

As Sheep Among Wolves

By

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Matthew 10 and Luke 10

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SUNDAY

Scene 1

*ENTER Peter and John LEFT*

PETER

This new town looks promising for us.

JOHN

Yes, Peter, but promising can turn to terrifying in the wink of an eye. Do you remember Nazareth?

PETER

How could I forget, John? How could I? One moment, we're among Jesus' townfolk, invited into the synagogue to preach. The people were interested and open, and -- almost like a wall slammed down between us, they turned on us.

JOHN

We scattered, didn't we? They tore Jesus away from us and we were sure he was dead. But we couldn't leave without him.

PETER

(to no one in particular)

The folk of his own town tried to kill him.

JOHN

And that's why even a promising town is still dangerous for us.

PETER

You're right, of course. I'll keep my guard up.

*Peter begins to exit RIGHT, but John catches him.*

JOHN

Have you seen Thomas around?

PETER

No, why?

JOHN

Well, I worry about him.

PETER

He's a grown man, John. He can handle himself. Let's go.

JOHN

But he's had the good fortune of never being around when things turn ugly. I have a bad feeling about this town, Peter.

PETER

So, what? You want to baby him? Thomas can handle it, and anyway, I haven't seen him.

JOHN

You're right, of course. It's silly.

PETER

So come on, then!

*EXIT Peter and John RIGHT*

Scene 2

*ENTER Zipporah, Ruth, Rachel, Mischael, Daniel, Issac, Hannah, Joshua.*

*These all trickle in from no particular direction and mime conversations or purchases.*

*ENTER Thomas LEFT*

THOMAS

(aside)

Alright, Thomas. You can do this. You've talked to strangers before, and this is nothing different. This is just an entire crowd of strangers and you're talking about something dangerous. You could be killed.

(pause)

Don't talk like that. You can do this. It's dangerous, but it's also wonderful.

*Thomas walks out into the market.*

*ENTER Tailor LEFT*

THOMAS

(to Tailor)

Excuse me--I was wondering if you'd heard the news! Jesus is in your town.

TAILOR

That's good.

THOMAS

Are you a believer? Have you already heard him speak? He's incredible, isn't he?

TAILOR

Listen, friend. I don't have time for this. I don't know your Jesus and I don't know you. Can you please step back? I have to set up here.

THOMAS

Oh, of course. Sorry.

*ENTER Tanner LEFT*

THOMAS

Have you heard that Jesus of Nazareth is in your town?

TAILOR

Jesus of what now?

THOMAS

I'm sure you've heard of him. He walked across the sea of Galilee and healed a man possessed by demons there.

TAILOR

Say, you're right. I have heard of this guy.

THOMAS

So, you believe in him!

TAILOR

Isn't he the guy who challenged Roman authority by saying he was king of the Jews?

THOMAS

Oh! Uh . . .

TAILOR

Listen, buddy, no offense, but anybody who follows this Jesus must be crazy. The Jews haven't had a king for a thousand years. And since the Romans are in charge, he must have a death wish. They don't just kill folks who challenge them. They've killed entire towns looking for one man. So, you understand why I want you to go away, now.

THOMAS

I'll just--yeah. Of course, have a nice day!

TAILOR

No problem. Just leave me alone.

*Thomas steps forward, dejected.*

THOMAS

What would *he* do in this situation? I think I already know.

*ENTER Vendor LEFT*

THOMAS

Excuse me.

VENDOR

Are you looking for fish? My man hasn't come in yet. He gets here with the catch after lunch, so you should check back then.

THOMAS

No, I'm not looking for fish.

VENDOR

Why waste my time, then?

THOMAS

Because I have good news that will change your life. Jesus of Nazareth is in your town. Yes, the Jesus you've heard of! He has healed the sick and the crippled. He has cast out demons! But more than that, he has done something for me that no one else can do: he changed my life.

TANNER

How so? How can a man change a life?

