

“Where in the World are You?”

5/17/15

Ascension

Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53

Grace, Mercy, Peace and the presence of God are yours from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!

“Where in the world are you?” is a question asked in the detective game of Carmen Sandiego. “Where are you?” is a question asked of “Waldo”. Do you remember the pictures, and books of pictures, where you looked incessantly to find Waldo? Where was Waldo? Where is Waldo in the pictures on the back of your study guide? It is not too hard to find him there. But, some pictures were extremely hard to find Waldo. Yes, Waldo is there!

Where is Jesus? The question is often asked, “Where was Jesus during the 40 days after his resurrection and before His ascension into heaven. There is not much written about Jesus during this period of time. Jesus is noticeably missing during the 40 days, or so it seems.

Jesus appears three times on the day of His resurrection. This was vital to prove Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and fulfilled the prophecies. You know, the prophecies of being in the earth 3 days and then rising from the dead (Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 17:22). **“⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:40, ESV)** Following this prophecy Matthew records 3 different times Jesus said He would die and rise from the dead. The first of which Matthew records:

“²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (Matthew 16:21, ESV)

On Easter Sunday Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14; Matthew 28:9). The next to see Jesus were the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13; Mark 16:12). The last group to see Jesus were the ten apostles hiding behind closed doors (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:33; John 20:19). In the first meeting on the day of resurrection Thomas was not with them. Thomas was told Jesus was alive but would not believe it because He did not see Jesus. Thomas

said, ***“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”*** (John 20:25) Eight days later Jesus’ disciples were indoors again, but this time Thomas was with them when Jesus appeared (John 20:24). This is when Jesus told Thomas to put his finger in the nail holes of His hands, and to place his hand in His side. To this Thomas replied, **“My Lord and my God!”** Jesus’ response was, **“You believe because you have seen. Blessed are those who have not seen but believe.” That’s YOU!**

Another time Jesus appeared to the disciples, the third time, there were seven of them fishing (John 21:1ff). Jesus prepared breakfast, the disciples caught 153 fish at Jesus’ command. It was at this time Jesus spoke to Peter about loving Him and feeding His sheep.

St. Paul tells us that Jesus appear to Cephas, James, and the twelve (1 Corinthians 15:3). Some of these appearance may be of those just mentioned. St. Paul also wrote that Jesus appeared before more than 500 brothers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). This is not to mention His presence with them when He ascended. Could Jesus have appeared other times? Of course! Scripture does not have everything Jesus did. In fact, the Apostle John tells us Jesus did so many things that the world probably could not contain all the books of these events (John 21:25; 20:30).

Scriptures records only 7 appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. Why did Jesus appear so few times after His resurrection? Your guess is as good as mine. Jesus had told the disciples that in a little while they would no longer see Him as He was going to Him who sent Him (John 7:33; 16:16). Jesus had completed what He came to do. Jesus said, **“It is finished!”** when on the cross He had defeated sin, death, and the devil. (John 19:30; Acts 13:29; John 17:4). What else was there for Him to do on earth? But, on the other hand, Jesus’ disciples had much work to do ahead of them.

What is it like when you have friends or family members staying with you? You attend to their needs, and you put aside many things you need to do, right? As long as they are with you, you are distracted. Pleasantly so, of course. As long as Jesus was present, in the body, on earth, His disciples would have longed to be with Him and would have relied upon His presence for help and

guidance. Jesus' appearance with the disciples, after His resurrection, assured them He was alive. There was no question about Jesus' resurrection as apostles and disciples were eye witnesses. Jesus seemed to have weaned His disciples off of Him as He prepared them for His departure. They were ready as Jesus blessed them and left them. They worshiped Jesus and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God until the power of the Lord came upon them to share His love to the world (Luke 24:52; Acts 1).

Where in the world is Waldo? Oh, I don't mean Waldo. Where in the world is Jesus? Jesus told us, "**Behold I am with you always even unto the end of the age**" (Matthew 28:20). Where in the world is Jesus? St. Paul says, "**you are the temple of the living God**" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Jesus said He will abide in you (John 15:1-7). Where in the world is Jesus? Jesus is in the abiding and living Word. **Jesus is the Word**. Wherever the Word of God is, God is there. Where in the world is Jesus? Jesus said, "**where two or three are gathered in My name there I am among them**" (Matthew 18:20). Ah, He is in His churches, here today, and anywhere you gather in His name. Where in the world is Jesus? Every time you partake of the Lord's Supper you receive Him for He said, "This is My body... this is My blood." Where in the world is Jesus? The **Psalmist** wrote, *"⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. ¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."* (Psalm 139:7-13, NIV84)

Note three things in these verses: 1) You cannot escape God. He is **ALWAYS** with you. 2) If you think you are hidden from God in the dark, well, think again, for Christ there is no darkness because wherever He is there is light. Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). Thirdly, 3) When you were in your mother's womb He was there creating you.

The week the terrorist attacked the Twin Towers in New York, 9/11, our second daughter, Alli, was scheduled to go to England for a semester of over sea's study. At first we cancelled her trip, but,

then we reconsidered based upon the truth of this text. We knew Jesus would be with Alli going over, and while in England, just as He would be in the states. Alli left on the second flight that crossed the oceans on September 13th.

Where in the world is Jesus? Everywhere! The trouble is, sometimes we just cannot see Him because we are looking in the wrong places. i.e. When trying to find Waldo. **Sometimes** we cannot see Jesus because our world is too cluttered. We have too many material possessions that are more important to us. **Sometimes** we cannot see Jesus because our world is too busy with the world. Our schedules don't allow us time to be still and know God (Psalm 46). **Sometimes** we cannot see Him because we are looking to see Him in the flesh just like Thomas. We want a different type of Jesus or God.

Where in the world is Jesus? Most importantly He **WAS** on the Cross of Calvary paying for **EVERYONE** of your sins (1 Peter 2:24). **NOW, where in the world is Jesus?** Wherever you are and aren't. When Jesus left He blessed His disciples. Jesus' blessings keep on coming, because He is always with you to help you, comfort you, and take care of you. Yes, He is right beside you and sometimes carrying you (Psalm 95:7). When in times of trouble God promises to be there and hold your hand and give you strength. Isaiah records the LORD saying,

“¹⁰ fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10, ESV)

“¹³ For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.”” (Isaiah 41:13, ESV)

Don't let the world distract you and you will be blessed knowing Jesus is with you wherever you are. Let it be so! Amen!