

Travelling With Jesus

Life is like a journey. In the natural our companions can help make or mar the journey. The pleasantness and progress of a journey can be significantly influenced by companions. A companion like Jonah can ruin the voyage whereas a companion like Jesus in the boat with the disciples will calm every storm and thereby enhance progress to the intended destiny. To successfully face the challenges in life's journey, partnership with Christ is indispensable. Ezra 8:21-23 highlights the benefits of securing divine partnership at the beginning of every adventure.

This message is based on the story of Jesus at the age of twelve years, travelling with His earthly parents (Joseph and Mary) to the feast of the Passover in Jerusalem as recorded in Luke 2:41-50 “.... **And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple....**” This story makes a unique contribution to our knowledge of the early years of Christ's life. It illustrates the humanity and the divinity of Christ. We note from here:

1. the great mistake of the earthly parents in assuming that Jesus was in their company when He was not.
2. the grand mission they undertook back to Jerusalem in search for 'the missing Christ'.

Many 'Christians' today make similar mistakes but not all are prudent enough to undertake a similar grand mission. This is a timely reminder that “... **let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall**” (I Corinthians 10:12).

THE GREAT MISTAKE

“But they supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey...” (Luke 2:44). The great mistake of the parents was supposing without checking up. Before blaming them, let us ask ourselves if we do not act like that on occasions when we:

1. Plan our lives without consulting God
2. Build our lives on propositions that lack foundations.
3. On a spiritual pilgrimage to heaven assume that God is in our company but have no proof of His presence?
4. Like Sampson, bask in past glories, while totally oblivious of the fact that the Spirit of God had been grieved and left – **“And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him”** (Judges 16:20). Paul admonished believers to test (not assume) that Christ is in them – **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”** (II

Corinthians 13:5). Failure to test now can result in a life of great mistake ending in the great disappointment – “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

We learn from this story that:

1. It is easier to lose divine presence than get it back. The parents noticed after a day's journey that they had lost Jesus, but it took them another three days to find Him.
2. Joseph and Mary failed to benefit from Christ's activities in the temple. As Christ did not stop working simply because Joseph and Mary had gone, so also God does not suspend His programme simply because we have abandoned Him – we merely lose out of being a part of it. Simply stated, we miss out of the next level of divine programme when we move on without Him.

The reasons this great mistake took place may include:-

1. Commencing a return journey with presumption without checking up. Today many start journeys into marriage, career, religion, etc on the basis of suppositions. They move ahead based on circumstances and needs but without a green light from God.
2. Losing focus on Christ during the celebrations at the feast. At the end of the feast they packed their load to

return home, hoping that Jesus has followed suit. Similarly, many today lose their focus on Christ because of the demands of their job, career, studies, ambition, chores, religion and celebrations. They are like the Israelites who “... hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities....” (Hosea 8:14). It pays to remember Jesus' admonition – “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

3. Expecting Jesus to adjust to their plans rather than them adjusting to His. The normal thing everybody did after the feast was to return home but Christ had a different mission – “...wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's business?*” (Luke 2:49). They expected Christ not only to know the correct routines but also to adjust to their plans, scarcely ever finding out Jesus' priorities at the time. This is the problem with some Christians today. They fire off in different directions and expect God to adjust to them rather than finding out God's programme and aligning theirs to it. They are keen on establishing 'standards', and in the process of doing so have abandoned God's standards – “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:1-3).

THE GRAND MISSION

On discovering that Christ was missing, Joseph and Mary went back to Jerusalem on a grand mission to find Him. They suspended their personal plans of returning home and went back to Jerusalem, the very spot they lost Jesus. Their hearts were fully bent on finding Jesus and it did not matter how long it was going to take. We learn from this that:

1. Joseph and Mary took the initiative and made it their personal responsibility to search for the missing Christ. They did not 'suppose' that their relatives or a rescue mission would find and deliver the boy to them. Similarly, it is our responsibility to seek and find God the moment we notice that we have moved from him – **“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near”** (Isaiah 55:6). The prodigal son could have died in poverty if he did not take the initiative to return back to seek the father’s favour (Luke 15:11-32).
2. The parents returned to Jerusalem where they lost Christ. Divine presence can be re-established by returning to where it was broken. **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”** (Revelation 2:5). There is great significance in the directive God gave to Jacob to return to Bethel where he first met God and entered into covenant with Him (Genesis 35:1). However, we must not think that our Bethel or Jerusalem will always be a physical place. In some cases it will mean repentance and renunciation

of the thoughts, languages, attitudes, behaviours, acts and sins that made us to lose divine presence in the first place – **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7).**

It is encouraging to note that on the completion of the grand mission the parents found Jesus and travelled back with Him to their home. If we make up our minds to seek Him, we will certainly find Him, and what a pleasant journey it would be to travel with Jesus all the days of our lives till we meet Him face to face in glory.



Your spiritual welfare is our concern. For further help, please contact:

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