

I WILL SING OF MY REDEEMER

by Susan A. J. Lyttek



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**I WILL SING OF MY
REDEEMER**

By Susan A. J. Lyttek

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PALM SUNDAY

Voices of His Past

1. "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" (*Girl*)
2. "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty" (*Matthew*)
3. "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (*Pharisee*)
4. "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (*Older Man*)
5. "Fairest Lord Jesus" (*Mary of Bethany*)

Voices of His Present

1. "Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus" (*Man*)
2. "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" (*Woman*)
3. "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"
(*Middle-aged Man*)
4. "More Love to Thee" (*Young Woman*)
"Hosanna to the Living Lord" (*Angel*)

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Voices of His Past

1. "O Living Bread From Heaven" (*Judas Iscariot*)
2. "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (*Malchus*)
3. "Jesus, I Come" (*James*)
4. "It Is Well With My Soul" (*Mary, Mother of Jesus*)
5. "Whiter Than Snow" (*Simon Peter*)

Voices of His Present

1. "Break Thou the Bread of Life" (*Pastor*)
2. "Let Us Break Bread Together" (*Choir Member*)
3. "According to Thy Gracious Word" (*Weightlifter*)
4. "All the Way My Savior Leads Me"
(*Middle-aged Woman*)
5. "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (*College Student*)

GOOD FRIDAY

Voices of His Past

1. "Were You There?" (*James, Brother of Jesus*)
2. "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (*Soldier*)
3. "Just As I Am" (*Thief*)
4. "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"
(*Mary Magdalene*)
5. "Rock of Ages" (*Moses*)

Voices of His Present

1. "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed" (*Woman*)
2. "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood" (*Man*)
3. "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" (*Teen Girl*)
4. "At Calvary" (*Older Man*)
5. "At the Cross" (*Older Child*)

EASTER SUNDAY

Voices of His Past

1. "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (*Joanna*)
2. "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"
(*Martha of Bethany*)
3. "The Day of Resurrection" (*Man*)
4. "Lift High the Cross" (*Simon the Zealot*)
5. "Christ Arose" (*Joseph of Arimathea*)

Voices of His Present

1. "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (*Young Man*)
2. "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" (*Older Man*)
3. "I Love to Tell the Story" (*Older Woman*)
4. "Crown Him With Many Crowns" (*Woman*)
5. "Jesus Loves Me" (*Young Girl*)

INTRODUCTION

For the hundreds of years since the first Passion play, drama and music have gone hand in hand during Holy Week. Through the dramatic/musical approach, worshipers get a little closer to understanding the suffering of Christ, or appreciating his glory. However, not all churches have the time, the people, or the resources to host a Passion play.

With this collection of monologs, your church can still combine music and drama and create an intensely worshipful, and personal, experience. Through the collection's twofold approach, you can either use the monologs that recreate the history of Holy Week — Christ's Triumphal Entry, Lord's Supper, betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection — or you can choose monologs set in the present day that apply the truths of history to today's circumstances. The categories are entitled *Voices of His Past* and *Voices of His Present*, respectively.

What makes this monolog collection unique, and gives it the flavor of a Passion play, are the hymns. Each monolog is given the title of the hymn. Each monolog is designed to emphasize or complement the words of its song. For optimum effect, the song should begin promptly as the monolog is completed. A soloist, choir, or the congregation may sing the song, depending on the wishes of your drama coordinator and choir director.

Since there are forty monologs, ten for each major day during Holy Week, your church can decide whether to perform the monologs for one chosen day, perform a few each day, or use the entire collection. Many of the monologs are also appropriate for Lenten worship.

However you use them, they are simple to stage, with a minimum of props, basic costumes, and no sets. Since the monologs are short, they can be quickly memorized. By using a podium, lectern, or one of the props with the script hidden behind it, they may also be read and still maintain their effectiveness.

The important consideration is that the flexibility of the collection allows your church to enjoy its own program. You decide how you will celebrate Christ's Passion. You decide how you will sing of your Redeemer.

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All Glory, Laud, and Honor

(Girl)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 1

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

COSTUME: Biblical robe and sandals

PROPS: Palm branches

GIRL: (*Waving palm branches overhead, looking off in the distance*)

Hosanna! Hosanna! (*As loudly as she can*) **Hosanna!**

(*Leaning toward audience*) **I just saw him. Did you?**

I was walking home from my aunt’s house. Mother had me take over some extra bedding. Aunt had some surprise Passover visitors and didn’t have enough blankets and sheets for them all. It was a chore, but with Passover coming, I love to be outside. Jerusalem gets so exciting this time of year.

Then I saw all the people. Crowds and crowds of people. It was like a parade!

They were waving palm branches, flowers, their cloaks, and anything else they could find. I wished I still had the blankets with me, but then a nice man handed me these. (*Waves palm branches again.*)

At first, I couldn’t see what the excitement was about. I heard the cries “Son of David” and “Messiah.” But I didn’t know it would be him. Jesus. The one we’d heard so much about. The prophet who even argues with the rulers!

Still, there he was. He rode on a donkey that seemed almost too small for him. But the beast didn’t seem to mind. When I saw his eyes, I decided that I wouldn’t either. There was such kindness there. And something else. Something I couldn’t understand. It was like he knew me.

