

THE BIG IDEA: Keeping Jesus in the routine helps keep the rut out of it.

The Take-Off

What's the most important thing you've ever lost?

Or, what's something you lose all the time?

I remember people who would ask if I'd seen their glasses and they'd be right on the top of their heads!

I used to laugh at them until I did something way worse than that.

I lost my phone.

I still remember the panic I felt - I had just gotten a brand new iPhone 4s and I loved it! LOVED IT!!

Then one day, as I was talking on the phone to someone, I couldn't feel my phone in my pocket and I before I could process anything other than "Oh, snap! I've lost my phone!" I heard myself say - into the phone to the person on the phone - "I can't find my phone!"

We lose things. Car keys. Wallets. Socks (at least one each load, right?). Chapstick.

But in today's passage, the parents of Jesus actually lost Jesus.

That's right. When it comes to the unbelievable stories in Luke, this is up there! They lost the Son of God.

But before we poke too much fun at them, maybe we'll find that we've lost Jesus, too, and maybe we can figure out how to find him again.

Let's read it, and then let's learn from it.

Here we go.

[Read Luke 2:41-52]

1. How in the world do you lose the Son of God??

- a. When you first read verses 41-46, it's easy to think this is like another famous story about parents losing their son, isn't it?
- b. [HOME ALONE PIC]
- c. But this is nothing like that, because it was common for families then to travel in caravans
 - Women and children in front
 - Men in the back
 - Relatives would often travel with other relatives
 - It wouldn't have been until the first night that they would have realized it (v. 44)
- d. So, we can cut them some slack, but they did still lose the Messiah, and I can think of 3 reasons why they did (and these will cause you and me to lose Jesus, too)...
- e. FIRST, they allowed the community to be the primary caregiver
 - We talk a lot here about community, about the importance of it and your need of it
 - It's in community that we learn to love one another, forgive one another, find unity with one another even when we don't see eye to eye with each other
 - But when we pass Jesus off onto the community, we'll lose him
 - Suddenly, I have to preach the best sermons ever to make up for you not pursuing Jesus Mon-Sat
 - Our church will have to be the PRIMARY ministry to your children
 - You'll need us to plan EVENTS and PROGRAMS that God designed YOU to do on your own
 - It's good when community supports us in our walk with Jesus; it's bad when they have to hold us up and move our legs for us to get us to walk with Jesus
 - Community is intended to support us, not carry us.
 - Don't leave your spiritual growth in the hands of those around you; take responsibility for it yourself
- f. SECOND, they allowed the significance to be lost in the significant
 - Mary and Joseph were dedicated - verse 41 says they went to the Feast of the Passover every year
 - Passover was when the Jews celebrated their freedom from Egypt in Exodus 12
 - It was a big deal - a very significant event - and they lost Jesus during it
 - Get this: they lost the Passover Lamb in their celebration of Passover
 - They lost the significance in the significant
 - We do this, too, though.
 - Communion becomes a pre-lunch snack. Baptism becomes a pre-service add-on. Church, worship, study of the Bible. They all become optional, like adding a sunroof to a car.

- We lose sight of the fact that all of these things we do are significant because Jesus is the only one of any real significance!
- We must not lose Jesus in the study of or activities for Jesus.
- Mary and Joseph did. We can't afford to make the same mistake.
- g. THIRD, they allowed Jesus to be their son more than their Lord
 - This last warning sign comes from verses 48-49, and it's clear that Mary acted like any of us would have as parents: all of her worry (she had been "anxiously" searching - means "to be tormented") fed her outburst to her son: "Why have you treated us like this?"
 - Jesus' response is key - "You should have known I'd be in my Father's house."
 - That phrase - "Father's house" - is more about authority than location.
 - He's saying - I'm the Messiah, the Lord, and I've got work to do and the authority to do it
 - When we do this, we begin to lose Jesus in our lives, too
 - We shrink him down, try to make him manageable, and when we try to make Jesus anything other than Lord in our lives, we will lose him
 - It reminds me of how Mr. Beaver described Aslan to Susan in C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" - *"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he-quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"... "Safe?" said Mr Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."*
 - He will be Lord of all, or he won't be Lord at all

2. How can we find Jesus again?

- a. So, if we've lost Jesus, how do we find him again?
- b. The same way his parents did.
- c. FIRST, we realize he isn't with us.
 - I think of Samson in Judges 16:20 - Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him.
 - Inventory your life - take time to ensure he is with you, and that's when you may realize he isn't
- d. SECOND, we repent
 - Mary and Joseph didn't repent the way we usually think of it, but they repented perfectly
 - They stopped the way they were going and turned around
 - Our idea of repentance is to keep traveling without Jesus but cry a lot about it
 - But to find Jesus, you've got to stop, turn around, and go back to where you left him
 - In this story, he was at church
 - Isn't it interesting that many people leave church to be with Jesus, but here, Mary and Joseph went back to church to find Jesus.
- e. THIRD, we release control
 - True, they were still his parents and they raised him, but this is the story that transitioned Jesus from a son to raise into a savior to follow
 - The key to finding Jesus in our lives again is letting him grow
 - Giving up control and allowing him to lead us

The Landing

People are all about resolutions now, and establishing new routines - that's a good thing!

But every routine has a rut within it, and just like Mary and Joseph, we can lose Jesus in the routine and find ourselves in a rut without him!

But keeping Jesus in the routine helps keep the rut out of it!

We lose Jesus when we forget that nothing we do for him is as important as him, and we would do well this year to examine what we're doing and make sure that Jesus is still with us

Routines are great until we lose the purpose for them, and then the routine is nothing more than a rut.

Keeping Jesus in the routine helps keep the rut out of it.

Let's pray.