THE LAST SUPPER

by Pat Underwood
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PASTOR
READER
JESUS
ANDREW
JAMES
JOHN
PHILIP
THOMAS
JUDAS
BARTHOLOMEW
JAMES, THE LESSER
MATTHEW
THADDAEUS
SIMON, THE ZEALOT
PETER
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characters are visible. The table setting may be as simple as a few lighted candles, a chalice of juice (or wine), and a plate or basket of bread, to a more elaborate setting of items representing the Passover meal such as lamb, matzo, fruit, nuts, wine goblets, and plates.

It is very helpful to highlight each disciple's part so no one misses a cue. The disciples interact briefly when the betrayal is announced and when the bread and juice (or wine) is served, but otherwise only exchange facial expressions and body language.

Communion should follow the drama. Some congregations may wish to add foot (or hand) washing to the service as well.
(PASTOR is at the pulpit. READER is to the side of the table at a well-lighted podium.)

PASTOR: (These remarks are merely a guideline and may be modified to fit your circumstances and congregation.) As part of our worship this evening, we are re-enacting the scene from the Last Supper in a new, impromptu manner. When the disciples were originally called from their respective occupations into the ministry, they must have been very surprised. And so it is tonight. I will call several of you up here to play the parts of the twelve disciples in our Maundy Thursday drama. (PASTOR proceeds to select the DISCIPLES, either by appointing them or requesting volunteers. As each person comes to the front, he/she is handed a highlighted script and directed to sit at the table. JESUS also enters. When all are in place, the PASTOR continues.) Thank you all for being willing disciples! (Omit the next several lines if you are using an all-male cast.) Our table looks just a bit different than the table did in that upper room where the Last Supper was held. Here, we have both males and females of all ages sitting around the table to depict how we are all called to be disciples. Scripture tells us that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Just as none of the original disciples had time to rehearse their real-life drama when they were called into service, our disciples have not seen or rehearsed tonight’s drama. Let’s experience together the unfolding story of that heartbreaking night before Christ was crucified.

READER: The hour came when Jesus was to prepare for his death and resurrection.

And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they

1Galatians 3:28
sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” And he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the householder, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.” And the disciples set out and went to the city, and found it as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.\(^2\)

And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. And as they were at the table eating, Jesus said:

**JESUS:** Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.\(^3\)

**ANDREW:** *(To JESUS)* Lord, is it I? *(To audience)* I am Andrew, known to many as the friendly fisherman. What a happy day it was for me when I, such an ordinary man and not gifted, was chosen to be one of Jesus’ disciples. I ran to my brother, Simon Peter, and told him that we had found the Messiah. Jesus asked my brother to follow him also. I brought the Greeks to Jesus, and I brought the boy with the five loaves of bread and two fish to Jesus when he fed the crowd of five thousand. And now Jesus has told us that one of us is to betray him. How could it possibly be? Could it be I, Lord? Is it I?

**READER:** In those days, it was the custom of servants to wash the feet of guests. This was both a necessity, due to the exceedingly dusty desert roads, and a luxury, given how precious water was. Because we would like tonight’s presentation to be spontaneous, we will omit the literal act of foot-washing. It is written that Jesus removed his

\(^2\)Mark 14:12-16

\(^3\)Mark 14:17-18
robe, tied a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin, and washed his disciples' feet.

JESUS: (To all) If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.\(^4\) Do not worry. Believe. Believe in me...and in God.

JAMES: (To JESUS) I do believe in you, Lord! (To audience) My name is James. You should've seen how happy I was the day that Jesus chose me, along with my brother John, to be his follower. We were mending our fishing nets with our father, Zebedee, beside the sea of Galilee when he called us. I am sorry for the times that I suggested violence to Jesus as a way of solving problems. I was too ambitious and temperamental. But I learned from Jesus that God's way is always one of love. Now I worry for Jesus' safety. Surely my violent ways aren't returning, and it isn't I who will betray my Lord! Lord, is it I?

JESUS: Love one another as I have loved you!\(^5\)

JOHN: (To JESUS) Lord, I do love you, and I love my neighbors as myself, as you have taught us! (JOHN turns to the audience.) I am named John. Jesus calls me his “Beloved Disciple.” He is full of more love and kindness than anyone I have ever imagined. Sometimes Jesus calls me the “Son of Thunder” also, because of my impatience with those who reject the Lord. I feel so much peace within my heart since I met Jesus. It isn't possible that my selfishness has returned and now I am the one who is betraying my Master, is it? Is it I?

\(^4\)John 13:14-17

\(^5\)John 15:12
JESUS: For a long time I have been with you; yet you do not know me. Whoever has seen me has seen the Father!

PHILIP: (To JESUS) Forgive me for my unclear vision, Lord!

(PHILIP speaks to audience.) I am Philip. I am the first disciple chosen by Jesus. He called me when I was listening to John the Baptist in Bethany. It surprised me so to be chosen, for I am a quiet and shy man. I do ask important questions of Jesus at the right times, though. I introduced Bartholomew to the Lord. My faith in God has become so strong since I have known him. I can say without question that I find everything in Jesus that I find in God. But how could any of us betray this man, the kindest of all men? Lord, is it I?

