

Have you ever been lost for an extended period of time? Out of touch with the world for more than a day? I remember the old story about Daniel Boone, who, when he was asked if he had ever been lost replied, "No, but I've been a mite bewildered for three days."

It is interesting to me that Jesus was sort of "lost" a couple of times. He was out of pocket, or out of place for three days on two different occasions. In both of these instances, Jesus was out of touch with his people, and he was alone in a situation which he had power over. There are some interesting parallels in these two cases.

The first occasion was when Jesus was taken to Jerusalem at the age of twelve to celebrate the feast of the Passover (Luke 2:42-50). In all of the commotion, his parents left without him. Frantically they rushed back and found him in the temple listening to the teachers and asking questions. But it was the teachers who were amazed at the knowledge of Jesus. He triumphed over them, in a certain sense. He was lost only to his parents, but he definitely felt at home in the temple. And he told his parents that they should have known that he would be in His Father's house. He went meekly back to Nazareth with them and the world went on as usual.

The second occasion was of a much more serious nature. This was when he was in the heart of the earth for three days (Matthew 12:40-41). Jesus was crucified and His body put in a borrowed tomb. The stone was rolled across the front of the grave and he was lost to his apostles and friends, but only for a period of three days. We don't know exactly what His spirit did for this time, but it involved a triumph over death and the powers of darkness (2 Timothy 1:10, Colossians 2:13-15). Those who loved Him were devastated during this time, even though he had tried to tell them that this is what would happen (Mark 8:31). When he arose from the dead, the world changed dramatically for everyone.

I think of the hope that Jesus' parents had when they hunted for Him in Jerusalem; hope that turned somewhat to annoyance when they found Him. Then I think of the despair that the disciples had when Jesus was crucified; despair that turned to astonishment as they searched the grave for Him and found that he was gone. That astonishment ultimately became an excitement greater than they had ever known as they saw Him in many places after His resurrection. He stayed with them for some days and then was gone again, but before he left he assured them of His continual presence.

The point is that now we never have to be out of contact with him; he is always there for us. His final message in the gospel of Matthew was, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20)." He will never be lost or out of place again, as long as we remain a part of Him. He indeed is the vine and we are the branches (John 15), and no power on earth can separate that connection (Romans 8:39).