

SUN DAY

by Lawrence H. Balleine



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Sun Day

A sunrise service of dialogues,
monologues and poetry

by Lawrence H. Balleine

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Narrator

Mary

Salome

Pontius Pilate

Pilate's wife

John

James

Simon Peter

Young Man

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Set

Place a rising sun (made of translucent fabric) in a visible location along the back wall of the chancel. The sun may be constructed by attaching material to a large circular ring, such as a hula hoop. It may be lighted from the back so it has a “glowing” effect. The sanctuary should have minimal lighting.

Props

Jars of spices for Mary and Salome.

Costuming

With the exception of the Narrator, all cast members are to be appropriately costumed in biblical robes.

Length of Drama

Approximately 25 minutes (40-45 if Communion is included).

Preliminary Notes

The cast should be seated in the chancel — off to the left or right. Following the opening parts of the worship service, including song and prayer, the Narrator proceeds to the pulpit. The song at the opening of the service should be “pre-Resurrection,” since the empty tomb has not yet been discovered. The congregation should be encouraged to join in all the songs that are a part of the drama. It is helpful if their words are printed in the worship bulletin.

1 *(NARRATOR proceeds to the pulpit.)*

2 **NARRATOR:** It was the break of day following the Passover
3 festival years ago in Jerusalem. At that moment,
4 nobody — nobody knew it yet, but it would be a day that
5 changed the course of history.

6

7 **SONG — Verse 1 of “Morning Has Broken”**

8

9 **NARRATOR:** Now that the Sabbath was over Mary and
10 Salome arose early, and leaving their companions,
11 departed for the tomb of their friend Jesus, who had
12 been crucified and buried on Friday. They took with
13 them spices, for they sought to anoint the body of Jesus.
14 *(MARY and SALOME [carrying jars of spices] step down from*
15 *the chancel, walk down the main aisle of the sanctuary, and*
16 *exit through the sanctuary doors.)*

17 Meanwhile, on the other side of town, there’s activity
18 in the residence of the Roman governor, Pontius
19 Pilate — the one who had been assigned to the
20 Palestine province. He also arose early. His wife was
21 awakened by his restlessness. *(The NARRATOR returns to*
22 *his/her seat while PONTIUS PILATE and PILATE’s WIFE*
23 *move from their seats on the side of the chancel and assume a*
24 *visible position in the center of the chancel)*

25 **PILATE’S WIFE:** Why don’t you come back to bed? It’s too
26 early for you to get up.

27 **PONTIUS PILATE:** It’s useless for me to stay in bed. I’ve
28 hardly slept a wink for the past two nights. Ever since I
29 gave the OK for the execution of Jesus of Nazareth —
30 the one they call “king of the Jews” — I have not been
31 able to sleep. I have sentenced all kinds of criminals
32 and have ordered the execution of many, but never
33 have I been bothered like this. I feel I may have sent an
34 innocent man to death. And even though I washed my
35 hands of it, saying his death was not my fault, I wonder

1 now if I should have stopped it.

2 **PILATE'S WIFE:** Stop your fretting! It's over and done with.

3 Come back to bed. (*PONTIUS PILATE and PILATE's WIFE*
4 *return to their seats.*)

5

6 **SONG — “For Pilate Had Been Weak and Scared”**

7 (*Sung to the tune of “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee.” Lyrics*
8 *by L. H. Balleine.*)

9

10 **For Pilate had been weak and scared**

11 **And gave in to the crowd.**

12 **“Kill him! Kill him! Put him to death!”**

13 **Is what they called out loud.**

14

15 **He felt he had no other choice**

16 **And met their cruel demands,**

17 **So now he is a restless soul**

18 **Who does not understand.**

19

20 (*JOHN proceeds to the lectern or pulpit.*)

21 **JOHN:** I am John, one of the twelve — or should I say
22 eleven? Judas is no longer with us.

23 I was afraid it was coming to this: Jesus' crucifixion,

24 that is. There were just too many who were turning

25 against him. First it was the scribes and Pharisees.

26 They were so threatened by his teachings and his

27 actions. He showed no partiality. He made everyone

28 feel that they were important. The outsiders became

29 insiders. And when he had to make a choice between

30 what our old law said and what he felt was a more

31 compassionate way of doing things, he always chose

32 compassion — and this got him into all kinds of trouble

33 with our religious authorities.

34 But the common people loved Jesus' teachings. He

35 lifted them up. He made them feel valuable. And he

1 assured them that God cared about all his children.

2 We all thought Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.
3 When he rode into Jerusalem last Sunday on the back
4 of that borrowed donkey, the crowds assumed he was
5 about to rally us all into routing the Romans from our
6 homeland and that the kingdom would be re-
7 established like it was under King David. We even cried
8 out, “Hosanna! Blessed is this one who comes in the
9 name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom of our
10 forefather David that is coming.” Some of us who were
11 closest to him thought the same thing. But obviously,
12 this didn’t happen.

13 As the week wore on, even the crowds who had
14 cheered Jesus on Sunday were jeering him by Friday;
15 and they yelled out that he should be crucified.

16 I don’t understand it all.

17 I do know, however, that I was honored to be asked,
18 along with Peter, to make the necessary preparations
19 in a large upper room for the Passover supper. This
20 occurred on Thursday night and actually became his
21 “Last Supper,” for he was arrested in the garden shortly
22 after we left the upper room.

23 Whatever happens, I will always remember that last
24 meal we shared with Jesus. Yes, I got to sit next to him.
25 But before we ate, he taught us the importance of
26 humility and service — not so much with his words, but
27 by demonstrating it. You see, he washed our feet.
28 Servants always take care of this task. But he did it!
29 Most of all, he reminded us to love one another, for he
30 said, “It is by demonstrating love — self-giving love —
31 that people will know that we are his followers.”

