

## Looking for What Matters Most, Luke 2:41-52

Trey Rhodes January 1, 2022

Opening Illustration: Looking <https://www.ripleys.com/weird-news/the-missing-continent-that-took-375-years-to-find/> Zealandia

On average we waste 2.5 days of our lives every year looking for misplaced items.

Need Element: Life has made you feel like you've lost something that's very important to you.

- Some of you feel like you've lost your way. You used to know your purpose in life and how to get there. But now, you're not so sure.
- Some of you feel like you've lost the will to produce the good life you always but now, things no longer make sense
- Some of you have lost your energy level. Maybe it's your health, or maybe it's your stress level and pressure you're under, but you just don't even feel like getting up in the morning.
- Others of you feel like you've lost that spark in your marriage. There's just no fun, comradery, or romance anymore.

Truth be told, nearly everyone of us have been in that place where we feel like we've lost something.

What we've all lost at one time or another, or maybe even right now: It's an ongoing and close relationship with our Lord and God. As we begin the new year, how are you going to make your life count? How are you going to find your way back?

**MPS: If you want to get to the Father, you've got to find Jesus.**

Jesus knew exactly what you should do because He always did the right thing. It seems right that we too should do as Peter tells us to, "follow in His steps

(1 Peter 2:21) Christ was "leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."<sup>1</sup>

Today, we'll answer two questions that should help us find what we've really lost.

---

<sup>1</sup> [\*Christian Standard Bible\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), 1 Pe 2:21.

There was a huge gap between what the people expected Messiah to be and what Messiah really was.

The people of Israel expected the Messianic kingdom to be set up. They expected Messiah to be a political kingdom. They expected Him to free them from the tyranny of Rome and the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world.

But, everything about Jesus has been unexpected from the very beginning of His life on earth.

Gabriel announced to a lowly girl named MARY who was like the people she lived among, humble, lowly, expectant, but a virgin... and Gabriel told her she was going to have a baby. That's unexpected.

The Multitude of Angels shouted from the skies to a bunch of lowly, quiet, dirty, unkept, poor shepherds that: (LUKE 2:11-14)

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup>Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!<sup>2</sup>

Simon, a resident of the city of Jerusalem who was known as a righteous and devout man, was promised by the Spirit of God that he would see Messiah before he died”

Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,

<sup>29</sup> Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace,  
as you promised. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation. <sup>3</sup>

And what about Anna? The 84 y/o widow who was a prophetess and from the tribe of Asher, was sure that this little 8 day old boy was the One who would be the Redeemer. The Bible tells us: (Luke 2:27-38)

“She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers. <sup>38</sup> At that very moment, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:11–14.

<sup>3</sup> [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:28–30.

<sup>4</sup> [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:37–38.

This little boy was Messiah. How unexpected was that? A baby born in Bethlehem. Going to go home to Nazareth. Only 8 days old. Not being raised in the palace in Jerusalem, although already known as the King of the Jews by King Makers/Magi from the powers of the East.

Here's the first question we need to ask:

## **1. Do you know what you're looking for? (Luke 2:41-45)**

That means for most of us, we need to realize we're not close to Jesus. At the very least, we're not as close as we can be.

Think about Mary and Joseph, they had from the beginning done what they should have done. Starting with going to the required feast of Passover. (Deuteronomy 16:16)

<sup>16</sup>“All your males are to appear three times a year before the LORD your God in the place he chooses: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters. No one is to appear before the LORD empty-handed. <sup>17</sup>Everyone must appear with a gift suited to his means, according to the blessing the LORD your God has given you. <sup>5</sup>

Was Jesus the gift suited to the means of this family? He certainly was a blessing the Lord their God had given them.

The journey to Jerusalem was not easy. The journey was long and hard and uncomfortable for everyone.