*As Thomas speaks, people gather to hear him.*

THOMAS

Less than a year ago, I was a builder. I gave people a place to live. Build a frame that's good and sturdy and square. Lay mud down and let it dry. Line everything up, shape it, seal it, and present it to the happy family. But now, I have the chance to see men's hearts built in the same way. Build a framework of love. Put on a layer of instruction. Seal it with prayer to God.

TAILOR

Is that what he's really about? How does Jesus work as a part of this?

THOMAS

He dragged me out of my restless life and gave me direction and purpose. He was the one that showed me that change was possible. But you simply have to listen to him. Please, join me. We'll go find Jesus, and you can hear it for yourself.

VENDOR

(to all)

Well, I don't know about you folks, but I'm going to see this Jesus. My fish don't come in for hours. Is anybody coming with me?

*The other people murmur in agreement and follow Thomas offstage.  
EXIT All LEFT*

Scene 3

*ENTER Jesus, Peter, and John RIGHT.*

PETER

Here comes Thomas! See, John, have a little faith. Thomas did well.

JOHN

Yes, he did. Look at all these people here to listen to Jesus!

*ENTER Thomas, Vendor, Tailor, Tanner, Zipporah, Ruth, Rachel, Mischael, Daniel, Issac, Hannah, and Joshua LEFT*

JESUS

Thomas!

THOMAS

Lord, these people are interested in what you have to say. I told them that you changed my life, and they want to know how that is possible.

VENDOR

Yeah! How do you change a man?

JESUS

The kingdom of heaven is able to change a man's life because the man changes for the kingdom. Think of it this way: a man comes home and breaks his own things because he is angry. His wife pleads with him to change, but she cannot change him. He will continue to break his things and be angry until he chooses to change, for the love of his wife. How much greater is his love for God? And how much more change is possible when he changes for a greater love?

TAILOR

Is change easy?

JESUS

Change is never easy. Imagine bread in an oven. It's flat and wet, and you would never eat it. To make it rise up and dry out, the baker must give it enough heat to almost light it on fire. The heat is enormous, but the end result is so much better than the beginning that it makes the heat of fire worth enduring.

TANNER

That doesn't mean anything! Stop giving us meaningless words and just tell us what you mean!

VENDOR

Yeah, I didn't come here to solve riddles.

THOMAS

These aren't riddles, friends. Just listen, and the meaning becomes clear!

JESUS

The meaning of these things is like a flower in spring: at first, the flower is closed, but if you wait long enough, the petals open and you can see the beauty inside.

*The eight nod.*

TANNER

I'm a simple man with simple tastes. This is too much for me.

VENDOR

Look, we appreciate you coming to our town, but please leave us alone.

*EXIT Vendor, Tanner, and Tailor LEFT*

THOMAS

Please, no! He has truth to share with you.

JOHN

He is a teacher. His words do make sense, and you can find the truth in them!

PETER

Thomas, John. Let them go. If they aren't willing to listen, don't worry about it.

JESUS

Thomas, thank you for bringing all these people to listen to me. It means more to me that you were willing to talk about the kingdom than if they listened at the current time.

(to crowd)

Are you all still here? Good. Honestly, I recognize your faces.

ZIPPORAH

We've been following you, Jesus. We like hearing what you have to say.

JESUS

Gather around. I have a mission for you. Are you willing to live for me?

DANIEL

Of course, Lord. Only the faithful have stayed with you this far.

JESUS

Good. I have something special to say to just this group. How many are there? Forty?

ISSAC

At last count, seventy two of us!

JESUS

(to God)

You have blessed us, Father. Our cup runneth over.

(to disciples)

Excellent. You have heard me say that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

MISCHAEEL

I would work for you, Jesus.

JESUS

Precisely! Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.

*The gathered disciples stir and murmur at the idea of being sent away.*

RACHEL

It's as Isaiah said. Here I am, Lord, send me!

MISCHAEEL

Amen! Well said.

RUTH

But Lord, where will we find help? Without you there, I will be lost.

JESUS

You will find help from each other. Divide into groups of two. Balance your weaknesses. Spread your strengths, for the devil goes about like a raging lion, seeking whom he might devour. You will need to rely on each other, for I am sending you out as sheep among wolves.

