Have you ever lost something, something that you really need?

If you have you know that it can be a pretty bad feeling.

It never feels good to discover that all of the sudden you can’t find your wallet or your keys or your phone.

Some people can even “lose” their car in a crowded parking lot, if you can believe that --- forgetting where they parked and having to hit the panic button on their key fob to honk the horn and locate the car.

Not that I have ever done this but honking the horn is a handy tip if you this ever happens to you.

But if we *do* lose something, what is the first thing we do?

Well, we look in all the *usual* places of course.

Your keys might be in your jacket pocket, or on your dresser, or even still in the door.

Your cell phone might be on the passenger seat of your car, or between the couch cushions, or on the kitchen counter, or maybe in the bottom of your backpack.

Your wallet might have accidentally slipped out of your back pocket and is now on the floor under you desk chair, or on the floor of the movie theater you were just at, or maybe at the store you just checked-out of.

These are the likeliest places, the obvious places, the first places we like to look.

But if we can’t find these items in the places they “usually” are, well, then we’re in a lot of trouble.

When that happens, we are now forced to sort of “think outside the box” and try to “imagine” all the places they could possibly be.

The problem is,,, that figuring out what these other places are,,,

can be nearly impossible.

Once we have looked in all the normal places we think things might be, finding them in unfamiliar places becomes a huge deal.

Sometimes we just never find what we are looking for.

“We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

The magi probably have fascinated people since this story was first told.

It’s really quite a story, filled with all sorts of drama and wonder.

The magi, as you know, have been described in all sorts of ways --- and we usually picture them as finely dressed important people of some sort.

They all look pretty important in our manger scenes.

Some in history have even called them “kings” and have imagined them as some kind or foreign rulers or members of a priestly class.

Many Scripture scholars today see them more as astrologers or ancient star-gazers.

No matter how we imagine them, no matter what picture of them we create in our minds, a couple of things seem to be true about these men.

First --- they seem to be genuinely interested in the world around them, interested in seeking answers to big questions; interested in attaching meaning to things they couldn’t necessarily figure out or understand completely.

One doesn’t stare at the night sky and record movements of heavenly bodies just because they had nothing better to do in their spare time.

They almost certainly did so because they felt there were more things they could know about the world, more things to wonder about and seek understanding about and contemplate,

more to life and the world around them than simply the day-to-day realities every person had to face.

Life was mysterious, and they wanted a peek into that mystery.

And so whoever these guys were --- they definitely were searchers, seekers, and inquisitive people.

And secondly --- they clearly weren’t locked into one way of thinking.

For them, there was always more --- more to think about, more to experience, more to question, more to wonder about.

These were people who could have simply stayed within the safety of their own little world, within their own comfort zones, within the limits of their own imperfect knowledge of the world.

But instead, they appear to have been people willing to look for the answers to big questions in places where maybe they had never looked before, or thought about before.

These men had a certain wisdom and courage to think differently when searching for important and precious things.

How else do you wind up staring at a baby in a manger and somehow recognize the importance of the moment,

the importance of the experience,

the importance of the person?

I wonder how our lives might be different if we could do what they did . . . . .

Do we think there is real meaning behind life’s experiences, or are we at the mercy of chance?

Do we continually ask the big questions --- or do we think we have all the answers?

Do we always think of God in exactly the same way, unchanged from when we were young?

Do we believe our faith is a snapshot, frozen in time?

Or do we believe that faith is a journey, and that if we are open to grace, God will lead us to where we need to be?

Do we believe that God can only be found in the “usual” places?

Or do we believe that God might be found where we least expect him?

I think that maybe sometimes we get a little too comfortable in our spiritual lives,

a little too used to having the same thoughts and same ideas and same attitudes.

And sometimes living in that sense of comfort, that safe place, can lead to a kind of spiritual stagnation ---

a rest-stop on our journey that is so comfortable that we never leave.

And so we stay in the same place spiritually, day after day, and after a while, we no longer even think much about the journey, the road God wants to lead us down.

But make no mistake about it --- When we find ourselves in that place --- we will be missing out on a lot.

When we stop looking, we can be sure that we will never find the one thing our heart so desperately longs for.

And so we can’t simply keep looking for God in all the same places, but rather, we have to accept and believe that He might be found where we least expect him . . .

In the person we don’t like.

In the words of someone who we don’t really have time for.

In the cries of the poor, and the tears of someone who is ill.

In the person who we constantly disagree with.

In the little child, and in someone who has lived for many years.

In the joys, and in the sorrows.

In the successes, and in the failures.

I think these situations can be the “mangers” of our lives,

the strange and uncomfortable places where God wants us to find him, gaze upon him, and simply love him.

Can we be like the magi and search for God in hidden places?

Or do we give up searching when we can’t find Him in places we think He should be?

Lets keep searching; you might be surprised where you can find God today.