If we assume a pace of twenty miles per day (though perhaps slower, depending on transportation and the children), Nazareth would be a little over three days' journey along the shortest route.<sup>6</sup>

The couple had made this trek many times. We actually know that they had traveled right outside of Jerusalem to the little town of Bethlehem. Now, Jesus was returning with his family maybe for the first time after making their home in Nazareth. Being 12 y/o, every Jewish boy would look forward to the upcoming event of becoming a “Son of the Covenant:

---

<sup>5</sup> [\*Christian Standard Bible\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Dt 16:16–17.

<sup>6</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 2:43–45.

*With puberty, a boy became a “son of the covenant,” a custom continued in the present bar-mitzvah ceremony. It was considered helpful for a boy to attend the Jerusalem festivals for a year or two before becoming a son of the covenant so that he would realize what his new relationship involved.*<sup>7</sup>

Typically, the people going to the festivals would travel in huge caravans.

**2:43–45.** Caravans, which afforded protection from robbers, were common on pilgrimages for the feasts in Jerusalem. Traveling with a caravan, in which neighbors from their town would watch the community children together, Mary and Joseph might assume that the near-adult Jesus was with companions, especially if by now they had younger children to attend to. If we assume a pace of twenty miles per day (though perhaps slower, depending on transportation and the children), Nazareth would be a little over three days’ journey along the shortest route.<sup>8</sup>

Once the caravan had left after Passover, they traveled for 1 day of what was to be a 3 day journey. The stories began. Great conversation. Having fun not working and on top of that, spiritually fulfilled. After all, the messes that they made in the last year were now all forgiven. There was a lot of happiness and joy taking place. Then, probably Mary first. She found Joseph, and asked if he knew where her son was. He did not. They looked at each other when they realized Jesus was no where to be found. (SEE 2:44a). What would God think? They felt the blood drain out of their faces as the guilt poured over their ashen shocked faces, they Immediately, the decision was made to backtrack to Jerusalem.

Illustration: Story of losing Ben in Disneyworld. Any of you parents can probably remember a time you lost your own child. It is the definition of “frantic.” That’s how Joseph and Mary must have felt. They had to find Jesus and the sooner the better. So what do they do? It seems as if they look in all the wrong places for 3 DAYS.

Maybe this has happened to you. You know how it is, “All is right with the world.” Then the bottom drops out.

---

<sup>7</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 2:41–52.

<sup>8</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 2:43–45.

What do you do?

The Don'ts:

Don't rely on the advice of friends to give you answers.

Don't look in self-help books for the answers.

Don't make an open window for an escape.

Don't feel sorry for yourself

The Do's

- Look for Jesus while you pray.

Prayer has got to be more than "God get me out of this." Prayer was not given to us by our Lord to change your situation, but to change you. It is on that prayer closet that you develop that relationship with God. That is what can make the real difference no matter what you are facing.

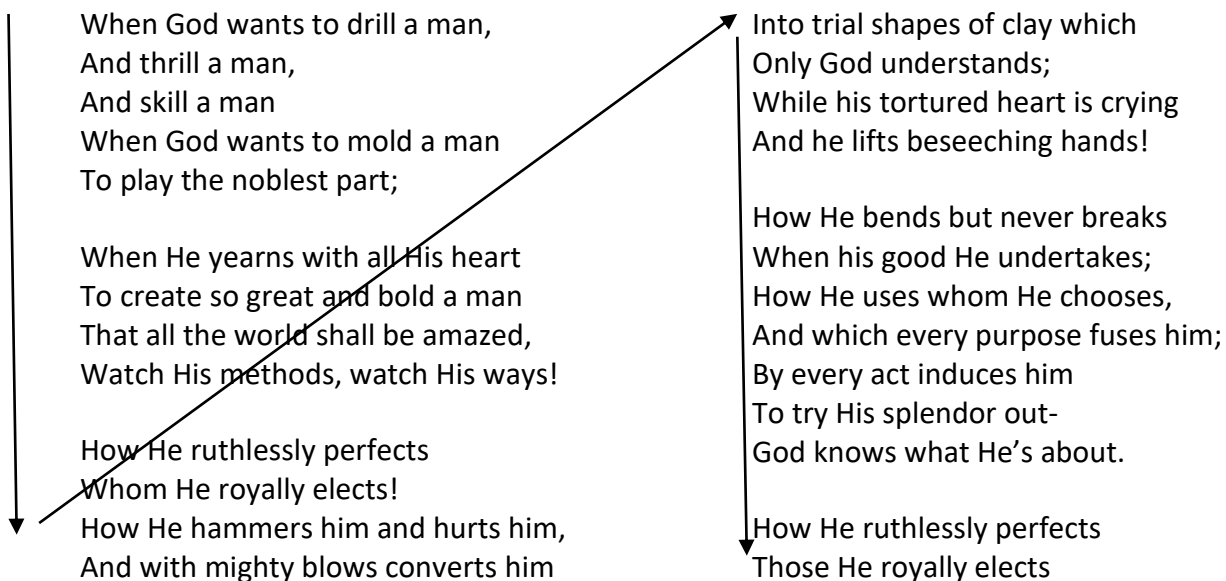
- Look for Jesus in your Bible.

