

JERUSALEM BOOK CLUB

by Rev. Mark and Karla Jensen



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JERUSALEM BOOK CLUB

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Reflections from Women Who Followed Jesus

By Rev. Mark and Karla Jensen

SYNOPSIS: Take a group of women, someone's living room, spirited literary discussions and snacks, and you've got yourself a book club! But these aren't just any women—they are followers of Jesus. And the book is a best seller: the Bible! Every week they meet to discuss the stories with their writers. The Bible scenes are enacted as they talk.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6-25 female, 3-12 male)

WEEK 1: Raised and Restored

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (8 lines)
 JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (f) Around age 12 (8 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (14 lines)
 BLEEDING WOMAN (f) (10 lines)
 BRIDE (f) from Wedding at Cana (9 lines)
 KAROL (f) (5 lines)
 JAIRUS (m) (1 line)
 JESUS (m) (5 lines)
 MARK (m) (17 lines)

WEEK 2: Teaching, Tending, and Tithing

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (9 lines)
 WIDOW (f) (8 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (8 lines)
 KAROL (f) (11 lines)
 SISTER MARY (f) (5 lines)
 SISTER MARTHA (f) (12 lines)
 JESUS (m) (4 lines)
 LUKE (m) (11 lines)
 AUTHORITY (f/m) extras, any number (Non-Speaking.)

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WEEK 3: Dreams and Demons

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother. (6 lines)
 MATTHEW (m) (15 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (9 lines)
 KAROL (f) (6 lines)
 PILATE'S WIFE (f) (11 lines)
 CANAANITE WOMAN (f) (12 lines)
 JESUS (m) (3 lines)
 PILATE (m) (6 lines)

WEEK 4: Communion and Communing

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (8 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (12 lines)
 KAROL (f) (12 lines)
 WIDOW (f) (8 lines)
 JESUS (m) (10 lines)
 DR. PHILISTINE (m) (25 lines)

EXTRAS:

DISCIPLES (Non-Speaking)

WEEK 5: Watershed Moments

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (14 lines)
 WOMAN AT THE WELL (f) (15 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (13 lines)
 KAROL (f) (9 lines)
 JESUS (m) (10 lines)
 JOHN (m) (20 lines)

DURATION: 5 scenes, 10 minutes each

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING:

You are welcome to use the same people for characters each week. However, if you have a larger group to accommodate roles, please feel free to use different players for the characters each week.

SET:

At one side of the stage, create the suggestion of a living room with a coffee table and lamps, and perhaps a potted plant or two. Arrange chairs—one for each book club member—in a semicircle. The other side is bare for the biblical enactments.

LIGHTING:

Although it is not crucial to use a spotlight, they can help to differentiate between the book club scenes and the biblical enactments. Characters may simply freeze if lighting is not available.

COSTUMES:

The characters may dress in biblical costumes, or you may have fun mixing some modern elements with the robes and sandals—for example, the Bride could wear a modern wedding veil with her biblical costume. Another option is modern clothing for the book group, with the addition of a robe when enacting the biblical scenes.

PROPS

WEEK 1: Raised and Restored

- ☐ Pitcher of water
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ Bibles for all
- ☐ a pen
- ☐ scarves or hankies for all

WEEK 2: Teaching, Tending, and Tithing

- ☐ suitcase
- ☐ bibles for all

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- ☐ cleaning supplies
- ☐ dishes
- ☐ offering plate
- ☐ three large wads of cash
- ☐ two pennies

WEEK 3: Dreams and Demons

- ☐ bibles
- ☐ watch
- ☐ pen
- ☐ paper

WEEK 4: Communion and Communing

- ☐ bibles
- ☐ bread
- ☐ napkins

WEEK 5: Watershed Moments

- ☐ bibles
- ☐ bucket
- ☐ pitcher of water
- ☐ glasses
- ☐ cross

SCRIPTURE:

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SCENE: *A book club has recently been formed of women followers of Jesus. Like many book clubs, guests are welcome and regulars return. Occasionally, authors have been invited to read an excerpt or give their feelings about the books to which they contributed. The book discussion focuses on the best-selling book ever: the Bible. Movement is crucial to keep the congregation's attention, whether it's to serve tea, eat dessert, clean up dishes, etc.—just so it's not distracting. Subtle up and down movements of the cast are best.*

INTRODUCTION

To be given by the pastor or a narrator. Could be used on the first week only or every week.

