do then?

As a side note, the distance from the rabbit to our house was about one mile. The return trip required that I go beyond where the rabbit was in order to turn around. Given this, the total return trip was a little over two miles. Since I maintained the speed limit, it took me about 5-6 minutes to return. This is important, for at this time of night this main boulevard has a steady flow of traffic. Other vehicles surely had to pass the rabbit scene during this time.

## "Go Back"—the Resurrected Rabbit

Well, when I arrived at the crime scene, to my amazement, the little rabbit was sitting in the middle of the road, sort of staring off into space. It seemed so calm. I began to examine the rabbit without touching it. I saw no blood, no signs of physical trauma, but I still wondered if its back was broken and it was frozen in place. I began to talk to it as if it would understand my concern for it, but it did not move. It just continued to stare in its frozen place. My car was sitting in the middle of the lane, thus protecting the cotton tail.

As I stood over the rabbit, two cars approached. The first one had no interest in this guy standing in the road talking to a rabbit, so he slowly found space to move on past me. The next car was driven by a young woman who obviously had more curiosity and perhaps compassion, so she stopped and got out of her car to ask me what had happened. I explained to her what I had done, to which she responded that perhaps the rabbit was stunned.

So, I returned to the rabbit again and began to talk to it. At this point, the little critter hopped up in the air, almost in a full circle, and ran off into the median strip of the road. To be sure that the rabbit had survived, I checked the area the next day and there was no sign of the rabbit. Thank you, Lord!

Now, I have no doubt that the Lord heard my first plea to raise up the rabbit. Without any doubt whatsoever, He raised up the rabbit and made it sit in that road, protected from traffic, until I could return. It was a miracle. The Lord also knew that I would argue my case but that I would obey His command. He had a lesson to teach me, and I was going to learn it because He had ordained that I learn it.

In many ways, the whole episode is comical on one level and in unbelief on another level. Can you imagine that I was arguing with the Lord over all the possible horrible outcomes and never once considered that the Lord, the Creator of all, as well as the healer, just might have been telling me that He would answer my cry to raise up the rabbit? Instead, I acted as if the Lord wanted me to return to the crime scene and stick my nose, so to speak, in what I had done to make me feel bad over it. In those brief minutes, I totally lost sight of whom I was talking to and lost sight of His character of unending and immeasurable love. I had dragged the Lord down to my level of thinking rather than rising up to His level of love. I was in unbelief, which if it had continued for a minute longer would have resulted in disobedience.

But there was one other thing that I realize was happening with me at that moment. I was totally absorbed in myself and my feelings. For those brief moments, I could not get my thoughts off myself and what I would do with the rabbit. Simply, I had taken my eyes off the Lord and was caught up in myself and what I thought was a dire outcome and what I had to do to fix or resolve it.

There are many lessons to be learned from this rabbit encounter, but here are a few.

When the Lord speaks to us, obey; after all, He knows best, and we know that to the ones loving God all things work together for good, to the ones being called according to [His] purpose (Romans 8:28).

It's ok to argue with the Lord. He knows our heart, so why try to hide it from Him? The corollary to this is not to be superstitious, as if, if we question the Lord, He is going to zap us with a lightning bolt. Love is corrective, not destructive. As He told the ancient Israelites who were in sin: *Come, let us reason together* (Isaiah 1:18).

Going along with this last point, no matter what is going on in our life, never lose sight of the fact that God is love and all that He does is done in love, unconditional love. He is not out to get us, so to speak, to

destroy us, or to make us feel bad over things we have done. He is the forgiving, restoring, loving God of all creation. He is after a heart-to-heart relationship in which we know how much He loves us and cares for us, and that He will see us through to the end.

When in difficult situations, don't play the what-if-game. We need to get our eyes off ourselves and the situation and onto the Lord; looking to Him for direction and trusting Him for the outcome. Your will be done and to You goes all the glory!

Only the Lord knows what transpired during those five minutes I was away from the scene. Did the rabbit remain on the road as other cars drove over it? Obviously, no one ran over the rabbit, which would have been its demise. Or, were there no cars on the boulevard during that time? Not very likely! Better yet, did the Lord protect the rabbit and raise it up right before my arrival? This is the most likely explanation, at least for me. Whether it was stunned or literally dead, I believe that, in my absence, the Lord not only protected this young rabbit but also raised it up to live another day.

Now, here is the primary lesson for us. If the Lord knows how to protect one of His creatures, even to raise it up, then He surely knows how to do likewise for His people created to be imaging Him to all creation. No matter how dire a situation we might find ourselves in, the Lord, who loves us more than we can imagine, knows how to protect us in such a way that when all is said and done, He receives all the glory for the great things He has done. If we are stunned and dazed by a situation, He knows how to raise us up. Even if we don't survive the situation and we literally die, He is going to, one day, resurrect us to His glory, when *death is swallowed up in victory* (1 Corinthians 15:54). There are many verses to support this, but here is one of my favorites.

For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself. (Philippians 3:20-21 CLV)

Dear brethren, are you eagerly waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus the king (Titus 2:13)? I've got some great news for you: King Jesus is waiting eagerly for His own glorious appearing, probably more so than most of His people are.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Father sent His beloved Son to this earth to die for the sin of the world. We were all like that rabbit; dead on the road of life. He came to save us, and He did.

Here is the good news: A day is soon coming when the Father will tell His Son: **Go back!** He will not hesitate or argue. He will go back, without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him (Hebrews 9:28).

Some days, I feel like that rabbit in the road, just sitting and staring, waiting for someone to come by and deliver me. It sat there eagerly waiting for me to return to witness its being raised up. It had life. For us who believe, that someone is the beloved Son of God, the resurrection and the life, who is listening intently for His Father's voice of love: **Go back!** He will obey, for **God so loves the world**. It won't be long.