

Living Lent | March 20

## Jesus Isn't Lost

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*Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*

*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*

**Luke 2: 41-52 (NRSV)**

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### Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

When I think about the idea of Jesus being lost, and Mary and Joseph having to look for him, I'm reminded of a scene from the film *Forrest Gump*. Lt. Dan, a Vietnam veteran who has tragically lost his legs and nurses a grudge against God, asks Forrest, "Have you found Jesus yet, Gump?"

Forrest, who has no capacity, it seems, for abstract thought, replies, "I didn't know I

was supposed to be looking for Him, sir.”

Jesus stated that he had come to seek and to save those that are lost. Mary and Joseph think that it is Jesus who is lost. When they finally find Jesus, His response indicates that He was not the one who had “wandered off.”

Did you hear about the married couple who were riding down the road in his old pickup truck—the kind with the bench seat up front? The husband was driving, and the wife riding in the passenger seat, neither saying all that much. Finally she pipes up, “What happened to us? We used to ride all snuggled up. You’d put your arm around me and hold me close. We aren’t the way we used to be. What happened?”

After a moment, the husband calmly replied, “I’m not the one that moved.”

“Assuming He was in their midst.” What a terrifying thought. It is possible to think you are walking with Jesus, but he isn’t with you. I know Jesus, I love Him with all my heart, and yet I am still “prone to wander.” I find that, like Mary and Joseph, I can assume Jesus is with me and find myself lost... even when things are good. When things are bad, when I’m in a crisis or experiencing deep pain and difficulty, I find it much easier to turn to God for help and relief. My struggle is to stay close to Him when life is ordinary. When things are relatively good. I need to be close to Jesus when loved ones are in the ICU, sure. But I also need to be close to Him when I am emailing, responding to texts, making sandwiches for the kids, and paying bills.

Maybe Forrest is onto something. We aren’t supposed to be looking for Jesus. Jesus isn’t lost. We are. And when Jesus finds you, He picks you up, throws you on His shoulders, and brings you back home. Home to Himself.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

Reverend Tom Carruth lives in Perry, Georgia with his wife Shelly, and their four children. They worship and serve at Perry United Methodist Church where Tom is the Senior Pastor. Perry UMC is a vibrant church that is shining the light of Christ in the heart of beautiful downtown Perry, across middle Georgia, and around the world.

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