

*TO TELL
THE STORY*



LUKE ITALIANO

Search for the Lamb

“Did you see his face?” Mary bit back a sob as she continued trudging up the rocky slope.

Joseph shook his head. “Mary, every boy looks like that the first time they see the lamb slaughtered. The blood on the white wool, of course. They don't realize what death is yet. They don't realize what it is to sacrifice a lamb. And it was his first Passover, Mary. Of course he looked like that.”

“No. No, Joseph, it was something more than that even. It was like – it was like he was seeing his own death.”

They continued up the rocky slope toward Jerusalem. Scrambling. Hurrying. Searching. Their son was missing. They'd gone to Jerusalem just like every year, but this was the first year – the first year they could bring their boy Jesus, that special boy.

Mary didn't speak her fear – she couldn't. But that voice from so long ago from that old man in the temple, “And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” It stuck in her mind like a refrain, and she couldn't get rid of it. What if it was this? What if *this* was the sword? What if Jesus was already taken from her? What if whatever destiny God had in mind for his Son, what if it already happened? He was only twelve! What if it already happened?

They got into Jerusalem, and at that late hour they began their search...and didn't find Jesus. And Mary's fears grew.

They stayed that night with some of Joseph's relatives. And the next day, the Passover crowds still choking the streets, they searched again. The markets? Some of the other relatives? Where could he be? Where would a twelve-year-old boy go?

And another day of fruitless searching, and Mary's worries grew. And finally on the third day Joseph suggested, “Well, why not the temple?”

And they went up to the temple mount, and they stepped through its gates. And they found in one of the side courtyards, the teachers all gathered around, nodding or mumbling to themselves, and there in their midst – their twelve-year-old boy.

Mary grabbed him. “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you!”

And Jesus searched his mother's face, a look of confusion in his eyes. “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?”

And Mary and Joseph did not understand. They did not understand that the Passover lamb was Jesus. That when he saw Joseph slaughter the lamb, he saw what would happen to him. And anytime Jesus felt anxiety, he turned to his Father. So he stayed in the temple about his Father's business.

But now, reunited with his parents, Jesus went home. And he stayed with them, and he was obedient to them. And he grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men until the time came to begin his ministry and to begin the long walk toward Jerusalem, where he would be the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world.

Brothers and sisters,

This is your God. Who even at that age of twelve years knew what he was doing. He was looking forward to redeeming you.

And this story is true.

Luke 2:41-52

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