HANNAH

Then, how shall we prepare?



JESUS

Don't!

HANNAH

Lord?

JESUS

Do not take a purse or bag, or sandals, and do not greet anyone on the road. Do not go among the Gentiles nor any town of the Samaritans. Your work is to the lost sheep of Israel.

JOSHUA

How shall we live? What shall we eat?

JESUS

When you enter a town, look for the house of some worthy individual until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it. If not, let your peace return to you.

(pause)

But, if no one in the town will greet you or listen to you, shake the dust of that town off your feet. I tell you, those towns will suffer their judgement on the day of God's return.

ISSAC

Lord, surely we will meet trouble. You said we were like "sheep among wolves." How shall we deal with persecution?

JESUS

Well, be on your guard against men: they will hand you over to the local officials and flog you in the synagogues. On my account, you will be brought before governors and kings, but in that way you will be witnesses to them, and to the Gentiles.

ZIPPORAH

I'll give those men a word or two!

JESUS

No, don't worry about what you'll say. At that time, it will be given to you, for it won't be you speaking, but your Father in Heaven.

(reassuringly)

And--don't worry about yourselves. Two sparrows are sold for a penny, but your Father in Heaven sees when even one falls. He values you so much more than a sparrow.

MISCHAEEL

Lord, you haven't told us our message.

DANIEL

Yes, Lord! What do we say?

JESUS

As you go, preach this message: "The kingdom of Heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse leprosy, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, now freely give. My peace be with you.

*EXIT Jesus, James, John, and Thomas RIGHT*

ZIPPORAH

He said groups of two? Then let's divide ourselves.

*The disciples talk as they mill around each other.  
Finally, the groups stand apart.  
Zipporah with Ruth.  
Rachel with Mischael.  
Daniel with Issac.  
Hannah with Joshua.*

MISCHAEEL

We seem ready. Are you all ready?

JOSHUA

I doubt we'll ever really be ready. But I suppose we have to go.

HANNAH

You'll be fine.

DANIEL

Shall we pray?

*Everyone circles up to bow or kneel.  
Father, we have learned how to pray from your son.  
Please hear us, now.*

RACHEL

Give us faith like children.

ISSAC

Give us faith for your work.

RUTH

Support us in our need.

JOSHUA

Lead us, oh great Shepherd, and do not let us stray.

ZIPPORAH

Let our words be heard by your sheep.

MISCHAEEL

Let our lives be examples to them.

HANNAH

And let our work be a glory to your name.

DANIEL

To you be all glory. Amen.

*The disciples get up and split into groups again.*

ZIPPORAH

You'd better all make it back! I'll cry if you don't.

MISCHAEEL

(laughing)

You're the one I'm most worried about!

ISSAC

Keep strong, everyone!

HANNAH

Goodbye!

*EXIT Zipporah, Ruth, Rachel, and Mischael LEFT*

*EXIT Daniel, Issac, Hannah, and Joshua RIGHT*

MONDAY

Ruth and Zipporah are finding a new town to work in, but Ruth is having trouble getting rid of her attachments. Zipporah is impulsive and drags her along. Remember, Jesus said not to bring "A purse, a bag, or sandals." They're supposed to live on faith. The women find a home that offers them shelter, and that night, they tell the story of Jesus and the Centurion. However, the next morning, their hostess is bleeding from the hand, but doesn't notice. The disciples discover that the woman has leprosy. Ruth, ever timid, offers to find Zipporah. She's sure that her friend's faith can act just as the centurion's did. Zipporah prays, and nothing happens. She insists that Ruth pray. "I can't heal--" she protests, but Zipporah points out "It's not about whether or not you can heal. God can heal." Ruth's prayer works, and Mary is healed of her leprosy.