(*Introspectively*) **And then I wondered if maybe it were**

1 true. Maybe he was the Son of God. (*Brightening*) But even
2 if he isn't, I love him. And I will keep praising him — even
3 if he can't hear me.

4 (*Leaving stage and waving branches*) **Hosanna!**

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Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

(*Matthew*)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 2

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Ride on, Ride On in Majesty”

COSTUME: Biblical robe, sandals, and beard

PROPS: None

MATTHEW: (*Stroking beard thoughtfully*) What a day that was! And what expectations we had!

We found the donkey — just like Jesus said. And when we began to enter Jerusalem, people came from everywhere. That wasn’t so unusual. People always arrived to hope for a miracle. But today, the hecklers and Pharisees didn’t seem to be around. Just throngs and throngs of people shouting praises to Christ. We knew then that his kingdom had come. We knew then that soon Jerusalem would see his glory.

(*Sadly*) We knew much. Everything except the truth. How many times had he told us he would die? Countless, it seems now. But on that day, we saw only his power. We saw only how the masses flocked to him. Surely only a few well-timed miracles were required. Then all of Jerusalem would be his.

What small things we longed for! How little we expected from him! We saw only the here and now; he saw all of eternity. He wasn’t content with restoring a city; he was working to restore souls. He was not an earthly messiah, but the Messiah who would reign as King of both heaven and earth.

Ride on! Ride on, my King!

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

(Pharisee)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 3

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”

COSTUME: Ornate biblical robe and sandals

PROPS: None

PHARISEE: I didn’t want to believe that he was the Messiah. I really didn’t. Accepting him as Messiah went against everything that I had understood from the Scriptures. Seriously, how could anyone call him a mighty conqueror or David’s shield? He was only a mild-mannered carpenter from Nazareth. But the more that Nicodemus told me about his conversations with Jesus, the more I saw the prophecies being fulfilled.

Today I watched his arrival into the city. Before I even saw him, I knew who was coming. The cries of the crowd told me that. But when I actually saw him, saw him riding on a donkey, I about fell over. The words of Zechariah rang in my ears. “See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9b).

I think it was in that moment that I fully believed. This Jesus was the Messiah promised. He was the long-awaited Son of David. And I wanted everyone to know. Oh, how I wished for something visible that would let everyone know who he was just by looking.

What I wouldn’t give for a crown to place on his holy head!

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

(Older Man)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 4

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

COSTUME: Tattered biblical robe and sandals

PROPS: Crutches

OLDER MAN: *(Holding loosely onto crutches, pointing with end of one crutch)* I sit over there — usually. It’s not too far from this gate. That way I get a fair share of traffic. There’s always people coming in and out. Enough of them are generous so that a beggar like me can get by.

When I heard the commotion, I was surprised. It was nearly Passover and all, I knew that, but even large crowds don’t generally make that much noise. So I edged my way over to the gate to see what there was to be seen.

I didn’t really expect that I’d see much. Just curiosity, you know? Few people acknowledge the presence of an old cripple. What I hoped for, more than anything, was that a few of the onlookers would notice me. Then I’d get a few more mites than I usually receive. That’s all. Whatever it was, I saw it as an occasion to make the begging easier.

But as I approached the crowd, I found a clear path right through the middle and hobbled toward the front. It was like I was meant to be there. Then the next thing I knew, I was looking into those eyes. They pulled at me and drew me to him.

Who was this man? The crowds called him the Son of David. The Messiah. Maybe so. But this is what I know. As he rode, he stretched out his hand to me. I could feel the power of that gentle movement surge through me. In that moment, I knew that whatever they called him, he was a servant of God. With this realization, I could feel my legs

1 **straightening. I could feel my strength returning.**

2 *(Lifting crutches overhead and walking Off-stage)* **O for a**
3 **thousand tongues to sing his praise!**

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Fairest Lord Jesus

(*Mary of Bethany*)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 5 **CATEGORY:** Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Fairest Lord Jesus” (or “Beautiful Savior”)

COSTUME: Biblical robe, headdress, and sandals **PROPS:** None

MARY OF BETHANY: (*Shyly*) I walked behind him that day. Far behind him. I could just barely make out the movement of his hair as the donkey carried him into Jerusalem. Once in a while, I would see one of his arms move toward the crowd. I am certain he was finding individuals to care for, even while the crowd praised him.

I have never seen anything more beautiful. I have never seen anyone being more beautiful than he was that day.

Martha, when I told her about it, said, “Mary, you didn’t even really see him that day. He was too far away. And even if you had, how could you possibly call him beautiful? He’s not even handsome. And men are not beautiful. That word’s for women.”

Martha’s older than me. And she runs our house. Often, she intimidates me. But I wouldn’t back down. “Maybe most men aren’t,” I said, “but he was. And is.”

Martha just shook her head at me and went back to planning dinner.

It had nothing to do with how he looked. Couldn’t she understand that? It was what I could see in him. How he accepted the praise and remained unchanged. The sorrows and sufferings of the people around him still touched him. He was riding into the city as its Lord and acting as its servant.

