

## He Came to Save, But I Was Lost!

Go to Gospel of Luke, Luke 2:40-49 where we find a very interesting event in the early life of Jesus. **Luke 2:40-49** *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. (41) Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. (42) And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. (43) And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. (44) But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (45) And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. (46) And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47) And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. (48) And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49) And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

Later, Jesus stated His mission in coming to this world was, **Luke 19:10** ... *to seek and to save that which was lost.* How ironic that the Son of God, the Christ that came to seek and to save the lost should be lost according to Luke 2. But He was; however, He was lost to his earthly parents, not to His Father in heaven. There are many lessons in this account for us, for you see Jesus is lost by many people even today.

**He Was Lost by Religious People.** Joseph and Mary were religious people who were intent on doing the will of God. That is the reason for this difficult trek to Jerusalem - a trip of about seventy miles - probably all on foot. The trip probably took three or four days, each direction, and customarily several families would travel together. Jesus was twelve years old, and when His parents departed from Jerusalem, they left Jesus behind, thinking that He was with the group of relatives and friends. And again, it seems very strange that Jesus would be lost by His own mother. But it doesn't take a wicked and lewd person to lose Jesus; one doesn't have to be a vile and base sinner to lose Him. Just a little bit of carelessness and neglect will often be enough to lose Him.

The truth is that all of us, even the strongest of Christians, have left Jesus behind at times. It is done any time we go to places where He would not go, or participate in things which the Lord would not approve. It wasn't that His parents didn't love Him, for they did, but they were busy with other things, and just *"left him behind."* Sometimes we get "busy" with other things and leave Jesus behind.

**He was Lost In the Most Unlikely Place.** Isn't it strange that Jesus should be lost while he was in the House of God; the place where the family had gone to worship. He was in the temple. We may think of losing Jesus in the honky-tonks, beer parlors and pool halls, but not in the house of God. But we should remember that even "church-goers" can lose the Christ. Thus we have the warning: **Heb 2:1** *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* We would do good to remind ourselves of 1 Cor. 10:12 where Paul writes *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*

Try to imagine what was going through the minds of Joseph and Mary while they were hunting for Jesus in Jerusalem? After all, a twelve year old boy can quickly get lost and is not easily found. So, where did they look? The busy narrow streets of Jerusalem must have been crowded with the visitors that came there for the Passover just as Joseph and Mary had done. During the Passover, it was not uncommon for there to be some 300K to 400K visiting Jews in Jerusalem. Isn't it interesting that He said to them, "**How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?**" (**Luke 2:49**). Considering the mission of Jesus in this world, it's not surprising that they found him in the temple. And if you ever leave Jesus, the first place to look is "**the house of God, which is the church of the living God**" (**1 Tim. 3:15**). Sad to say, the Lord is often left at church.

We go about a busy schedule during the week and leave Jesus at church house. It didn't take long to lose the Lord. Mary and Joseph left him so far behind in one day that it took three days to find Him again. And even today, we can lose in a few moments of sinful indulgence, what it will take days, weeks, months and years to recapture; if we can recapture it at all, for we may never be able to regain our reputation. Making a terrible mistake takes only a moment. It takes years to build a good influence and reputation that can be destroyed in a careless moment. We must be ever alert to keep the Lord constantly with us.

**They Departed from Jesus; He was left.** Jesus didn't run off from home, as some boys do; He didn't leave His parents. They left Him. Jesus has never left anyone, as He promises, **Heb 13:5 ... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.** He will never fail us, nor will He forsake us. But people often forsake Him. Hear again His warning, **Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.**

As long as we are doing His will, we remain in fellowship with Christ, and are protected by His promises. King David wrote, **Psa 37:25-27 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. (26) He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. (27) Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.** When people depart from Christ, however, He still will welcome them back, if His conditions are met: **2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.** There is a way back, but notice this is one of those conditional promises – "if" and "then". The point is, if we depart from Christ, we can return, if we will meet the conditions He prescribes.

**They Didn't Know He Was Lost.** Joseph and Mary evidently acted on the supposition that Jesus was still with them. But their supposing it didn't make it true nor assure His presence. And in the religious world today, some have left the Lord behind, and didn't even know it. Just think of all those who act in religion today without first obtaining all of God's truth on the subject. Listen to the inspired word recorded in 2 John 9. **Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son** Notice that reading again. Everyone should carefully check to see if he is abiding "**In the doctrine (teaching) of Christ**" with regard to his morality, his worship, his fellowship with *others*, etc. If we do not abide in the teaching Christ, we lose fellowship with God and Christ, and that means losing the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus that's promised in 1 John 1:7.

The first search for Jesus by His parents was fruitless, for they were looking among their own relatives and friends. Some today think that they will find Christ among their relatives. They will not consider the idea that their parents could be wrong religiously. Thus they turn only to the tenets of faith handed down in the family. *"I am alright spiritually in my mother's church,"* they claim. But Joseph and Mary didn't find Jesus among their relatives and friends. They had to keep on looking for Him.

**Seek the Lord While He may Be Found.** As the prophet of old said, *"Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55:6)*. But really, we don't seek the Lord because HE is lost, but because we are! His mission on earth was to *"seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10)* and that means you and me: *"There is none righteous, no, not one ... for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:10, 23)* We *"find"* Jesus by faith - that is, we hear His gospel and put our trust in Him through obedience.

The Bible says, *Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Because we recognize our own sinfulness, we are to diligently seek after a Savior, and the Lord Jesus is the only Savior. As He said: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6)*. And the apostles later echoed that: *Acts 4:11-12 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (12) Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

To *"seek the Lord while he may be found"* implies that time and opportunity will one day expire. We should be *"redeeming the time, for the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16)*. We redeem the time when we use it wisely, recognizing that our time will one day end, and often it ends suddenly, with no warning. So, let us learn to use our time to *"seek the Lord while he may be found."*

Because the gospel of Christ is *"the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth," (Rom. 1:16)*, we urge you to hear and believe His gospel. Then, we urge you to obey that gospel: Figuratively, let's go back to Jerusalem, and seek and find the Lord in His word. Then let us put our trust in Him, believe and obeying His word and live by it, so that we can live with Him forever in the presence of the Father in Heaven. That is His will for each of us.

Invitation. Do you need to respond to the invitation of the Lord?