The Bible may have information but it is not information you seek but transformation of your life.

- Look for Jesus with eternity in view.

Real purpose comes from us understanding that God has a purpose has a purpose for you. Often, it is in the struggles and difficulties that God molds us and makes us into who we need to be to fulfill His purpose.

### When God wants to Use a Man.



That's how we find purpose and live out God's purpose. That's what lasts for eternity.

- Look for Jesus with a fellowship of believers.

Contrary to popular belief, fellowship is not eating your mammaw's favorite casserole. It's not talking about the latest thing you heard on the news or ESPN. It's not even enjoying each other's company. It's what we do when we gather together around the Word. Study the Word together. Discuss the Word. Commit to obey the Word. And hold ourselves accountable to the Word.

That's why our best spiritual growth happens in community. That's in biblical fellowship. We need each other when life gets tough.

- Look for Jesus in your relationship with Him.

Don't let it be the last place you look, but look to Him first! Your relationship to Jesus matters. It's how you find the presence, the purpose, and certainly the heart of God. Your relationship to Jesus should never be your last resort, but your ongoing and intimate fellowship with our Lord Jesus.

Look for Jesus! He matters most

Yes, we need to know what we're looking for but we must ask the question

## **2. Do you know where to look? Luke 2:46-50**

Jesus is the only way we will ever have to the Father.

This is about moving us closer and closer to a constant close relationship with Jesus

And now here Jesus is, in the temple at the age of 12. Still not in the palace, but in the temple. Not returning with his earthly caretakers, but with His Father, in His house. He's not playing hide and seek or tag you're it. What is he doing? He asked questions. He gave them answers. He was in His father's house where he announced for the first time that He was God's Son, not Joseph's son (the one who was looking for Him. He conversing with the Rabbis, the teachers of the law of that day which amazed the people who heard him. This 12 y/o boy. Now, that was unexpected. No political ploy here, but asking and answering questions in the temple.

This is the One they are looking for.

Amazed at what this child grasps because much of what was being said, the teachers (Rabbis) didn't understand themselves.

Here, these teachers are confronted by this One whom we have already been told by two different, godly faithful witnesses (Remember Anna and Simeon) that this is their Messiah. Surely they would have remembered that time only 12 years ago. So, in case they couldn't remember, Jesus was here asking questions, answering questions with who could be some of the greatest minds of their day:

in some one of the enclosures around it, where the rabbis, or "doctors," taught their scholars. **sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.** The method of question and answer was the customary form of rabbinical teaching<sup>9</sup>

They were asking and getting questions answered which amazed them, but not one of them said, This is Messiah as Anna and Simeon declared those years before.

"Their amazement must relate to his deducing things from Scripture which they had never found before"<sup>10</sup>

Truly it could be said of these learned men of that day, just as John wrote in John 5:39-40 <sup>39</sup>You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. <sup>40</sup>But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life. <sup>11</sup>

Now Mary gets into it with Jesus. Remember before you get too harsh with her, she had been frantically looking for 4 days 3 days in Jerusalem and then add the day it took them to get back to Jerusalem.

