

LOST AND FOUND

Luke 2:43-46

Introduction: A pastor and his family had gone to a mall and were in one of the department stores. While browsing around their small son and daughter wandered off. There came an announcement over the store's sound system that the parents of ...(giving the son and daughter's names) were lost and would they please come to the toy department where their children were waiting for them. Of course everyone laughed when hearing that the "parents were lost in the store" so the parents made their way to the toy department and were reunited with their children. This happens frequently, people becoming separated from others unintentionally, and even unnoticed.

A similar thing happened to Jesus when He was a youngster. He had accompanied His parents to Jerusalem to the temple and had become separated from them. They finally found him but why did they lose contact with Him in the first place? Christians often lose Jesus and thankfully most find Him again.

I. HOW DO PEOPLE LOSE JESUS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

1. He is lost by carelessness and gradually.
2. He can be lost while doing Church work.
 - Pastors can become so involved in meeting church member's needs that Jesus is lost.
 - Those involved the most, loaded down in church activities can lose Jesus.
 - Some the most active church members have the most superficial experience with Jesus and some even have NO activity with Jesus having lost Him by allowing their church work to take His place.

II. REALIZING JESUS IS GONE, WRONG THINGS CAN BE DONE IN TRYING TO FIND HIM

1. Jesus' parents continued on their homeward journey even though they realized Jesus was not with them.
 - They didn't stop right then to look for him.
 - Neither does anybody else it seems.
2. Jesus' parents thought that He was probably somewhere in the company of friends or other family.
 - It should not be very comforting to think that Jesus is "somewhere around."
3. Jesus' parents looked for Him among their kinfolk first.
 - They looked but didn't find Jesus among any of their family.
 - If you looked among YOUR family, would Jesus be found?
4. Jesus' parents NEVER turned back, even though they knew Jesus was missing.
 - Christians do this day after day, continuing on without Jesus, even though they know He is missing.
 - Today people have everything, do everything they way, go everywhere without Jesus.
 - People push on with their lives not realizing the dreadfulness of Jesus not being there.

III. WHAT SHOULD ONE DO WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT JESUS IS NOT THERE?

1. Jesus' parents finally turned back, going back to where they had been and looking along the way.
2. There is **NOTHING ELSE ONE CAN DO** if Jesus is to be found.
 - If a person goes away from Jesus, that person must return to where Jesus was last seen.
3. It was a dreadful and sorrowful seeking for Jesus' parents.
 - It was their own carelessness and neglect that brought about the separation.
 - The same thing happens to us today. It is our own carelessness and neglect that brings separation from Jesus.
4. It takes longer to find Jesus than it does to lose Him.
 - In just a few moments, and hour or two, Mary and Joseph lost Jesus but it was three days before they found Him again.
 - The same thing applies to us today.
5. Mary and Joseph were excited when they found Jesus.
 - The thought of getting back with Jesus should be exciting and happy.
 - It's better to turn back with tears like Jesus' parents than to continue on with the laughter and chatter with friends and others.
6. Jesus is not ever that far away from any of us who have lost contact with Him.
 - Mary and Joseph were separated from Jesus by just 8 miles or about a two hour journey.
 - If people would spend a couple hours in prayer and repentance, they would be restored and reunited with Jesus.
7. Jesus is not far away from the saddest, hardest and worst person.
 - Whom did Jesus spend most of His earthly life with?
 - What about the sad two disciples on their way back home to Emmaeus?
 - Don't forget about Mary in the Garden of the Tomb.
 - Jesus was so close but they never knew it.
8. Remember! Jesus will always be found where He was left.
 - Mary and Joseph left Jesus in Jerusalem and that is where they found Him.
 - It is right where we left Jesus that we will find Him. Give it some thought. When/where was it that you were last close to Jesus?

IV. HOW TO KEEP FROM LOSING JESUS

1. Keep your eyes upon Jesus and you won't lose Him.
 - Had Mary and Joseph kept an eye on Jesus, they would not have left Him in the Temple.
 - Had Mary and Joseph kept their eyes on Jesus, they would not have had to suffer the worry and anxiety they suffered.

- Had Mary and Joseph kept their eyes on Jesus, they would not have had to go back and find Him.
 - If we keep Jesus in sight, looking at Him from time to time, talking to Him frequently, Jesus will never be lost.
2. If we continually talk to Jesus, we will not lose Him.
 - Communicating daily, even more often, will assure constant companionship with Jesus.
 3. By getting Jesus inside our life, we won't ever lose Him.
 - Many know Jesus only as a visitor now and then.
 - **John 14** describes how to get Jesus inside one's life.

CONCLUSION:

1. Even while doing "church" work, one can become so involved that Jesus is left behind and never consulted.
2. Life is so busy that doing normal, acceptable, required duties can cause Jesus to be left out of one's life.
3. If Jesus is not the leader of a Christian's life, then that Christian will not be living as God wants and can't be used as effectively as he/she could be.
4. Losing Jesus is a quiet, unnoticed thing and habit and routine take over causing a person to never feel the need to go to Jesus for advice or help.
5. Every Christian, even pastors, lose Jesus now and then. He can be found only where He was left.
6. Take an inventory Christian, just where is Jesus in your life? Have you left Him somewhere?