

## **"Losing Jesus: Finding God When You Feel Like He's Gone"**

In scripture we see many "wandering stories". Israel was freed from Egypt and then wandered in the desert for many years. Jesus was baptized, and then went into the desert, as did Paul after his dramatic conversion.

What might not be as clear to us is that this may come as a result of God's will? At some point and time we realize it is also a place where we find Jesus.

This is one of the few stories about the childhood of Jesus.

### **Luke 2:41-52**

*"Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.<sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.<sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.<sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."*

*<sup>49</sup> "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

*<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man".*

This was a terrifying event for a parent to lose their child. Even if it was only for 10 minutes, let alone 3 days, yet Mary: *"treasured all these things in her heart"*.

For many the scriptures including a story like this gives validation to the truthfulness of not only the story but also the scriptures in general. If you were the parents, this would have been the last story you would want in the

truthfulness of not only the story but also the scriptures in general. If you were the parents, this would have been the last story you would want in the scriptures. This story also confirms for us how real and truthful scripture is, it is not a “whitewash”.

As with recent events of children being lost or forgotten, in most cases it is not a lack of love for the child but a reflection of how busy parents are, there is a lot going on. This was the Passover; it was a “biggie”, a huge event with thousands of people. They walked the entire day to get home and then realized that Jesus was not there.

The scriptures are unique, “*it is the only book in the world you have to do before you understand it*”. What we are reading about is not theory to those who have lost Jesus.

## **What Did They Do When They Lost Jesus?**

### **#1 They went to others who knew what Jesus looked like**

Do you believe in the church? Probably “the church” has hurt all of us at some point in our lives nevertheless we must believe in the church. One of the earliest documents written by the early church is the “Apostles Creed”. That document states many foundational truths but at the end it says, “I believe in the church”.

Why is this so important, because if you lose Jesus you will usually find him again among the church, people who know him.

### **#2 They went to the last place they saw him**

For them this was Jerusalem, for us where did you last experience Jesus? Was it during worship, a small group, prayer time, etc.?

### **#3 They looked for Jesus for 3 days**

They didn’t stop searching for him until they found him; they gave everything they had. Don’t give up! Do you love him enough to find him? It’s okay to search for God’s will; actually the process is the important part of the journey, so much happens there.

### **#4 They actually wanted to find him**

This sounds so simplistic maybe even unnecessary to ponder, but we can be assured if we search for him we will find him

The first thing God asked Adam and Eve after their disobedience was, “where are you”? When we look for the first words Jesus said in Luke, “why are you searching for me”?

We have to ask ourselves, do we really want to find him or is it just for show? Some people who say they are searching for God, are not. We have assurance that if we search for him, we will find him. Listen to Jeremiah

show? Some people who say they are searching for God, are not. We have assurance that if we search for him, we will find him. Listen to Jeremiah 29:13: *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart”*.

## **Foreshadowing**

This story, although an interesting peek into this season of Jesus life, is a beautiful foreshadowing of something much more important.

We see foreshadowing throughout the scriptures; remember the instructions concerning the Passover lamb being certain that no bones were broken. This was not some bizarre command without any meaning but it was a look at the cross and the fact that the Lamb of God would have no broken bones.

Another example of this was Israel wandering thirsty in the desert. Moses was told to speak to the rock, he ends up striking the rock and water came out. When Jesus hung on the cross they plunged a spear in his side and water came out.

This story of Mary looking for her son for 3 days, she found him discussing with and preaching to the elders. This would be a foreshadowing of a time in the near future when she again would search three days for him again. As with the first event he will be found preaching again, Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:19 *“After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits”*. This story was a foreshadowing of the resurrection, telling us even though the day is dark, hope will break through.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Could you relate to AJ’s opening comments on wandering? Would you be open to sharing about one of those times and what did you learn through your journey?
- 2) AJ gave 4 actions that Mary and Joseph took to find Jesus. Please discuss how each relates to us today:
  - “They went to others who knew what Jesus looked like”
  - “They went to the last place they saw him”
  - “They looked for Jesus for 3 days”
  - “They actually wanted to find him”
- 3) Discuss this statement about the scriptures: *“it is the only book in the world you have to do before you understand it”* (remember what we are reading about is not theory to those who have lost Jesus)
- 4) Lastly, review the subject of “foreshadowing” on pages three and four. What are some other examples of foreshadowing in the scriptures and discuss how this story foreshadows the resurrection.