NARRATOR: Do you ever wonder what faithful women see in Jesus? Why do women follow Jesus today? Why did they follow him when he lived on earth? Women saw what men often overlooked. They admired the spiritual aspect of Jesus, and he taught his followers how to break out of roles in which they've been cast.

This Lenten journey examines how women of faith can be dedicated, maintain relationships, and remain present and engaged even in tough times, like Jesus demonstrated at the cross. When Jesus said, "Go and sin no more," he offered his followers forgiveness—a clean slate. But Jesus reminded them that they have a responsibility to change their lives. In these weekly Lenten sketches, Jesus asks if we embrace change or run from it.

Women supported Jesus' ministry, even placing themselves in danger by going to the cross, exactly where the disciples didn't want to be. Though they knew the threat of arrest, they showed up anyway. Even after his death, women went to the tomb to prepare his body, demonstrating their faithfulness.

Raised and Restored

Week 1

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Based on Mark 5:21-43

SYNOPSIS: Jairus' Daughter is raised, and the Bleeding Woman touches Jesus' cloak. Mark is the guest author.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 female, 3 male)

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (8 lines)
 JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (f) Around age 12 (8 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) (14 lines)
 BLEEDING WOMAN (f) (10 lines)
 BRIDE (f) from Wedding at Cana (9 lines)
 KAROL (f) (5 lines)
 JAIRUS (m) (1 line)
 JESUS (m) (5 lines)
 MARK (m) (17 lines)

PROPS

- ☐ Pitcher of water
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ Bibles for all
- ☐ a pen
- ☐ scarves or hankies for all



- 1 **AT START:** Some book club MEMBERS are present. Others are
- 2 just arriving. MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS, and BRIDE are together,
- 3 chatting, while MARY MAGDALENE, JAIRUS' DAUGHTER and
- 4 BLEEDING WOMAN are taking their seats or are getting their
- 5 drinks. A biblical scene during the middle of the sketch will play out
- 6 using some extra characters to expand the CAST, or you may use
- 7 the CAST already On-stage.

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MARY MAGDALENE: Come on in, ladies. We're so glad everyone could make it to book club tonight. (*Doorbell rings. She looks to the door.*) Oh, there's another guest now. Why don't you all grab a seat, and we'll get started with the questions. Mary, I'm so glad you brought a guest. I'll be right back to meet her. (*Motions to them to find a seat.*)

MOTHER MARY: (*To MARY MAGDALENE.*) I'm glad to be here, Mary Magdalene. (*Turns to her guest, the BRIDE.*) And dear, I have such fond memories of your wedding at Cana. (*They head toward the chairs.*)

BRIDE: That was the best day of my life, Mary. We were so fortunate that your amazing son was there, changing water into wine when we ran short. Jesus was the life of the party. Is he here tonight by chance? (*She looks around as she pours a glass of water.*)

MOTHER MARY: We miss Jesus so much, dear. I hope Mary Magdalene's idea for this book club of women who followed Jesus works. I think our relationships with Jesus will bring us together in a powerful way.

MARY MAGDALENE: (*Returns with another guest, KAROL, whom she seats.*) Ladies, I'd like to do introductions. We have a couple of brand-new members of our book club. You all may have heard of Jairus, a religious leader in the area. Well, this is his lovely daughter. (*Motions to JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.*)

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: And I brought a friend who was healed by Jesus simply by touching his cloak!

BLEEDING WOMAN: One touch one time, and my life was changed forever.

ALL WOMEN: (*Ad lib reacting.*) That's amazing. Wow. I knew it. We loved Jesus' style.