3 Female  
Ruth  
Zipporah  
Mary

1 Male  
Jacob

Props

1 walking stick for Ruth  
1 bag for Ruth  
1 coat for Ruth  
1 cookpot for Mary  
1 knife for Mary

TUESDAY

Mischael and Rachel recount some recent victories, and decide to find a new town. Mischael's enthusiasm soon finds the people to be like brick walls. He sweeps for a woman, recounting the story of the lost coin, but she turns him away, coldly. Rachel tries to reach out to a man who turns out to be the priest of the local synagogue, and he is very negative about her "hogwash about this made-up messiah." Mischael meets a crippple who mocks him for inviting her to be healed. Rachel drags Mischael out of the city as per Jesus' instructions, where they have an argument. Mischael isn't about to let these people escape without hearing the good news, but Rachel isn't interested in wasting their time. After all, Jesus said to "shake the dust of that town off your feet." They turn away to find new hope elsewhere.

2 male

Mischael  
Zacharias

2 female

Rachel  
Calpurnia

1 gender independent

Tannis

Props

1 broom for Calpurnia  
1 cup for Tannis  
1 cane for Tannis

WEDNESDAY

Issac is trying to bring a bit of logic to the faith business, but Daniel is fired up and hears the spirit calling. The two disciples enter a town and find a friendly ear in Zadok, a local kid. The two disciples tell Zadok the story of Jesus calming the storm, delivering the apostles from certain death. However, things aren't so easy. The two hear rumors that the Roman centurion in town isn't a fan of Jesus. He arrests them at the gate for making trouble. Zadok hears about the arrest and comes to talk, and Issac tries to use the opportunity to scheme his way out of prison. "When my words get us free, you can thank me later." But of course, Daniel points out that Jesus said "Don't worry about what you'll say. I'll give you the words." The scheme almost immediately falls apart. Daniel is called up to sort things out--Issac's lies aren't doing them any good. Daniel tells the truth. The Centurion turns to Zadok, who testifies on Daniel's behalf, and the Centurion decides the men aren't radicals, just believers, and has them thrown out, not killed. "You said 'we follow Jesus' to a man who hates Jesus, and he let us go?" "Like I said, have a little more faith. God will provide."

3 male  
Daniel  
Isaac  
Centurion

2 gender independent  
Zadok  
Soldier

Props  
2 Roman costumes

THURSDAY

Hannah and Joshua enter a town and immediately meet a friend in Sarah. She takes them to her home and makes them welcome. It seems like their hosts have already gotten the town excited to hear about Jesus. It's seemingly the perfect opportunity. However, when he is preaching about Jesus' casting Legion into the pigs, Joshua is interrupted by a person (Matthew/Magdala) possessed by one of the same Legion that possessed the man in the Decapolis. Joshua runs away, and Hannah attempts to calm him. Of course, Jesus had already told them to "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse leprosy, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." The two return to the scene of the showdown, and Joshua calls on the name of Jesus to drive the demon away. They gently lay the once demon-possessed person on the ground, and invite him/her to join them and learn the good news of the messiah.

2 male  
Joshua

2 female  
Hannah  
Sarah

1 gender independent  
Matthew/Magdala

Props  
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FRIDAYScene 1

*Jesus is raised on the cross already as the audience enters the auditorium. A Roman stands on either side of him, armed. When all the audience is seated, the play begins.*

JESUS

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It is finished.

*ENTER Joseph and Nicodemus REAR  
The two men walk up through the audience.*

JOSEPH

This--this is too horrible. I don't know if I'll ever be able to talk about this.

NICODEMUS

That isn't how I see it, Joseph. I feel like this moment is why humans will continue to sing, to write, to talk, to find the words to describe the way we feel right now. For the rest of our lives, people will meet in small corners to discuss the day they saw the Son of God die: how the clouds pressed the earth flat, how the ground tore open, and how strong men wept at his death. This is the highest and lowest moment of history.

JOSEPH

If people will remember this forever, we shouldn't stand still. Come with me, Nicodemus. Pilate won't let us preserve his body if we leave it to start a riot.

*The two men move upstage to the cross.*  
You there, soldier! Help us take this body down.

SOLDIER

Sir!