I have never seen anyone more fair, more beautiful, or more lovely than he was on that day. (*Pausing, trying to think of the right words*) He is my fairest Lord Jesus (or “my Beautiful Savior,” if using that version of the hymn).

Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus

(Man)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 6

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: Standard church podium

MAN: (*Leaning on podium, resting chin in hand*) Could I have been a disciple in those days? I often wonder. Would I have had what it took? Could I have loved and acknowledged Jesus publicly when so many of the people in authority hated the very mention of his name?

It’s the crowd of Palm Sunday that makes me wonder. I mean, look how enthusiastically they greeted Christ that afternoon. Four days later, many of them shouted, “Crucify him!” I wonder how many of those who changed their words still wished and hoped that Jesus would do something incredible. Maybe they prayed that he, like a genie, would wave his hand and make the entire Roman army disappear. Or maybe some of them had thoughts a little more biblical, but for the wrong time. Maybe they hoped the streets would suddenly turn to gold and all the world would be at peace.

Whatever the case, I don’t think they all changed their minds that quickly. They were acting out of fear, out of frustrated dreams, and out of selfishness. They wanted their own Jesus — not the one that God had given.

How often do we do that? More importantly, how often do I do that? Do I ever despise Jesus when I should praise him? When he is scourged by the multitudes of public opinion, do I stand fast like John, or do I pretend that I am in agreement with the crowd? And if the crowd praises his wonderful teaching, do I go beyond that and

1 praise the way he cleans out the temple?

2 Too often, I am just like the fickle crowd. But today,
3 today I vow to better serve my Lord — in the triumph of
4 his entrance, the baseness of his death, and the glory of
5 his resurrection. How many of you (*Sweeps hands across*
6 *audience*) will try to do the same?

7 Hail! All hail! The once despised, often still despised,
8 Jesus is here with us. (*Hands overhead*) Hail the Paschal
9 Lamb of God!

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1 **Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies**
2 *(Woman)*

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4 **DAY:** Palm Sunday — 75 **CATEGORY:** Voices of His Present6 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”7 **COSTUME:** None8 **PROPS:** Sunglasses

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10 **WOMAN:** When I think about Palm Sunday or Easter, I see
11 sunlight. It doesn’t matter what the weather actually is.
12 The truth of what we celebrate brightens my day.

13 When Jesus entered Jerusalem all those years ago, I
14 imagine the Mediterranean sun was shining in all its
15 radiance. It must have been a pleasantly warm day. One
16 where you could survive comfortably without a coat or a
17 cloak. But it must have also been dry and clear. The sun
18 cooperated to let as many people as possible witness his
19 entry into the city and throw their garments under his
20 feet. It had to. It was being called upon to reveal its
21 Creator. It needed to illuminate the King of Glory.

22 So today, I needn’t look outside my window. I know the
23 sun is shining. It is shining even here, in this building,
24 warming us to his presence. And, even better, it is shining
25 in your heart and mine to remind us of his love, his
26 radiance, and his power.

27 *(Donning sunglasses)* Shine on. It’s a perfect day.

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Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

(Middle-aged Man)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 8

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: None

MIDDLE-AGED MAN: In my younger days, like many of you, I served in the military. I was even assigned to Germany for a while. I loved life in Europe, but it was quite different from what I’d experienced in this country.

One day, I was driving between bases to take a small load of supplies to a new commander. I’d been to the other base before, and the fastest route was over two small highways. You had to go a couple of dozen kilometers out of your way to take the Autobahn. So there I was, driving a military car to another base. Smooth as silk. Until, much to my surprise, I saw brake lights in front of me. And in front of the stopped cars, I saw a flock of sheep. Sheep? On a highway? Yep. They were being directed to their spring pasture. Only thing is, they didn’t want to go. They wanted to stay where they were, even if no grass was left. And once they got moving, they wanted to graze on every single weed beside the road. And if one strayed off the path, at least another dozen followed him. They were silly animals.

Finally, the other cars and I got drafted to move the critters. We honked and steered behind them until they slowly moved forward. After about forty-five minutes, I got back on my way again. That day, it would’ve been faster to take the Autobahn. But how was I to know?

So what does that have to do with Palm Sunday? The

1 crowd. How many of them were sheep? How many of
2 them were as fickle as those creatures I followed that
3 day? How many weren't really following Christ — just
4 the person in front of them?

5 In Isaiah, it says we are all like sheep. Jesus knew the
6 crowd's weaknesses, just as he knows our weaknesses
7 today. And being a knowing and gentle shepherd, he
8 wept as he entered Jerusalem that day. Even some that
9 were his would end up following a stray sheep when the
10 path up to Calvary became too difficult.

11 He knows we are sheep. Silly sheep. And still he leads
12 us with love and patience — whether we are praising
13 his triumph or cowering in his death.

14 Savior, like a shepherd lead us.
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More Love to Thee

(*Young Woman*)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 9

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “More Love to Thee”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: None

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YOUNG WOMAN: (*Praying, head bowed, eyes closed*) Oh Lord, to remember you and this day as you would have me do. I haven’t known your love for long. I am so uncertain as how to celebrate your entry into Jerusalem. Do I remember you as the King coming into your city? Or do I remember you as the Servant heading for the cross? Please give me guidance, Lord, so I know best how to honor you and love you. Amen.

