

The Search on Staircase Trail

Gilbert Gilman, ex-army-paratrooper, was in the prime of his life. He parked his shiny sports car, which was one of his prized possessions, at the small parking area at the



beginning of the hiking trail known as the “Staircase” in the eastern Olympic Mountains. He didn’t tell anyone where he was going. Up he began to hike into some of the most beautiful and rugged landscape in North America.

Somewhere along the way he must have wandered or fallen off the main path. Perhaps no one will ever know what happened to Mr. Gilman.

When he didn’t return in the evening, National Park Rangers were notified, and they organized a search to begin the next day. The search lasted ten days and involved over 5,000 man hours. Rangers, Search and Rescue personnel, and volunteers all combed over the terrain near the trails. Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft searched by the air. Snorklers swam the Skokomish river, searching in the shallow water in case the missing hiker had drowned. Where the river ran too fast for swimmers, men searched with underwater cameras attached to poles along ledges and log jams.

Despite the all out effort of the searchers, no trace of the hiker was found. When Park Rangers felt they had tried everything possible to find the missing hiker and had failed, they called off the search.



Do you know we live in a world of lost souls and that a grand search is underway to find them? Men and women are lost because they have been estranged from God through sin. Being lost doesn’t mean they can’t appreciate the beauty of the universe. It doesn’t necessarily mean they have experienced a fall from the path of respectability. It doesn’t have to mean that they are crushed under the circumstances of life and are so wounded they cannot lift themselves back up. Being “lost” doesn’t mean they have never felt the presence of the Creator. Many of them surely have. It means sin has separated them from God.

Being lost means we have wandered from the God who made us into paths of self-pleasing. It means because of our self-will we are living at a distance from the one true source of goodness and truth in the entire universe. Our souls are lost when they try

to live apart from the Giver of all life. “Lost Souls,” isn’t a catchy, poetic phrase devoid of any definite meaning. Souls who continue on in their lost condition until they die will find themselves “lost” in the darkness of hell for all eternity.

No one has to perish in a “lost” state. Even at this moment a search is going on by God to bring lost sinners back to himself. God had to initiate this search because man left to himself would never find his way back on his own. To make a way possible for men to come back to him, He sent his Son into this world. The Lord Jesus went all the way to



the cross where he gave his life for sinners. God’s light and love shone from the cross like a mighty beacon for all the world of lost sinners to see. On the cross the Lord Jesus paid sin’s fearful penalty. Because the death of the Lord Jesus means so much to God, he can freely justify all those who place their faith in his Son. **“Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.”** (Acts 13.38,39) Without this justification by faith, souls are lost and will always remain so, until they come to Christ.

The intensive search for Mr. Gilman continued for ten days but sadly he was not found. God in grace is searching for you to bring you home to Himself. Will you hear the Savior’s voice and that you might be found? If you come to Christ, you can know with a happy assurance you are saved and sing like one of old:

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found
Was blind but now I see.*

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 13.10)