

# Losing and Finding Jesus

Thomas Robinson, December 12, 2010

## Luke 2:39-52

<sup>39</sup> And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor (grace) of God was upon him.

<sup>41</sup> Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.

<sup>43</sup> And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup> but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, <sup>45</sup> and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

<sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

<sup>48</sup> And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "*Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.*"

<sup>49</sup> And he said to them, "*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*" (You knew, didn't you, that it is necessary for me to be in the things of my Father.)

<sup>50</sup> And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup> And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

## Luke 24:13-32 Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

<sup>13</sup> That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "*What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?*" And they stood still, looking sad.

<sup>18</sup> Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "*Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?*"

<sup>19</sup> And he said to them, "What things?"

And they said to him, "*Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,* <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the *third day* since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "*O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*"

<sup>26</sup> *Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*"

<sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup> but they urged him strongly, saying, "*Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.*" So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was **at table with them**, he took the **bread** and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.  
<sup>31</sup> And **their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.** <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, “*Did not **our hearts burn** within us while he talked to us on the road, while he **opened to us the Scriptures?**”*”

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## Traditions at the Heart of God’s People

This section transitions from Jesus’ birth to his ministry. A glimpse into the intervening years shows a life solidly rooted in the traditions and scriptures of Israel. Jesus grows up as the oldest son of Joseph & Mary, who both go to Passover in Jerusalem every year (with their children and much of their village/extended family). It is custom so often repeated that this year they don’t check that Jesus is with them when they start home.

Jesus is 12, preparing for manly responsibility before the Law at 13. Beginning to learn Joseph’s trade. His father also schools him in all the rites of Passover, temple, duties. At the end of these events, the whole pattern of tradition, family, village continues.

## God’s Unexpected Disruption

But this year something happens. The boy Jesus hears not only the instruction of his father Joseph but also the call of his great Father, perhaps even as Joseph instructs him. Luke lets us discover this disruptive call in a human way, in the experience of his parents.

Everything’s fine – till Jesus is gone. Lost. A boyhood adventure, prank? Dangerous. Searching. Three days lost. Fear, distress! Guilt? How could we have left him? None of the regular places. Kidnapped? Finally, they try even the Temple. There he is! Joy, anger. How could you?

Jesus is the opposite of lost. Sitting among great teachers immersed in scripture and all the questions of Israel’s history and law. He listens and inquires. He responds with his own answers. Amazement. His parents are perplexed. Two perceptions. “*Why were you looking for me?*” This is just what you were instructing me for: to be in the house/affairs of my father. Through all of Joseph’s teaching he had heard his Father’s call: “*You knew, didn’t you?*” There’s a sense of rightness/belonging/being home, as much as in Nazareth.

## Living the Unfolding Story

There’s more Luke wants us to hear in Jesus words: “It is necessary” (*dei*) for me to be in the things/house/affairs/scriptures/story of my Father. Jesus’ first words express an awareness of the unfolding story of God’s unstoppable faithfulness that he’ll live out. Later, Jesus repeatedly uses the phrase when anticipating his suffering and death.

It is Mary & Joseph who are lost and found. They don’t understand what has taken hold of Jesus. But in their faithfulness they play a role in bringing all their hopes to fulfillment. God’s intervention emerges through Jesus’ faithfulness to them. Mary treasures it up.

## The Other End of the Story

Mary & Joseph were not alone. The events could not really be understood till fully played out. In Lk 24 at Passover another couple, Cleopas and Mary (?), have lost Jesus for 3 days since his crucifixion. With questions and disappointed hopes they leave Jerusalem. Jesus meets them, but they can’t perceive him just as they can’t perceive what has happened.

Jesus opens the scriptures and their hearts (burning); he breaks bread and they see. He speaks of the necessity – God’s faithfulness – that has been unfolding all around them. They rush back to Jerusalem. Jesus was not lost; they were. Now they and we are found.