*Passing a long sheet under Jesus' armpits and around his chest, you can support him from behind while you lift off his hands and lower him to the ground. Stage this how you like; I found it to be uncomplicated.*

*Joshua and Nicodemus wrap Jesus in the sheet.*

NICODEMUS

Joseph, where will we bury him?



JOSEPH

I've given it some thought, but . . .

NICODEMUS

He deserves the best, a proper funeral, not a rushed embalming. The least we can do is put him in a proper grave. But so close to the Sabbath, where can we turn?

JOSEPH

Nicodemus--

NICODEMUS

What?

JOSEPH

I would put him in my grave. I would, but would it be insulting?

NICODEMUS

Are you insulted?

JOSEPH

No.

NICODEMUS

Neither am I. Then it's your tomb or nothing. We have to act quickly--sundown and Sabbath are closing in on us.

*The men finish with their preparations and use a makeshift stretcher to carry Jesus off-stage.*

Scene 2

*The Upper Room.*

*ENTER John, Thomas, Daniel, Issac, Mischael RIGHT*

*ENTER Peter LEFT*

PETER

Have you heard anything?

DANIEL

If we had, we would tell you.

MISCHAEEL

And you, Peter?

PETER

Nothing. The Sabbath keeps us safe; the Pharisees won't look for us today. We should leave as soon as the week begins, though.

JOHN

And what of Jesus' body? Any news?

PETER

You think I went back to that hill?

JOHN

I just--

PETER

(interrupting)

You think I went anywhere near that place, just to satisfy your curiosity? I would go berserk if I had to see it again. What I wouldn't do for a sword--

ISSAC

Don't say that!

PETER

Have it your way. I'll live like a rabbit running from a lion and hunker down in this cave of a room.

THOMAS

Peter, you fool. Can't you see that we're all trapped together? It's not just you who wants to charge off and fight for the kingdom, but if you do, you'll get us all killed.

PETER

You want to say that standing up, Thomas?

*Thomas stands*

So?

THOMAS

Peter, I beg you to forgive me. Today has been a nightmare, but it's no reason to yell at you.

PETER

Thomas, you're a better man than I am. You have my forgiveness, and I hope you can forgive me, too.

THOMAS

Seventy times seven.

*The room relaxes, everyone sits.*

PETER

From what I could see, the gates are guarded more than usual, but it's Romans, not Jews, doing the guarding. The passover crowds make it safer to slip in and out, but I still feel like I'm being watched. We could probably leave tonight if we hurried.

JOSHUA

What about the others? I don't think the women will leave tonight.

ISSAC

And the guards will be more suspicious after dark, even during Passover.

JOHN

What do you think, Thomas? What's our safest bet?

THOMAS

If we don't leave tonight, we can leave in the morning, I suppose.

ISSAC

Won't the Passover crowds be heading out then, too? We can slip onto the road and be gone. Otherwise, a group as large as ours would draw attention.

JOSHUA

So, we're decided? We leave as soon as dawn breaks.

*ENTER MaryM RIGHT*

JOHN

Mary, it's good that you're here. We think it's good to leave Jerusalem in the morning. The Pharisees will find us, otherwise. Even the city can't hide us for long.

MARYM

I can tell the others your plan, but I won't agree to it.

MISCHAEEL

Really? Why would you possibly want to stay in the city?

MARYM

I want to embalm His body.

PETER

The body is with the Romans, Mary! You would be walking into the jaws of death!

MARYM

From what I hear, I won't be the first person to do so. Who chopped off a servant's ear last night? Was that you, Peter?

DANIEL

Mary, please. The Pharisees are men of the book. They'll surely follow proper burial. You don't have to go.

ISSAC

Please listen to reason!

MARYM

I'll listen to reason when you all listen to your hearts. You too, John? Would you make me stay and let the Lord's body rot?

JOHN

I can tell you won't give up. At least let me talk to Nicodemus. He's in the council; he'll know where the body is. Please, let us help.

MARYM

At least you have *some* sense.

*EXIT MaryM RIGHT*

PETER

That fool woman will get herself killed, I tell you.

JOHN

And you would be as reckless as she is, if your places were switched.