Finally they see a crowd and in the middle of that crowd was Jesus. Mary

"Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."<sup>12</sup>

Mary was an upset, guilt-ridden, frantic woman

This was how Jesus replied to His mother's question. He has to bring her back to what she should have already known. Jesus was on mission. Today His mission begins in earnest.

---

<sup>9</sup> David Brown, A. R. Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, [\*A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Matthew–John\*](#), vol. V (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 231–234.

<sup>10</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 851–853.

<sup>11</sup> [\*Christian Standard Bible\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Jn 5:39–40.

<sup>12</sup> [\*Christian Standard Bible\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:48.

<sup>49</sup> “Why were you searching for me?” he asked them. “Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house?” <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he said to them. <sup>13</sup>

If you want to find me, this is where I’m going to be - **in my Father’s will.**

Jesus knew what His purpose was. Jesus knew what the Father’s will was. He would over and over speak about the Father’s will:

- Your will be done on earth (Matthew 6:10)
- I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 5:30)
- For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 6:38)
- yet not what I will, but what You will. (Mark 14:36)

This statement is one of the most unexpected and powerful statements in the Gospels. For the first time, Jesus himself announced His deity. This as a 12 y/o boy for the first time at a Passover festival. **The Lamb of God announces His true identity in the same place the blood of the Passover lamb was sprinkled on the mercy seat in this temple’s holy of holies.** He wasn’t in the palace, but in the temple. This was the place where heaven met earth. God chose to dwell with man.. the temple is the house of the God. Now with His own voice and to His mother he says I am in my Father’s house. You know Joseph is not my Father. He recognizes God the Father as his Father. He proclaims that He is God the Son.

In the present instance, the second part of the statement is of extraordinary significance. The importance of Jesus’ use of the phrase “my Father,” with its implied designation of himself as the unique Son of the Father, is heightened not only by the preceding question but by the subsequent statement of v. 50. By saying that Mary and Joseph did not understand, Luke underlines the awesome mystery of Jesus’ statement of filial consciousness.

Jesus lets all who can hear that it was necessary that He was in His Father’s house. The God the Son and God the Father, His Father together. On purpose, by design as God Himself willed. He knew what His Father’s will was, and He did what His Father willed.

What about you? How resolute are you to know and do God’s will for you, your life, your purpose? How do we even know?

---

<sup>13</sup> [\*Christian Standard Bible\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:49–50.



### \*How Can I Follow the Will of God?

This can get you started knowing what the will of God is and then starting it for your life.

- Develop a love relationship with God – this is a real and personal relationship
- Know and obey the revealed will of God  
This is what we know from the Bible. It's all but impossible for God to get your attention if you are not already doing what He has revealed for you.
- Look for where God is at work around you – God has placed you into a part of His kingdom and wants you to be responsible for it. See what God is up to. Pray for God to use you and see what He does next.
- Believe God can use you and get involved where He's working = How do you know? When someone starts to talk about ANY kind of spiritual matters, ask questions like, You wanna talk? Can I pray for you? What do you think God is doing in your life right now?
- Adjust your life to the will of God – If that means coming earlier to church, staying late after church, coming out a day or night of the week, get involved in missions, or going to the mission field. Then do it! And do it on God's schedule, not yours.

Closing Illustration: Many of you may have heard of Lee Strobel. He wrote the book *The Case for Christ*

\*Blackaby, Henry. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Pp. 68-71. Lifeway Press, 1990.

So as a Christian, are you willing to adjust to God and His kingdom so He can best use you this year?

If you're not a Christian, are you open to starting a relationship with Christ? Jesus lived a perfect life that we could not, died the death we deserved, was buried and rose again 3 days later. God is moving you right now because He wants that relationship with you. Will you come to Him today through Jesus?

\*Blackaby, Henry. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Pp. 68-71. Lifeway Press, 1990.