(*Opening eyes, sees audience, is startled.*) Oh! I didn’t know you were here. I am so sorry. I thought I was early — the first one in the church. I wanted a chance to pray before the worship started. You see, today is Palm Sunday. (*Self-consciously*) But you know that. It’s just that I didn’t grow up going to church. I’m not sure what to do today. I know today is meant to honor Jesus. I know it’s meant to celebrate an important day in his ministry. But how am I supposed to go about it? Just waving a palm branch doesn’t seem to be enough.

Maybe it’s because my faith is still so new. I want every act of worship to show Jesus how much I love him. But how do I do that today?

(*Quickly*) You don’t have to answer. It’s probably different for you anyway. It’s probably different for everyone. We are all individuals. Just like everyone in the crowd that day was an individual. Some were there to love Jesus. Some were there to show their support.

1 Some were there because they wanted to love Jesus, but
2 didn't know how. And some were there because they
3 wanted Jesus to love and serve their own desires. Some
4 good, well-meaning people, some not-so-good. But they
5 were all there, honoring Jesus.

6 And me? I want to love him. I want to love him more
7 each day. (*Dropping to one knee, lifting face to*
8 *ceiling/heaven*) This is my earnest plea: more love, O
9 Christ, to thee.

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Hosanna to the Living Lord

(Angel)

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DAY: Palm Sunday — 10

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Hosanna to the Living Lord”

COSTUME: Dressed all in white

PROPS: None

ANGEL: The throngs in Jerusalem weren’t the only ones singing today. We — myself and two other angels — were in charge of the heavenly chorus. If anything, we sang louder and more joyfully than we did those years ago in Bethlehem. *(Lifting arms overhead)* Soon, we knew, the Son of God would reign!

Unlike some of the earthly worshipers, we had no doubts who Jesus Christ was. We had known from the moment Mary agreed to God’s plan. But knowing and understanding are not the same. God living with mankind as a human male. We found it glorious and amazing.

We knew, too, that his arrival in Jerusalem spoke of prophecies fulfilled. As we sang, we longed to look into the future. If only we could’ve seen what God had planned next. What wonders would his Son carry out? What did the Trinity have planned for the people of God?

We imagined many things that day, each more wonderful than the next. But never did we imagine the mysteries of grace and salvation! God astounds the angels as he joins the affairs of men. King of Kings, we offer you our praise!

Hosanna, Lord!

O Living Bread From Heaven

(Judas Iscariot)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 1

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “O Living Bread From Heaven”

COSTUME: Biblical robe and sandals

PROPS: Silver pieces and bag

JUDAS ISCARIOT: *(Running coins through his fingers)* I thank you, exalted temple leaders, for this contribution to my cause. I tell you, after what he said tonight, it made my decision a lot easier.

I figured we’d have a normal Passover meal. You know, Moses, the escape from Egypt, and all that. But no! Sure, we said all those words. He didn’t forsake the actual ceremony. He just added to it.

And what he added! About a year ago he made this claim that he was the Bread of Life. At the time, I thought, whatever. As long as he gets the Romans out of Judah and I make my profit, who cares? He brought that up again tonight. Said he was the Bread of Life broken for us. And he implied that the Passover bread told of him. As you know, excellent ones, the Passover has nothing to do with the promises of the Messiah. It is merely a remembrance. A tradition of the law of our people.

Anyway, he went on to say that the wine represented his blood, and that when his blood was shed, it would forgive our sins. Can you, exalted leaders, believe this audacity?

(Lifts bag and jingles it.) Thank you, honored ones, for this donation. *(Starts to leave, then pauses.)* Remember, he to whom I give the kiss of brotherhood is Jesus. I think it is fit payment for a prophet who has turned his back on the real needs of the people.

Living bread from heaven, indeed!

Go to Dark Gethsemane

(Malchus)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 2

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Go to Dark Gethsemane”

COSTUME: Biblical servant tunic (mid-thigh, white or off-white)

PROPS: None

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MALCHUS: My master had definite opinions about the one called Jesus, or the Christ. Basically, he hated him. Since the moment Jesus came on the scene, I heard him talk about this Nazarene with scorn and fury. And as my master was a leader in the temple, I assumed that he knew what he was talking about. So when he asked me to accompany him that night, I went eagerly. After learning of Jesus for three years, I was ready to get my hands on that blasphemer. He decidedly deserved whatever he had coming.

Son of God, indeed!

But I had never seen him. Or heard him. Not up close. Then one of our company asked him if he were indeed the Christ. He replied, “I am he.” A simple, albeit blasphemous, answer to a simple question. But seconds later, I found myself face down on the ground. Prostrate, as if I were worshipping him. For a moment, I wondered what I had tripped over. That was until I noticed that all of us were down.

My master, visibly offended by his predicament, began to struggle to his feet first. As a good servant, I could not let him do it on his own. I rose quickly to help him up. That’s when it happened. One of his followers lunged at me. I noticed the blood before I realized what had happened. My ear lay on the ground.

But the one my master hated rebuked him. “Put away

1 your sword,” he said. Then he picked up my ear,
2 cleaned it, and put it back on my head. As if I were a
3 building which could be so easily reassembled!

