

# Lost and found together

## A funeral sermon

Brent Kipfer

**A**nd if we're lost  
Then we are lost together\*

The love song “Lost together” takes on new meaning in light of our gathering here today. We are here together. And many of us may be feeling lost. It’s terribly disorienting to lose someone you love. It can get so that you hardly know which end is up anymore. Grief can take you all kinds of places you don’t want to go: anger, fear, pain, depression, loneliness, guilt. All of these feelings are normal. You may be feeling lost today.

*And if we're lost  
Then we are lost together*

I know that Cindy wasn’t a very religious person. It might surprise you to hear that many people thought Jesus wasn’t either. When you get to know Jesus, you find out that playing religion is not exactly one of his priorities. Jesus breaks down a lot of our stereotypes about God.

Today some of you are asking, “Where is God in all of this?” I believe that God is like the lover in the song who would rather be lost with us than be anywhere else without us. That is the message of Christmas. One name for Jesus is Immanuel—God with us.

---

\* In December 2002, I was invited to officiate at the funeral of a forty-one-year-old woman named Cindy, who had died of cancer. I had met her twice, and had provided pastoral support on the day she died. Although she had not been involved in the church, her husband wanted a Christian pastor to lead the memorial service at a local funeral home. Before the sermon, a friend sang one of Cindy’s favourite songs, “Lost together,” by Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor, © 1992 Blue Rodeo Productions. Although the music would not normally be used in Christian worship, I took a line from the refrain as a central motif for my sermon. I prepared the sermon with the assumption that a significant proportion of the congregation would be non-religious.

Christians believe that Jesus is God in the flesh—that Jesus comes near to show us the face of God.

For many of you, last week when Cindy died was not a time for lighthearted Christmas celebrations. Christmas lights, parties, and presents did not fit. Maybe you can identify with the writer of Psalm 22. In a gut-wrenching prayer, he cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest” (Ps. 22:1-2).

Where is God in our confusion and grief? Where is God when we are lost? How does God respond to this kind of prayer? God doesn’t give a pat answer. God doesn’t give a lecture on the purpose of suffering. God doesn’t explain in five easy steps. Instead, God comes in person. God stands with us and says,

*And if you’re lost  
Then we are lost together*

God comes in person to be with us. That is the surprise of Jesus Christ. Who would have imagined it?

When Jesus was dying on the cross, he cried out, using the words of Psalm 22. Mark 15 describes the day of his crucifixion: “When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Mk. 15:33-34).

Consider what these words mean. If Jesus is God in the flesh, then God himself went to the most godforsaken place. Out of love for us, Jesus became lost and forsaken—separated from the presence and security of his Father in heaven. He said,

*And if you’re lost  
Then we are lost together*

Jesus entered a broken, messy, and sinful world to stand with us, to be our friend, to carry our sin and to suffer our pain. Jesus reveals the heart of his Father to us. He comes with a love that will not let us go. He comes to be in relationship with us. He comes to share our lostness.

And if we are lost with God, then we are really not lost at all. If Jesus is standing with us, if we are standing together, that is good news indeed, because with Jesus, suffering and death do not get

**Jesus does not shrink from even the darkest place. And if we welcome him there, his presence transforms it. The cross is a place of torture and death—but Jesus turns it into a place of freedom and grace.**

the last word. After the cross comes his resurrection. And if we are united with him in his death, then “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). This is a promise that God makes to us. Jesus experienced death for us, so that we could live with him. He offers to stand with us in our grief, in our sin, in our lostness—and by doing that, Jesus changes this awful place. And he changes us. It is a gift, unexpected and free. The apostle John was amazed by

that gift. He was a close friend of Jesus, and he wrote, “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10).

Our hope and strength are not based on what we do, but come through Jesus. He does not shrink from even the darkest place, the ugliest place. And if we welcome him there, his presence transforms it. The cross is a place of torture and death—but Jesus turns it into a place of freedom and grace.

When Jesus comes, a whole new future opens up for us. The writer of Psalm 16 describes this gift, the result of God’s presence with us. He gives thanks to God, saying, “You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11). It sounds jarring to hear about joy or pleasure when we are so full of sadness. It seems unreal, scarcely possible. Still, Jesus steps into the darkness and whispers,

*And if you’re lost  
Then we are lost together*

Psalm 22 begins with the cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Maybe you are asking the same question today.

The person who first called out those words turned his pain into a prayer. His question still hangs in the air and pierces us. But that is not the end of the matter for the psalm writer. After expressing his pain and confusion and lostness, he finally comes to the conclusion that the Lord did not despise or abhor the suffering of the needy; “he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him” (Ps. 22:24).

God also hears us and, by his Holy Spirit, he stands with us today. God assures us that because Jesus has been raised from the dead we too can experience newness of life, both in this life and the next.

*And if we're lost  
Then we are lost together*

### **About the author**

Brent Kipfer is pastor of Brussels (Ontario) Mennonite Fellowship. He and his wife, Sarah, have three young children, Joel, Micah, and Joanna.