

## Jesus ... Lost

## Luke 2:41-52

- Nathanael:** Dr Luke, have you ever been lost? Perhaps when you were little
- Dr Luke:** Ah yes Nathanael. Back home in Antioch I wagged school one day because I wanted to see the chariot racing at the Circus. Never did get there. Fortunately I met a Roman centurion who knew the family. Why do you ask young Nathanael?
- Nat:** I've just found a reference in your research notes that says, 'Jesus got lost at 12. See \*Rhoda.' ... What is that all about?
- Luke:** Dear Rhoda. She never lived down the fact that after Peter was imprisoned by \*Herod, then escaped, he came to the house of Mary where she was a servant. He knocked at the door and she was so excited at recognizing his voice that she ran off to get the others ... leaving him outside in the cold! ... They did laugh about it ...
- Nat:** But what has she got to do with Jesus getting lost?
- Luke:** Well you see, after the resurrection, Jesus' mother and her support group, Mary M, Joanna, Mary mother of James and the others\*, well, they used to meet regularly ... and of course, tell stories. Sometimes they met at Mary's house ... Mary mother of \*John Mark ... and Rhoda joined the group.
- Nat:** Too many 'Marys' Dr Luke.
- Luke:** Yes ... we must be careful how we write their names ...
- Nat:** You've written ... 'Jesus got lost at 12'. Is that important?
- Luke:** (*looking at his papers*) Rhoda. R for Rhoda. Here we go ... P for Paul ... and \*Philip ... and \*Priscilla ... R for Rhoda. Yes, here it is. ... It's a good story too. Ready?
- Nat:** Quill and paper ready ... Now you've got me excited.
- Luke:** It seems that Joseph and Mary, with Jesus, the family and relations, regularly went up to Jerusalem from Nazareth for the Feast of the Passover ... Big celebration, a holiday.
- Nat:** (*writing*) ... and Jesus was 12 of course.
- Luke:** And that is important because at 12 a Jewish boy entered manhood. So, every year the women and children would have started off first, because they walked slower, and a day later the men, a group of them, started because they walked faster. They would meet up in Jerusalem ... Same thing, two groups, on the way back.
- Nat:** (*shakes his head while he writes*) Okay ... two groups. Got it.
- Luke:** On the way back, Mary, smiling at her 'boy' growing up, leaves him with the men, and the women begin to travel home first. Joseph, on previous travels, has been used to Jesus being with the women ... He assumes the same this time.
- Nat:** Ahh. ... so the confusion arises

**Luke:** Yes. Joseph and his group of men catch up with Mary and the women and children. “Did Jesus enjoy his first Passover as a ‘man’?” she asks. ... “I was going to ask you the same question. Isn’t he with you?” ... “No, I thought he was with you!” ... Oops!

**Nat:** I know ... perhaps he is with Uncle Clopas. ... or ... Oh no! ... Where is he?

**Luke:** So, back to Jerusalem ... checking all the places they had been ... Seems it was three days ... three days! ... before they got to the temple ... and there is Jesus ... calmly sitting among the teachers ... listening ... asking questions ... having a great time.

**Nat:** My mum would have given me a flip across the ear ... then a hug ... then tears.

**Luke:** Apparently Joseph and Mary were just astonished ... Because the teachers seemed impressed, even amazed, at this 12 year old ... his understanding ... his questions ... his words. They were all very happy together.

**Nat:** Okay, but Mum would still have ...

**Luke:** *(interrupting)* Now write, “His mother said, “Son, why have you done this to us. Your father and I have been anxiously searching for three days.”

**Nat:** *(writing)* ... My mum would not have been that calm. ... Flip, hug, tears. ... I tell you.

**Luke:** Nathanael! ... Jesus responds just as calmly ... “Why were you searching?” he says ... You must have known I’d be in my Father’s house”. And then he gives a little smile and a nod of acknowledgement to Joseph.

**Nat:** The little tyke! ... Oops. ... Sorry. *(head down, writing)*

**Luke:** Mary said later that she didn’t quite understand, but she treasured all these stories in her heart, to share with the women later. Apparently Jesus just went back to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and was a good son, obedient, getting taller, learning all the time. He had the gift of getting on well with people.

**Nat:** It’s a good story isn’t it? I’ll write it up properly now ... after a cup of tea.