4 As my master led his enemy away, I watched this
5 Jesus in amazement. And at that moment, I began to
6 wonder. Had my master’s hatred blinded him to the
7 truth? Was this indeed the Son of God?

8 I still don’t know. But I know my mind keeps pulling
9 me back to that night. Over and over, I find my thoughts
10 heading to dark Gethsemane.

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Jesus, I Come

(James)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 3

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Jesus, I Come”

COSTUME: Biblical robe and sandals

PROPS: None

JAMES: What did I do that night? Sleep when I was supposed to stay awake. Run when I was supposed to stand firm. Me. Can you believe it? One of the Twelve. One of those he had chosen personally three years before. One of those who had walked with him, talked with him, and who had witnessed most of his miracles. Can I keep awake when he asks me to? No. Do I have the fortitude to stay near him when the religious leaders capture him? No. Do I even have Peter’s misguided audacity to draw a sword? No. I run. I hide.

I could pummel myself a thousand times for how I behaved that night. But what good would it do? He was God. *(Corrects himself.)* Is God. He knew what would happen. He knew what I would do. And still ... *(Gazes into the distance.)* And still he took me with him so that I could see those moments — and tell others of them.

If that night had been the end, I don’t know what I would’ve done. But, praise God, it was not! He came out of the tomb. He came back to us, holy and righteous and alive.

That night, I ran. I fled for my life. But no longer. Jesus is my life. And whatever he asks of me, wherever he calls me, that is what I will do and where I will go.

Jesus! I come. I come to thee.

It Is Well With My Soul

(Mary, Mother of Jesus)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 4

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “It Is Well With My Soul”

COSTUME: Biblical robe

PROPS: None

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS: I heard he was captured tonight by the temple authorities. *(Sighs and wipes eyes.)* The very people I thought would recognize him and who he was. They never wanted a thing to do with him. And I gradually figured out why. I’ve seen the fear on their faces. The fear that they gloss over with pride and self-righteousness. Every time they came to challenge him, the fear was there. They were afraid that he’d change their status quo.

Of course he would! That’s what he does. Nearly thirty-four years ago, he turned my life upside down. He chose me to be his mother. But I chose and I choose him to be my Savior. Even tonight, when things look bleak, when I grieve to think of what my son might suffer, I know it will be well. I don’t know when, and I may not understand how, but I know that God never loses control. He has let this moment happen for a purpose.

(Begins to cry again. Suppresses tears.) I do not want to see him suffer. But I will be there for him. And I know it will pass. Like all moments of despair and pain, it will end. God is in control of it all. Happen what may, it will be for God’s glory. And knowing that, it will be well. *(Crying and not able to stop it)* Because of love, it is well with my soul.

Whiter Than Snow

(Simon Peter)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 5

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Whiter Than Snow”

COSTUME: Biblical robe

PROPS: None

SIMON PETER: I didn’t want him to serve me. How could I? Want my Lord to wait on me like a common slave? He was the Messiah. The Holy One. The Son of David. Hadn’t I confessed him to be the Christ? Hadn’t I seen him glorified on the mountain with Moses and Elijah? Hadn’t I followed him and called him my master and teacher for three years? I respected him. I honored him. And as God, I worshiped him. He was so much greater than I. How could I let him serve me? Of course, I argued against it. (*Drops shoulders and looks ashamed.*) I have never been known to hold my tongue.

I should have known that he was teaching us something again — a twofold lesson. One, that only he could truly clean me. And two, that his disciples needed to serve each other. And serve each other willingly, instead of worrying about who would be greatest in heaven.

I am a slow learner. I admit it. But eventually, the truths of that night registered in my soul. As I accepted them, I began to feel closer to him and cleaned of my stubborn faults. He has, and he continues to, wash me whiter than snow.

Break Thou the Bread of Life

(Pastor)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 6

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Break Thou the Bread of Life”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: Communion/Lord’s Supper bread

PASTOR: *(With reverence)* All those years ago, in the quiet of an upper room, Jesus broke the Passover bread. Then he gave it to his disciples and they ate it.

On the surface, there was nothing unusual about what happened. The ceremony required that the bread be broken. But this time, Jesus explained why the bread was broken. He, the true Bread of Life, would soon be broken for us.

He had broken bread in front of them many times before. It was a common practice to break bread as the meal began. But with Christ, it was more than habit or culture. For our Savior, it demonstrated his reliance on God’s provision. Remember the feeding of the five thousand? He gave thanks, he broke the bread, and the miracle began.

But here, on the last evening before the cross, Jesus told them that God was going to provide in a way they could not yet imagine. He was not going to provide bread for the body, but bread to sustain the soul.

He, the Bread of Life, would be broken. He, the way, the truth, and the life, would be given for us, and the fetters of sin would fall.

(Raising bread and breaking it) Let’s all bless that bread today!

Let Us Break Bread Together

(Choir Member)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 7

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Let Us Break Bread Together” (spiritual)

COSTUME: Traditional choir attire

PROPS: None

CHOIR MEMBER: (*Humming song softly as approaching stage/ front of church*) There are many things we do privately to honor God. We can worship him as we watch the sunrise. We can sing his praises in the shower. We can pray in our closet or in the car.

