



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

The Lost Brothers

by Nate King

One Saturday afternoon, I was grilling in the backyard while my two boys played downstairs. When dinner was almost ready, I called down, “Boys! Come up for dinner!”

Ethan, my oldest, replied with words that completely freaked me out, “Daddy, Jon is not down here.”

“WHAT?!” My heart jumped a little.

I’m pretty sure every parent has experienced this exact moment at some point. You momentarily lose sight of your kids in a crowd or store, or perhaps they miss curfew. The WHAT moment we all experience as parents is the pain of suddenly realizing your child is not where they were supposed to be.

I wheeled into action but couldn’t find my two-year-old. I called out to him, “Jon! Jon! Where are you, buddy!?” I called out again and again. Our neighbors started helping when they heard our shouts. Every nightmare scenario from all of the good Liam Neeson movies began playing in my head. Nothing. No where. Where was my son? I kept calling out.

Jamie was literally running laps around our neighborhood, crying out for him as only a worried mother can. I frantically searched every room in our house as three excruciating minutes turned into thirty. Jon was lost, and I was losing it.

He’s nowhere! I remember thinking. What does that even mean? I went outside for about the tenth time to see if he had gone into the yard. Still nothing. My neighbor had begun combing the woods behind our house.

One sudden and unexpected realization had tossed our world on its head. If that sounds dramatic, it’s because it certainly seemed that way. Jon was lost.

Ethan was crying. I was crying. Jamie was crying, all the while continuing to search.

Honestly, at that moment, it felt pretty hopeless. I didn’t know what could have happened or how it could have happened. Unsure of what else to do, I just sat down on the floor in the middle of the living room, feeling empty. Then I said a very simple prayer, “God, help me find my boy.” I slowly climbed back to my feet, sick at my stomach, and started walking back through each room. Again.

I don't know where the idea came from. Maybe it was God. Maybe it was desperation. But I walked into the spare bedroom downstairs, a room I'd already searched at least twenty times. I picked up an old, unused curtain lying on a stack of boxes. And there he was—my boy—curled up under a curtain, asleep on top of an unpacked box.

I scooped him up as I shouted, screamed, and laughed all at the same time. I told Jamie, "I got him!" I told the neighbors, "I got him!" Ryan, next door shouted, "Hallelujah!"

We held him so close, and he had no idea why. He just knew he woke up loved. He woke up in my arms.

There are people in your life who are lost. They don't even know they are lost. They are oblivious to it. They don't know the Father is looking for them. They don't need those of us who follow Jesus to tell them how lost they are. They need us to look for them.

In the midst of my frantic searching, Ethan didn't hide in a corner and sob. He was running through the house with all the energy of a five-year-old boy scared for his little brother screaming, "JonJon! JonJon!" And unlike the story of the returned son we read in Luke chapter 15, my Ethan didn't resent his brother when he was returned to us. He was full of joy. And our hot tears of fear turned to boisterous shouts of rejoicing.

Just like the story from Luke's Gospel, we had a barbecue. We celebrated a little more that night. Our love grew just a little bit more. Why? Because what was lost was found.

When the one you love is lost to you, it is frightening. You feel powerless to help. But you can't stop searching. Because they're never as far away as you may fear they are. They may just need you to come looking one more time.

When they are found, don't explain how lost they were. Celebrate how loved they are. Heaven smiles with all the warmth of a good Father when the lost are found, and love has the last word.

Question Who needs you to seek them, find them, and love them home?

Family Chat Are you dealing with a hurtful situation that you need to share with your family?

Take Action Be merciful to others today, as your Father is merciful to you. Be on the lookout for the lost brother or friend who needs mercy extended to them.