32 And then, while we were eating, he took the bread
33 and the cup, and lifting them up, offered some words
34 that neither I nor the rest of us who were with him in
35 the upper room will ever forget. Upon breaking the

1 bread, he said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this
 2 in remembrance of me.” And then holding the cup
 3 before us, he announced, “This cup is the new covenant
 4 in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in
 5 remembrance of me.” (*If Communion is to be celebrated, the*
 6 *PASTOR may come forward and assume his/her position at*
 7 *the Communion table as JOHN says: “And then, while we were*
 8 *eating ... ” from the previous narration. The PASTOR will then*
 9 *break the bread and hold up the cup at the appropriate time*
 10 *during JOHN’s narration. At the completion of JOHN’s above*
 11 *narration, JOHN is seated. Holy Communion then continues*
 12 *using an appropriate liturgy. At the completion of the*
 13 *sacrament, the PASTOR returns to his/her place, JOHN*
 14 *returns to the lectern or pulpit, and the YOUNG MAN*
 15 *discreetly leaves his seat and exits, joining MARY and*
 16 *SALOME out of sight) Then we sang a hymn and went out*
 17 *to the Mount of Olives to a garden called Gethsemane.*
 18 *(JOHN returns to his seat.)*

19

20 **SONG — Verse 1 of “Go to Dark Gethsemane”**

21

22 (*JAMES proceeds to the lectern or pulpit.*)

23 **JAMES:** Jesus took me, yes me, along with Peter and John a
 24 little deeper into the garden — away from the others.
 25 And stepping a few feet from us, he fell to his knees,
 26 praying to God that if at all possible, the cup of
 27 suffering might be removed from him.

28 But then he offered to God the words I will always
 29 remember: “But not my will, O Lord, but thine be done.”

30 I don’t know how long he prayed because when he
 31 came back to us, we had drifted off to sleep. He prayed
 32 a second and a third time, and each time he came back
 33 to find us sleeping. I should have been honored to go
 34 with Jesus and Peter and John, but instead, I couldn’t
 35 even keep my eyes open. (*JAMES returns to his seat.*)

1 SONG — Verse 2 of “Go to Dark Gethsemane,”

2

3 *(SIMON PETER proceeds to the lectern or pulpit.)*

4 SIMON PETER: James worried about falling asleep when
5 we were with Jesus, but certainly mine is the much
6 greater sin. Not only did I fall asleep too along with
7 James and John, I denied him. Yes, I denied any
8 acquaintance with Jesus.

9 You see, as soon as he finished praying in the Garden,
10 the temple guards came to arrest him. I was ready to
11 fight, but Jesus told me to put away my sword. They
12 hauled Jesus off to the courtyard of the high priest, but
13 we all fled into the darkness.

14 Then I remembered what I had promised my Lord
15 earlier in the evening — that I would never forsake him.
16 So I circled around and joined the crowd in the
17 courtyard, and then and there it happened: I was
18 warming myself by the fire and a servant girl
19 approaches me and points at me, and announces: “This
20 man was with Jesus.”

21 I responded, “Woman, I do not know him.”

22 Soon someone else said, “You are one of Jesus’
23 followers.”

24 Again I lied through my teeth, saying I didn’t know
25 him. And then about an hour later, a third person said
26 that I was with Jesus, to which I replied, “Man, you
27 don’t know what you are talking about!”

28 Just then — as I made my third denial — the rooster
29 crowed and the Lord turned toward me, and his eyes
30 met mine. I knew that he was aware of what I had done,
31 and so my last memory of Jesus is of his eyes meeting
32 mine — not with anger, but with deep disappointment.

33 Some time back he had called me Peter — the Rock.
34 Yet this strong “Rock” crumbled under the pressure.
35 When the going got rough — when I found myself out of

1 my comfort zone — it was easy to deny him, especially if it
2 meant saving my own neck. Does that ever happen to you?

3 I am so ashamed; so filled with guilt and remorse. Will he
4 ever forgive me? Can I ever forgive myself? (*SIMON PETER*
5 *returns to his seat.*)

6

7 **SONG — Verse 2 of “Ah, Holy Jesus”**

8

9 (*NARRATOR proceeds to the pulpit.*)

10 **NARRATOR:** Now the women who had left earlier to anoint the
11 body of Jesus were drawing closer to his tomb. As they
12 approached it, they were saying to each other:

13 **MARY:** (*From Off-stage*) Who will roll away the stone for us from
14 the entrance of the tomb?

15 **SALOME:** (*From Off-stage*) I don’t know, Mary. It’s a very large
16 stone.

17 **NARRATOR:** And looking up, they saw that the stone had been
18 rolled back. It was very large. And entering the tomb, they
19 saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a
20 white robe. And they were alarmed. And he said to them ...

21 **YOUNG MAN:** (*From Off-stage*) Do not be alarmed. You seek
22 Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here; he
23 has risen. See the place where they laid him. But go; tell his
24 disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.
25 There you will see him, just as he told you. (*MARY and*
26 *SALOME re-enter the sanctuary. They run toward the*
27 *DISCIPLES. As they head toward JOHN, JAMES, and SIMON*
28 *PETER, they are yelling.*)

29 **MARY and SALOME:** (*Ad lib excitedly*) He is risen! The Lord has
30 risen! (*When MARY and SALOME reach the other DISCIPLES,*
31 *they compel PETER and JOHN to join them. These four run*
32 *through the sanctuary, proceeding down the middle aisle, exit, and*
33 *return to the empty tomb [Off-stage]. The NARRATOR returns to*
34 *his/her seat.*)

35



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