But when it comes to observing what he demonstrated to his disciples that night, fellowshiping as they did in that upper room, we must come together. We must, as a group, as a church, as a body of believers, do this in remembrance of him. It is, in more than one sense, the mystery of Communion. In coming together, we see more clearly how we belong to him. We also see that without his body broken upon the cross for us, there would be no body of Christ on earth — no church as we know it.

On that last evening of life as we understand life, he prayed for us. “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23b). He prayed for our true communion, whether we are assembled — like tonight — or individually, each seeing his glory in the sunrise.

Tonight, we take another step toward true fellowship. Tonight, we are one body belonging to Jesus. Let all who believe partake. Let us break bread together on our knees. (*Begins singing and choir follows.*)

According to Thy Gracious Word
(Weightlifter)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 8 **CATEGORY:** Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “According to Thy Gracious Word”

COSTUME: T-shirt and sweats **PROPS:** Dumbbell optional

WEIGHTLIFTER: I could have been any one of a number of people that day. Not John — he was too honorable. Not Judas — he had no love for Jesus. But just about anyone else.

I am weak. That may be hard for you to believe when looking at these muscles, (*Flexes bicep, with or without weight*) but it’s true. That’s part of being human. We have a hard time being strong for anyone or any purpose outside of ourselves.

I would love to say otherwise, but I could’ve been Peter denying Christ. I could’ve been the thief — jeering at Christ until I realized that he was my only hope. I could’ve been the fickle crowd — knowing that I should stand for him and the truth, but afraid that I, too, might get crucified if I did. Any of these people might’ve been me.

But you know what? Jesus still loved them — in spite of their weaknesses. And he still loves me. While on the cross, his love did not change. He knew their weakness, their human frailty, just as he knows mine. And all their strengths pale in comparison to his love. All their abilities and desires to do good falter in the face of their human nature.

And still, he paid the price for them — and for me. And, miracle of miracles, when my mind and memory flee as I feel the brief sting of death, he will remember me in his kingdom of heaven and use his power of forgiveness to call me to him.

All the Way My Savior Leads Me
(Middle-aged Woman)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 9

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “All the Way My Savior Leads Me”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: Box of tissues

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN: Life hasn’t been the best lately.
(Sniffing. Blows nose.)

Some of you know what’s gone on with our family. Bits and pieces anyway. But today, when I think about Jesus in the garden, I feel like I need to tell the whole story.

Last year, my Harry was downsized out of his job. After twenty-four years! They didn’t even give him the extra year of credit so that he could get his retirement. But we kept doing OK. The house, thank the Lord, was paid for. Harry got odd jobs to pay most of the bills we did have. Friends and family, like many of you, took care of the rest. It wasn’t easy, but God provided.

Then Harry Jr. took it into his head to support us. He began a part-time job after school and gave us the money. I won’t say it didn’t help, but we were doing OK without it. He was trying so hard to make things like they were before. And that job didn’t make enough to do that. So he began to find other ways to make money. Illegal ways. Ways he must’ve justified to himself because we needed the money. *(Tears start.)* Needed the money? We needed him. We needed to stick together as a family.

Last month, things fell apart for our boy. He almost got caught. He felt bad about letting us down. He felt bad about letting the church down. He felt like he had

1 sinned so much, God would never love him again. He
2 convinced himself that we'd all be better off without
3 him. My son, my only son!

4 *(Continues speaking between sobs.)* Through all this,
5 Jesus has been faithful. I know he is with me. He
6 endured much worse in the garden, let alone the cross.
7 And even if my steps falter now, I know my Savior loves
8 me — just as he loves my son. And if I keep to Jesus'
9 leading, God's Son, his only Son, someday our family
10 will look at his face together.

11 *(Whispers with hope.)* Together!

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Sweet Hour of Prayer

(College Student)

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DAY: Maundy Thursday — 10

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Sweet Hour of Prayer”

COSTUME: None

PROPS: None

COLLEGE STUDENT: *(Male or female)* I love Jesus. Every day that I’m away from home, dealing with new circumstances, people, and difficulties, I try to depend solely on him. I know the battles would be easier if I prayed regularly — so I try to. But I find it difficult to pray, and pray seriously, on a regular basis. I know it’s what I need, but I can’t do it. Mealtimes and bedtimes are easy and predictable. But serious prayer is hard to do.

Today, when I think about Jesus and his time of prayer in Gethsemane, I feel as embarrassed as Peter, James, and John did when Christ woke them up. He’s not asking me to sweat blood as he did. He’s only asking me to keep watch and pray. Serious prayer that honors him and helps me through the day-to-day stuff that everyone has to deal with.

I’m not saying that I’ll change overnight, but I’m going to try. Maybe if I make serious prayer as predictable as meals, I’ll give it the priority it deserves. Then I’ll be able to rejoice with the hymn writer and find my prayer time sweet and precious. Something I want to do. Someplace I want to be. *(Starts to sing song softly while walking Off-stage.)*

Were You There? (James, Brother of Jesus)

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DAY: Good Friday — 1

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Were You There?”