*John moves to go.*

Now, I may need help tracking Nicodemus down. If we split up, we may go unnoticed. Can I get some help?

*Daniel, Issac, Joshua, and Mischael move to join him.*

THOMAS

We'll pray for you, but no heroics. We don't have him watching out for us.

JOHN

His father is always watching. I'll see you all by sunset.

*EXIT Thomas, John, Daniel, Issac, Joshua, and Mischael LEFT*

*EXIT Peter RIGHT*

*ENTER MaryM, Hannah, Rachel, Ruth, Zipporah*

MARYM

Can you believe them? They're talking about running from the city, hiding--and all before we've properly seen to Jesus' body.

ZIPPORAH

Can you blame them? They've seen their closest friend and leader die.

RUTH

He was my friend, too, Mary.

MARYM

I understand that, but from the way they react, it's like they don't care.

RACHEL

I think grief strikes them differently. Peter's sad, I know, it, but he's constantly on the move. If he stops for a moment to think, his mask might crack and the tears will come out. That's something he's not going to let happen.

MARYM

Are you trying to say that they're wise? It seems to me that if the disciples continue hiding and running, they'll break from exhaustion before they can outrun the tears.

RACHEL

They're no more wise than you or I. They just face things differently than we do.

HANNAH

They're like sycamores: tall and straight and strong. The wind blows through them and barely affects them. However, when a storm comes through, the sycamore is the first tree to break and fall to the ground. I would rather be a willow, and bend under the weight, but never break.

RUTH

A sycamore breaks if you treat it like a willow.

MARYM

That's fair enough, but they will have to bend a little and let me care for the Lord's body. They may not want to face their sorrow, but they won't stop me. John went to ask Nicodemus for a favor.

ZIPPORAH

Is that settled?

*ENTER Joshua LEFT*

JOSHUA

We've found Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

MARYM

And?

JOSHUA

In the morning tomorrow, you can go to prepare the body.

MARYM

Thank you, so much. Thank you!

RUTH

Let's prepare for tomorrow and get to sleep.

*EXIT MaryM, Rachel, and Hannah LEFT*

*EXIT Joshua, Zipporah, and Ruth RIGHT*

Scene 3

*At the Tomb*

*ENTER MaryM, Rachel, and Hannah LEFT*

RACHEL

Is this the tomb?

MARYM

It should be right here. But I don't see any guards. Was Joseph of Arimathea playing a joke on us?

HANNAH

Certainly not. And yet--here is an open tomb! This can't be right.

*ENTER Soldier RIGHT*

*The Soldier looks dazed.*

SOLDIER

You should leave!

MARYM

Whose tomb is this?

SOLDIER

It belonged to some Pharisee. I don't know.

MARYM

Tell me, was there a man buried here?

SOLDIER

It's not safe to talk about . . .

RACHEL

Please, we must know.

SOLDIER

(voice lower)

We saw a light, and then the door of the tomb . . .  
opened. Everyone scattered.

HANNAH

Who was buried here?

SOLDIER

Jesus, the false king.

*Mary grabs at the soldier.*

MARYM

Where have you taken him? Please, I must care for him!

HANNAH

Mary, we should go.

MARYM

It was my last promise to Him, my last gift to the Man  
who saved me.

RACHEL

Mary, it's over.

*EXIT Soldier LEFT*

MARYM

This was the one way I could repay Him. He never took  
anything, never needed anything. Now he needs this, but  
I can't even give it to him.

RACHEL

Forget the embalming, Mary. He knows. We'll go find the  
men and leave Jerusalem behind.

MARYM

The men! Of course, the other disciples should hear  
about this. Rachel, Hannah, I'm going to run. Take  
these things!

*EXIT Mary LEFT*

*EXIT Rachel and Hannah LEFT*

Scene 4

*Upper Room*

*ENTER John LEFT*

*ENTER Peter and Thomas RIGHT*

JOHN

I've just come back from loading the donkeys. Was that the last of it?

PETER

Everything I can lay my hands on.

