

LOSING, THEN FINDING JESUS

Luke 2:43-46

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: A couple and their two small children had gone to a mall shopping and their children were told to stay close and not wander off. Well, children have a tendency to wander off. After a while the parents noticed that their children were nowhere in sight and at first were agitated because the children had not obeyed, then they became a bit uneasy as the mall was large and had many stores. Suddenly there came an announcement over the mall's intercom speakers that the parents ofand.....are lost and would they please return to where they left their children at such and such toy store. Humorous, but true. Children become separated from their parents.

Remember the account of Joseph and Mary losing Jesus for three days while in Jerusalem?

I. JESUS CAN BE EASILY LOST BY ANYONE

1. Joseph and Mary had gone to Jerusalem for a "holy week" of meetings.
2. As with any large assembly, people get separated as they visit, attend sessions, etc., and usually agree to meet at an appointed place later on.
3. With Jesus not being with one parent, it was obvious he was with the other parent, so at the appointed time Mary and Joseph started home.
4. A similarity is that in our busy, active lives, we, too, can forget about Jesus as we get caught up in the daily pressures of making a living.
5. Sadly, even in Church activities, Jesus can be left out. Think about it!

II. HOW IN THE WORLD CAN A PERSON LOSE JESUS?

1. It is never deliberately but sometimes we are just plain careless.
 - There was a lot going on at the Jerusalem conference and Mary and Joseph were seeing friends they'd not seen in a while and were busy catching up and hearing speeches, etc. Besides Jesus was old enough to take care of Himself.
 - Like Mary and Joseph, no Christian would deliberately try to get away from Jesus. It's just that there is so much going on in life that eventually Jesus is just not mentioned anymore.
2. Strange, but true, Jesus can be lost even in doing "work for the Lord."
 - There are "spiritually dead" Christians who are very active in their Church.
 - Some busy Church workers have little relationship with the Lord Jesus and even some have NO relationship with Him.
 - Think for a moment - Have you ever spent as much time in prayer as you have at a Church meeting of some sort? A business meeting? A committee meeting? Even a "worship" service?
 - At some time or other every Christian has been guilty of being so busy doing something around the Church that there wasn't time to consider Jesus.

III. DISCOVERING JESUS IS NOT THERE CAUSES SOME WRONG DECISIONS

1. Mary and Joseph didn't immediately stop and start looking for Jesus.
 - Most people don't stop what they are doing either when they discover that Jesus is not there.

- Usually what people do when Jesus is not around as much is to slow down praying and reading God's Word and attending Church services as often, all the while knowing what they are doing is not right.
2. Mary and Joseph thought that Jesus was nearby, probably with some friends or family members.
 - A lot of people have the same thoughts, even though Jesus is not immediately present, He's close by somewhere.
 - Where would Jesus be if you suddenly missed Him?
 3. Mary and Joseph kept on going, they didn't turn back right away, even though Jesus wasn't with them.
 - Aren't most people the same? They just continue on their way, going about life as usual, etc.
 - Where can people go without Jesus? They go anywhere and everywhere, without Jesus.
 - People just don't realize that Jesus just isn't there, so they go on their normal way.

IV. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE WHEN ONE DISCOVERS THAT JESUS IS GONE?

1. Finally Mary and Joseph turned around and went back and finally found Jesus.
 - That's the only way to find Jesus - turn around and go back - He wasn't the one who left!
2. Mary and Joseph were very upset and sad as they looked for Jesus.
 - Surely there is regret, sorrow and questions one has when he/she discovers that Jesus isn't around.
 - It is not Jesus who has left, it is US, therefore anxiousness should prevail until Jesus is found.
3. It took a while before Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus. It took only a few moments to lose Him but it took a lot longer to find Him.
 - The same truth applies to every. In the twinkling of the eye Jesus can be lost, He's gone from one's life.
4. Although Jesus was separated from Mary and Joseph, He wasn't that far away.
 - A truth: Jesus is never very far away from anybody.
 - How far away from YOU do you think Jesus is right now?
5. Mary and Joseph found Jesus exactly where they had left Him.
 - Jesus was still in the Temple where they had last seen Him.
 - So, where do you think you may have left Jesus? What were you doing? Retrace your steps back to where you knew for sure that He was with you. What happened?
 - Jesus is exactly where you left Him, where you and Jesus were together.

V. IS THERE A WAY TO KEEP FROM LOSING JESUS?

1. Today's world is very busy and demanding but yet we can stay in touch with each other, even across the world, as many times a day as we wish.
 - If Jesus had been on the minds of Mary and Joseph, they would never have left Him.
 - If we stay in touch with Jesus as much as we do with our facebook, email and internet friends, Jesus would never be left behind - ever.

2. Sadly, Jesus is only a VISITOR in the lives of many. He doesn't really live there very long at a time.
 - Jesus wants to live permanently, constantly with us. Does Jesus have a key to your "door?"
3. Consider this fact: If Jesus really lives with you, is a part of everything you do and goes everywhere you go, and you two are constantly talking, you are not going to lose Him somewhere along the way.
 - Losing Jesus is a gradual and unnoticable happening and it is done and over before we even realize it's happening. Pay Attention!

CONCLUSION:

1. A fact: One cannot lose what he/she never had! So, is Jesus a part of your life? Has Jesus EVER been a part of your life?
2. Or are you one who has been so busy doing good things, Church work, that your walk and talk with Jesus stopped somewhere along the way? You've been going along life without daily walks and talks with Him? The truth is, you've lost Jesus somewhere along the way?
3. But perhaps you are one who is satisfied with your present relationship with Jesus? However, just maybe, you need to go back somewhere and find Jesus again? You left Him when this or that happened as you became preoccupied in the event.
4. Jesus is as near us as we will let Him be. He never will leave us. It is WE/US who do the leaving.