COSTUME: Biblical robe

PROPS: None

JAMES, BROTHER OF JESUS: *(With humility)* I brought Mother to that accursed hill. I did. But nobody knew it. I wasn’t about to stand close enough to get recognized. Identify with him? Are you kidding? I hoped and prayed that no one in the crowd knew that I was related to him.

Now, so many years later, I look back on that day in shame. And I wonder how many other people have had the same reaction. How many of us hid in the crowd? There were throngs of people on Golgotha that day. Some were skeptics like me, but I wonder how many had followed him until that moment. Followed him avidly. All the way until that last moment. All I know is, from where I stood, I couldn’t see a single member of the Twelve except John. He stood with Mother. A couple of women stood near the cross, too, but the throngs who clung to his words? I could tell no difference between his followers and his enemies as I watched the crowd.

How many, having hindsight to guide them, would’ve acted differently on that day? I know I would have. Maybe, just maybe, if I had stood near Mother, Jesus wouldn’t have needed to entrust her care to John.

I was there. Were you?

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
(Soldier)

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DAY: Good Friday — 2

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

COSTUME: Roman-style belted robe, sandals, and
sword/scabbard

PROPS: None

SOLDIER: I’ve told it so many times. It still doesn’t seem believable. If I hadn’t lived it, I would’ve called it a tall tale.

It was an assigned duty. Not one that I would’ve chosen, but my brother got on the wrong side of the proconsul. And in this army, anyone in the family pays for, to some degree, the sins of a relative. But so much for my problems.

I was one of the guards on crucifixion duty that day. Three executions. Nothing new. Sometimes we had more, sometimes we had less. If you could get past the gruesome nature of the death, it was quite boring, really. We just waited for the prisoners to die. If it took too long, one of us had to break their legs.

I had lost the lot that day, so I would break the legs of the man on the middle cross. The one called Jesus. That was an odd one. We generally didn’t crucify for blasphemy. Like we cared about the Jews’ God? I don’t think so.

When we got to the hill, he was bleeding extensively from the beatings, whippings, and floggings he had received. Even so, I had never seen anyone willingly take his place on the cross. Jesus actually seemed to be waiting for us to put the nails in.

And raised up, he took on a new authority. Certainly

1 he was sad, but the grief wasn't about losing his own
2 life. It was about us. And about missing his Father. It
3 was so different than any other death I had watched.

4 That was even before the darkness, the earthquakes,
5 and all the rest. See, it seems like a tall tale.

6 Then, with a crack of thunder, he cried out, "Into
7 your hands I commit my spirit!" (Luke 23:46) and
8 collapsed. I thought he had fainted. But a test revealed
9 that he was already dead. I didn't need to do my duty
10 that day.

11 There was no need for me to stay on that hill until
12 they took the body away. My duty was done when he
13 died. But I couldn't tear myself away. I stared at the
14 man. And as I read the sign above the cross, I knew it to
15 be true. Partially true, anyway.

16 Because this wasn't just the King of the Jews. This
17 was the King of all. The King of Glory.

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Just As I Am

(Thief)

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DAY: Good Friday — 2

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Just As I Am”

COSTUME: Ragged robe, gray face and body paint to look ghostly

PROPS: None

THIEF: Did I want to go to a cross? Who’s kidding who?

Of course I didn’t. All my life, all my professional life, that is, I lived in fear of getting caught. I knew if my means of earning a living were proven true, I would be killed. And who in their right mind wants to die? Especially when there’s so much loot to gain?

But I did get caught. I knew I shouldn’t have tried to rob that Pharisee. He was too strong and shrewd. But the wealth he possessed lured me in. Or rather, my own greed did. And when they nailed me to that cross, I cursed the soldiers and spat in their faces. But that was just a front. I knew I was getting what I deserved. I had broken both Jewish and Roman law.

Two other guys were getting hung up that day. One guy looked and acted pretty much like me. The other was different. Really different. He took the abuse patiently, quietly. It was almost as if he were a parent dealing with a tantrum that would soon subside. He didn’t scream when the nails hit him. He never cursed the pain. Not once. Not even one of the legal oaths.

Then, once up on the cross, he started quoting from the scrolls. I had never paid much attention when I went to the temple, but any Jew worth his salt knows the sound of those words. Knows the tone of the Scriptures. Even through his pain, I heard more authority in his voice than I’d ever heard from a rabbi.

1 But when he asked God to forgive us, all of us who
2 were present to see his suffering, that's when I broke. I
3 wasn't thinking of others in my pain. I was only
4 thinking of myself. He could think beyond the moment.
5 He could love while he died. Something cracked inside
6 me. The hard shell fell apart and I knew that the stories
7 were true. This was the Messiah.

8 So I asked for him to remember me. He knew what I
9 meant in my heart. I was sorry, so sorry for the life I had
10 led. I wished I could've lived in such a way that he
11 would've approved. But at least I died in his peace,
12 testifying to his power.

13 Because he took me, just as I was. He promised me
14 paradise, just as I am.

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There Is a Green Hill Far Away

(Mary Magdalene)

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DAY: Good Friday — 4

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “There Is a Green Hill Far Away”

COSTUME: Biblical robe

PROPS: None

MARY MAGDALENE: (*Dreamily*) It could have been a beautiful place.