JESUS: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me!¹

THOMAS: (To JESUS) You teach us so much, Lord! (To audience) I am called Thomas. Some only know me as Doubting Thomas because I demand proof before I believe. But I am not a man of doubt, I am a man of daring. When Jesus’ life was in danger at Bethany, where he visited Mary and Martha after Lazarus died, I am the one who said to the other disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”² I have great faith in Jesus and know that he brings people to God. His enemies cut God down to their own size. That isn’t what I’m doing tonight as Jesus has told us that one of us will betray him, is it? As I search within my heart, I ask, “Is it I?”

JESUS: It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread in the same dish with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.

¹John 14:6
²John 11:16
man if he had not been born.¹

JUDAS: Is it I, Teacher?

JESUS: (To JUDAS) So you say!

JUDAS: (As a plea to the audience) I am Judas Iscariot from Judea. I have been called a violent revolutionary because I wanted to overthrow the Roman rulers. The others think of me as impatient, stingy, and ambitious, yet surely they trust me, because they made me treasurer of our group. What of it if I made a deal with the chief priests and now I carry thirty pieces of silver that they gave me? Listen to me...I love Jesus! All I want to do is force the hand of Jesus and make him assert himself as the Messiah. Can you blame me for taking the affairs of God into my own hands? And now, how could he know what I’ve done? Yet he acts as if he knows! Me, betray my Master? Is it I?

JESUS: He who believes in me will do the works I do. He will do even greater works, because I am going to the Father.

BARTHOLOMEW: (To audience) I am Bartholomew. Some call me Nathanael. I was a fisherman and a disciple of John the Baptist when Philip told me of Jesus and asked me to follow him. When Jesus saw me he said, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”⁹ It was as if he could look into my heart. I answered, “You are the King of Israel.”¹⁰ I know this to be true. I have witnessed many kindnesses and miracles made possible by this holy man. We prepared a meal tonight that will have special significance for believers, and now we hear of a betrayer in our midst. Teacher, is it I?

JESUS: You do not yet understand what I do for you.

JAMES, THE LESSER: (To audience) My name is James, the

⁸Mark 14:20-21
⁹John 1:47
¹⁰John 1:49
Lesser, but I am also called James, son of Alphaeus. I am called Lesser because I am smaller in size than the other man named James. I first saw the Master when I witnessed his baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River. It wasn’t until one year later that Jesus chose me to be one of his disciples. I had been an adversary of Rome, but I believed in attacking the Romans by peaceful means. The Master taught me to work together with people I don’t always agree with. And now, one of us in his inner circle is a traitor. Lord, it is I?

JESUS: I have chosen you to go forth and bear much fruit.

MATTHEW: (To audience) I am Matthew, the tax collector. My life is proof that Christ can turn a hated man into a blessed gift of God, because my life has changed completely from my fellowship with Jesus. Can you imagine what it was like to have the Christ walk into my place of business when I was collecting taxes and say, “Follow me”?11 I was shocked, and so was everyone else that I knew. I served Jesus in my home, even though the Pharisees complained about him eating with publicans and sinners. Jesus said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”12 I have listened to and loved this man since I was chosen to be one of his beloved followers, and I can scarcely believe one of us is wicked enough to betray this good man. Who could it be? Master, is it I?

JESUS: Tonight the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

THADDAEUS: (To audience) My name is Thaddaeus. I am the son of James. I have always been a curious, questioning man. I asked Jesus why he had revealed himself to the

11Matthew 9:9
12Matthew 9:12-13

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twelve first, and he said that he only disclosed himself
to living and obedient hearts. He told us that we have
authority over unclean spirits and the power to heal
every kind of disease and infirmity. He told us to go
forth and preach, to be as wise as serpents and as
innocent as doves. We learned to trust deeply in the
Lord. Who is it within us tonight who is no longer wise
nor innocent? I despise even thinking it, but — Lord —
is it I?

JESUS: All will know that you are my disciples by the love
that you have for one another.

SIMON, THE ZEALOT: (To audience) I am Simon, the Zealot. I
was a member of the Zealots when Jesus chose me to
follow him. We were a group of fanatical Jewish patriots
who advocated revolutionary tactics to overthrow the
Romans. I learned from Jesus that greater things can be
accomplished through love. After surrendering myself
to God, I learned not to be afraid of Rome. I learned that
God is almighty. He is everlasting love. Who is it among
us that doubts this so completely that he believes in
power more than in love? Am I suspect? Is it I? Is it I?

JESUS: You will all fall away; for it is written, “I will strike
the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” But after
I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. ¹³

PETER: (To JESUS, emphatically) I will never deny you, Lord!
Never!

JESUS: (To PETER) Tonight, before the rooster crows twice,
you will deny me three times.

PETER: (To Jesus; again, emphatically) If I must die with you, I
will not deny you!¹⁴ (To audience) I am Peter; Simon
Peter. I am the brother of Andrew, a fisherman by trade.

¹³Mark 14:27-28
¹⁴Mark 14:31