BLEEDING WOMAN: One more pushy crowd member, and I would have had to settle for just being Facebook friends with Jesus. Then where would my life be? (*ALL shake their heads.*)

MOTHER MARY: I'm Jesus' mother, Mary. You probably all know that by now. And my guest is the new bride.

BRIDE: Hello, everyone.

KAROL: And I'm Karol—I'm just a neighbor. My parents took me to church during my youth. I went to Bible camp as a kid. I've had Jesus in my life forever.

MARY MAGDALENE: That's wonderful, Karol. All of us in this book club knew Jesus. That's what's brought us here to discuss the selected book for this month. It's the number-one best-seller of all time. *(She holds up the Bible.)* Did you all like our choice? *(ALL murmur in agreement.)*

BRIDE: I loved the book of John. I couldn't believe it when I read the story of my wedding, right there in black and white. It was just like watching *E! Entertainment News*.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: The book of Mark was a great read! The author, the disciple Mark, told my story in the most compelling way. It should convince others how incredibly powerful Jesus truly was. He should be on the *Good Morning Jerusalem* TV show.

MARY MAGDALENE: And the part of the story where you were actually dead—well, I'll think twice about saying I'm "totally dead" at the end of a long, hard day.

BLEEDING WOMAN: Honey, you got a second chance at life. I can only imagine how thankful you must be.

BRIDE: Sweetie, I don't know if you've noticed or not, but your healing from years of bleeding must have been an amazing blessing as well. I get dizzy at the mere mention of a paper cut.

MARY MAGDALENE: Talk about new life! Before you were healed, I imagine you were stuck inside. No yoga or lunch dates or shopping, am I right?

BLEEDING WOMAN: Exactly. I felt so isolated. When I saw Jesus ahead of me in the crowd, I just knew all I had to do was to reach him, even if it was simply to touch his cloak.

BRIDE: That's a lot of faith. I wouldn't have believed Jesus' miracles before I saw him turn water into wine. I would have at least Googled him, done a background check, or consulted *Consumer Reports*. I guess I'm weaker in spirit than you.

BLEEDING WOMAN: Ironically, my weakness is what drove me closer to Jesus. God knows it wasn't my husband. He's a terrible driver. I had no other place to turn. Physicians had given up on me. I had no life.

KAROL: My own struggles and weaknesses—and I don't just mean chocolate, ladies—have brought me closer to Jesus also. I know Jesus understood what it was like to be human.

MOTHER MARY: If only I could have told everyone about Jesus' special gifts! Perhaps then Jesus could have healed more people. Even as his parents, we didn't understand how truly godly he was.

MARY MAGDALENE: *(Rises.)* I'm sure we could talk all night about how wonderful Jesus was and how he changed our lives, but I have a special guest.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: *(Standing, getting ready to leave.)* It's not my dad, is it? He doesn't know I'm here. I told him I was out with friends at a movie.

MARY MAGDALENE: Of course not. *(Crosses to welcome MARK at Stage Left.)* It's the author of the book of Mark.

ALL oooooh and ahhhhh.

MARY MAGDALENE: Ladies, please welcome a devoted disciple of Jesus and, if I may say so myself, a prolific writer.

ALL clap while MARK enters.

BRIDE: *(Crosses to MARK.)* I don't remember you, but your counterpart John I recall from my wedding reception. Would you mind signing this for my groom? *(Hands him a copy of the Bible she carries.)*

MARK: Oh, yes, John's another wonderful disciple and fellow writer. *(Signs Bible.)* He and I were with Jesus for much of his ministry: we broke bread, went fishing for fish, and then we went fishing for men. We attended weddings, birthdays, baptisms, funerals—

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: Resurrections! *(She approaches MARK.)* Mark, it's me, Jairus' daughter. You may not recognize me alive or wearing clothes instead of my pajamas, but it's me. Jesus raised me from the dead!

MARK: *(Looking closer)* Of course! I hardly recognized you without the undertakers and incense.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: I would just die if you read that passage in your book about what happened to me! Not literally die. I've already done that once. But, you know, I'd be so pleased.
(Returns to her seat.)