Just outside Jerusalem’s city walls, the hills seem a lot greener. It could be because there are more open spaces. Even on that awful hill, if you didn’t see its summit and you didn’t know what it was for, you could imagine shepherds leading the sheep to pasture. Or children playing and running on the bare slopes.

But the years of blood destroyed its potential beauty. And today, the memory of his blood and pain washes my eyes in grief. Today, on the anniversary of his death, it’s hard to keep from crying. Especially when I imagine looking upon that hill. What a horror. The place of the skull.

(*Wiping eyes with the back of her hand*) Still, if I remember the time since his death and all that has happened, I might truly call it a beautiful place. Today, when I cannot return to Jerusalem because of my testimony, I remember that place fondly. Because on that green hill, love unlocked the gate of heaven. And now, someday, maybe even someday soon ... I’ll join him there.

Rock of Ages

(Moses)

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DAY: Good Friday — 5

CATEGORY: Voices of His Past

SONG TIE-IN: “Rock of Ages”

COSTUME: Biblical robe

PROPS: Staff

MOSES: Do I remember the rock? Of course I do. Twice it came when we were thirsty. Both times, it was faithful and responded just as God said it would. The first time, I also was obedient. *(Lifts staff and strikes floor or podium once.)* The second time, however, I let my anger at the people steer me into sin. *(Hits floor or podium twice with staff when says the word “twice.”)* That day, I struck the rock twice, instead of speaking to it as I was told to do.

I had walked with God long enough to know that the punishment was just. I would not enter the promised land. I had abused the rock. Not merely a random stone. His rock. The rock eternal. The rock of Israel.

From the seat of Abraham, I watched events unfold these past three years. The Lamb, the promised Lamb, had come into his own. Not Lamb alone, but also the rock. His rock. The mighty cornerstone.

And today, I saw what my extra blows did. I may as well have been the soldier who stuck the sword in his side. I did as much damage as he did.

I know, though, that he forgave me long ago. His wounds of today cleansed me years before they flowed. Time is no barrier to his love and power. Oh Christ, you are my Rock of all the ages! His Rock!

Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed

(*Woman*)

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DAY: Good Friday — 6

CATEGORY: Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed”

COSTUME: Sunglasses, wig, hat, shawl — dressed to conceal identity

PROPS: None

WOMAN: I’ve heard lots of you talking today about what Good Friday means to you. I’ve heard the Bible account, too. If I were to tell the truth, it didn’t mean much to me. I don’t know why I came in here in the first place. All I can figure out now is that God had a reason. Somehow, he convinced me that I needed to be here. I thought I was just reliving memories.

You see, I’ve gone to church on and off throughout my life. Mostly off. But I was raised in a church very much like this one. So I know all the routines. And when the people were called to share in the bread and the cup, I participated. I didn’t really believe in what I was doing. But I knew what to say. I knew what to do. I could act as Christian as any of you.

Then the server said to me (*Or “pastor said”*), “The blood of Christ shed for you.” They always say that. I’d heard it before. I was even expecting it. But today, something in the voice or in the eyes of the server drove the words home as quickly as a hammer pounding a nail into wood. For me! That blood was shed for me! Even though I didn’t believe, he still died. Even though I ignored him and what he stood for, he still died for me. What he did for others did not matter. I suddenly knew that he had hung on that cross for me.

Whether I accepted him or not, he was my Savior.

1 **Whether I loved him or not, he was my God. Whatever**
2 **my reaction, he died, he shed his blood, for me.**

3 *(Quietly) And it is a debt I can never repay. (Walks off,*
4 *crying.)*

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There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood

(Man)

DAY: Good Friday — 7 **CATEGORY:** Voices of His Present

SONG TIE-IN: “There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood”

COSTUME: Suit and tie **PROPS:** Pulpit

MAN: It wasn’t all that long ago that I stood up here and asked to join your church. (*Corrects himself.*) Our church. What a day! What a memory! (*Looking around*) I’m sure many of you remember it as well as I do.

But what you don’t know is the inside story. The events as they occurred within my heart and my head. The thoughts I had that day as our pastor preached. The events that made it appropriate for me to come and speak to you on this Good Friday. More than appropriate. The events made it necessary.

(*Places hand on pulpit reverently.*) As I listened to the words from this pulpit about Jesus’ sacrifice for me, I could suddenly see it. For the first time in my life, I could visualize what had happened. There, in front of me, Jesus was stretched out on the cross in agony. “Forgive him,” he said to God, “for he knows not what he does.” He was talking about me, folks! I knew then — inside, not just intellectually — that Jesus died for me.

But it didn’t end there. As I watched, he surrendered his spirit to the Father. Then a centurion stuck a spear in his side. The blood and water poured from the wound. First, it was like a normal wound. Then it gushed like a river. Soon, the blood and water swirled around me, bubbling like a fountain. In its tide, I could see the filth of sin being pulled away from me. And from heaven, I heard his voice say, “For you, (*Insert own name*), I did this for you.”

So you see, I couldn’t avoid joining any longer. I knew the truth. I had been plunged into the fountain.



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I WILL SING OF MY REDEEMER

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