

We have just finished with the Christmas season, which is a season of warm fuzzy feelings and learning how much God loves us by sending His Son Jesus. Now we are getting ready to celebrate Easter and the death and resurrection of Jesus. First Jesus came as a baby and now he has died and risen from the dead. What happened between those times?

We know Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the temple to offer sacrifices and dedicate him according to the customary rituals of the time. While there, they encountered two faithful servants of God and Simeon declared that this baby was not only for the Jews, but for all of humanity.

The next time we hear of Jesus, he is 12 years old and is traveling with his family to Jerusalem for the Passover. As they were heading home, Mary & Joseph assumed he was with their group. When realizing they had left him behind, they hurried back to the city.

Can you imagine what was going through their minds? God entrusted them with His Son - and they lost him! Thankfully, they found him in the temple, talking as an equal with the rabbis. They were amazed at his wisdom.

Everyone who met Jesus never forgot their encounter...Jesus' parents, Simeon & Anna, and the temple rabbis. Have you had an encounter with Jesus? What is your story?

Many times, we get depressed because of a health problem, a financial situation, a family struggle or things totally beyond our control, and we ask, "Why me, Lord?" Is it possible that God is using this situation to bring you closer to Him?

What is your story? Is God trying to draw you closer to Him? Maybe someone walks with a limp and as a young child was made fun of in school. Does someone have a major scar?

Some people have scars we do not see. A terrible childhood? Abused? Rejection by family? The wounds in our hearts are more damaging than those on our physical bodies. Those hurts change the way we see the world. What is their story?

God heals - especially when we come to Him with a broken spirit. He heals the wounds in our hearts which may have broken our spirits. We may be disappointed because we cannot physically do things that others easily do but the wounds in my heart led me to the foot of the cross. God has a perfect plan and purpose for our lives. Our value comes from the life we have in Him. As God heals our pain, He creates a new heart of hope within us which leads us to praise Him in all things. So what is your story?

Prayer - God, help us remember that "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) We know you have a perfect plan and purpose for our lives. Help us come to you and surrender our dreams so we can see our true value and your vision of wholeness in us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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