THOMAS

I suppose now we just wait for Mary Magdalene, Rachel, and Hannah to come back. Is there anything left to be done?

MARYM

John, where are you, John!?

JOHN

Mary, what's wrong?

MARYM

John, the tomb--it's empty.

PETER

They stole him!?

JOHN

I thought Nicodemus said--

MARYM

Nicodemus was wrong. The tomb is empty. He was there, and now he's not.

*EXIT John LEFT*

PETER

Well, Thomas, are you coming?

THOMAS

Why should I? The Pharisees stole his body.

PETER

Well, I have to know, don't I?

*EXIT Peter and MaryM LEFT*



THOMAS

There's nothing wrong with me. Everyone around here is as jumpy as a cat, and I'm the only one who seems to remember that the ground is down anymore. There's nothing wrong with *me*.

*Thomas picks up anything the others leave and stalks out.*

I'm just realistic, is all. There's nothing wrong with me.

*EXIT Thomas RIGHT*

Scene 5

*ENTER John LEFT*

JOHN

Oh, oh no. Here it is, open just like she said. What if he's not here? What then, John?

*ENTER Peter LEFT*

PETER

John, is this the tomb? This one?

*John nods, and Peter runs in. (I staged this as merely off-stage right. If you have a Papier-mâché tomb, that would be awesome. I didn't.)*

PETER

John, they took him!

*Peter runs out again, fists clenched.*  
The Romans, John!

JOHN

I heard you!

(pause)

There's nothing left to do. I think that's the end of it.

*John and Peter both walk into the tomb at this.*

*John exclaims, and they both step back out.*  
Peter, it's so obvious! He's not here anymore!

PETER

Like I said, the Romans--

JOHN

No, I get it. The linen is folded. Peter, he wasn't taken, he left.

PETER

What are you talking about? John, slow down.

JOHN

He's not here, Peter!

*EXIT John LEFT*

PETER

John, what do you mean? Come back!

*EXIT Peter LEFT*

*ENTER MaryM LEFT*

*Mary's crying.*

MARYM

John, Peter, wait! They didn't say what they found. this was the only chance I had to repay him. I was going to embalm his body, to care for him after he died. If he's gone, there's no way for me to fill this massive debt.

I hope he isn't looking for my debt to be repaid. There's nothing that is equal.

(pause)

He knew that. But why would he give me so much if he never expected anything in return? How could he give me my own life as a gift? Oh--

*ENTER Jesus LEFT*

Sir, are you the gardener? Did you take the body, or do you know where it is?

JESUS

Mary!

MARYM

(realizing)

Teacher!

JESUS

Do not cling to me, for I haven't been to heaven yet. Please, go tell the others I ascend to my Father, and your Father, my God and your God.

MARYMM

Of course, my Lord.

*EXIT Jesus LEFT*

MARY

What does this mean? He's come back? Well, now there's nothing he needs. Could it really be a gift, what he gave me?

*EXIT Mary LEFT*

Scene 6

*ENTER John, Peter, Rachel, Hannah LEFT*

*ENTER Zipporah, Ruth, John, Daniel, Issac, Joshua,  
and Mischael LEFT*

JOHN

No, the linen was folded in the tomb.

PETER

The body was gone.

*ENTER Mary LEFT*

*The room falls silent. Everyone's looking at Mary expectantly for that silent moment, then suddenly everyone is talking at once.*

PETER

Where have the Romans taken him?

JOHN

What did you see?

ZIPPORAH

Are you alright? Were there soldiers?

RUTH

What happened?

ISSAC

You look like you've seen a ghost!

MISCHAEEL

What do we do next?

*etcetera. Mary breaks in over them all.*

MARYM

No, no no no! He's alive!

JOHN

I knew it! Did you see him?

MARYM

Yes, he was there by the grave. And he said he was going to ascend to his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

HANNAH

Our Lord is stronger than the grave.

JOSHUA

And what did he say we should do? Did he give you directions?

ISSAC

Yes, what do we do?

*ENTER Jesus RIGHT*

JESUS

Peace be to you.

*Everyone shouts and turns around.*

*Jesus spreads his hands and breathes in and out, deeply, as if satisfied. (This is weird, but he did it in the Bible; he breathed on them.)*

PETER

Lord--

JESUS

(interrupting)

Tell people about the forgiveness of their sins. Make sure sinners know about their guilt.

JOHN

Lord, thank you.

RACHEL

We will do as you ask.

*EXIT Jesus RIGHT*

PETER

We have been given a great responsibility.

JOHN

Can we pray together?

ZIPPORAH

Let's bow our heads. Lord, thank you for sending your son back to us. Thank you for your love and mercy. Thank you, thank you--thank you.

ALL

Amen.

*ENTER Thomas LEFT*

THOMAS

Are we praying?

JOSHUA

Thomas!

THOMAS

Could we pray for safety leaving the city? I've just come from the gates and they're swarming with guards.

JOHN

Thomas, Jesus was just here!

THOMAS

That's not possible. The door was locked.

MISCHAEEL

He was! We all saw him.

RUTH

Jesus is risen from the dead!

THOMAS

You all saw him die. The room is locked. I didn't see him on the stairs. No. He wasn't here. No! What you saw was a--a clever fake. A trick of the light. Jesus was never here.

MARYM

I saw him at the tomb, Thomas. He knew my name.

THOMAS

Well, whoever he is, he doesn't know mine.

MARYM

Why won't you believe, Thomas?

THOMAS

I can't allow myself to hope because that's how liars drag you under. False prophets and fakers. If I hope, they can trick me. I won't be tricked.

(growing angry)

Logic. Logic, don't you see? Everything has to be reasonable. And Jesus coming back from the dead isn't reasonable. It doesn't make sense.

JOHN

What can we do to convince you, Thomas?

THOMAS

(livid)

Until I see the scars in his hands and put my fingers in his side, I will not believe.

PETER

Thomas!

THOMAS

I will not believe!

*EXIT all disciples but Thomas, John, Mary, and  
Peter RIGHT*

Can you imagine? The absolute unbelievability of it? Jesus, back from the dead. He can raise people, but I know he can't raise himself. No, it makes no sense. And I stick by what I said! I won't believe! I won't, until I see the scars. Until I touch his side.

(softer)

You people don't understand. I used to build walls that went straight up and down. Long ago in a former life, everything was straight up and down. How am I supposed to believe that walls go sideways?

JOHN

Thomas, you must have faith.

THOMAS

(tired)

I had faith in a flesh and blood savior. Until he's flesh and blood again, I can't allow myself to be tricked by fakes.

JOHN

Do you remember when we heard that Lazarus was dying?

THOMAS

That was different, and you know it, John!

JOHN

Just hear me out. You remember, though. Jesus didn't go to Lazarus immediately. He waited for days.

THOMAS

Two full days, he waited. And then he told us Lazarus was dead.

JOHN

You said "Let us go too, that we may die with him." Thoas, you said that. You believed so strongly in Jesus that you were willing to risk death for him. Maybe now is like then. He wanted to show us more about the kingdom by making us wait. Can't you show faith?

THOMAS

(angry)

Faith!

MARY

Listen, Thomas. You remember what I was like when I met Jesus. I was insane in my possession. When Jesus spoke, he lifted the darkness from my mind. After that, I know that anything is possible. You've seen miracles, too. You've seen power, and healing, and death itself reversed. Please, have faith.

THOMAS

(incredulous)

Faith.

PETER

Listen, Thomas. I know you're angry. You're hurt, and you don't understand. But I believe Jesus is trying to work a greater purpose through your story.

(firmly)

Have faith.

THOMAS

Faith!? Is that enough?

*ENTER Jesus RIGHT*

JESUS

Peace be to you. Thomas, my son. I came so you could see the scars in my hands--so you could put your hand in my side. Believe.

*Thomas kneels.*

THOMAS

My Lord and my God! I'm sorry; I was angry because faith didn't seem like enough.

JESUS

You believe because you see me. That's easy. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet still believe. For them, faith is enough.