MARK: I'm here to please, spreading the Gospel wherever people will listen. *(MARK sits at the end of the semicircle of chairs.)*

MARY MAGDALENE: OK, wonderful, everyone! Let's open to the book of Mark. *(They all open their copies of the Bible as well.)*

As MARK reads, the scene is acted out Downstage or opposite of book club scene.

MARK: When Jesus had crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.

JESUS appears in front of congregation, as if speaking to them.

Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came,

JAIRUS enters and falls at JESUS' feet.

and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him.

JAIRUS: *(Pleading and desperate.)* My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.

MARK: So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.

BLEEDING WOMAN from book club rises and crosses to where action is unfolding in story.

She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had. Yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

BLEEDING WOMAN: I got much worse.

MARK: When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought...

BLEEDING WOMAN: (*Stands behind JESUS, ready to touch him.*) If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.

MARK: Immediately her bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. (*She rejoices.*) At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd

JESUS does so.

and asked,

JESUS: Who touched my clothes?

MARK: “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.

JESUS searches audience.

Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet

BLEEDING WOMAN falls at JESUS’ feet.

and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

BLEEDING WOMAN: I confess: I touched you.

MARK: Jesus said to her....

JESUS: (*Reaches for her to rise.*) Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.

BLEEDING WOMAN returns to her seat in the book club circle.

MARK: While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him...

JESUS: Don’t be afraid; just believe.

1 *JAIRUS' DAUGHTER rises from book club circle and moves to*
2 *action beside JESUS, laying down while other characters grab*
3 *scarves or hankies and become the crowd that is mourning.*

4
5 **MARK:** When they came to the home of the synagogue leader,
6 Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying loudly. He went in
7 and said to them...

8 **JESUS:** Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead
9 but asleep.

10 **MARK:** But they laughed at him.

11
12 *ALL laugh at JESUS.*

13
14 After he put them all out,

15
16 *JESUS motions them all to leave and CHARACTERS return to book*
17 *club circle.*

18
19 he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were
20 with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the
21 hand and said to her...

22 **JESUS:** *Talitha koum!*

23 **MARK:** Which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" Immediately
24 the girl stood up

25
26 *JAIRUS' DAUGHTER stands up.*

27
28 and began to walk around. She was twelve years old. At this
29 they were completely astonished.

30 **JAIRUS' DAUGHTER:** He gave strict orders not to let anyone know
31 about this, and told them to give me something to eat. I was
32 starving. Death left me famished.

33
34 *Scene ends and they return to their seats and others exit.*

35
36 **MARY MAGDALENE:** So what's all this mean to us, ladies?

37 **MOTHER MARY:** For me, and I think I speak for Mark and the other
38 disciples, Jesus' miracles proved he was the Son of God.

BLEEDING WOMAN: For me, I came to realize that when you believe in Jesus, all things are possible—even healing, if it's God's will. Even though not everyone who is sick is healed, I felt so lucky and couldn't help telling everyone my faith miracle.

MARK: For then maybe others would believe.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: For me, Jesus proved to all those present at my raising that he could actually defeat death.

BRIDE: Mark's passages allow regular people—even a naïve young bride like me—to see that God brought his son into the world to love us, to become one of us, and to show us God's will for the world through his teaching and miracles.

MARY MAGDALENE: What do you think, Karol?

KAROL: I think Mark wrote his book to encourage faith in a mighty God who walks with us always, from sickness to death, through good times and bad. Without Jesus as our foundation, what else is there?

ALL nod in agreement.

MARK: *(Rises.)* You all have a great deal of insight. I'm impressed. I should have made myself available for book club readings a long time ago, gals. Leave it to my pal, Mary Magdalene, to show me a new route to understanding and sharing the faith. *(Pause.)* I can read another few chapters, if you ladies are interested.

MOTHER MARY: *(She stands and approaches MARK.)* Mark, you're a wonderful boy and friend to my son, but you completely left out the Nativity story, *(Starts to walk him to the door.)* so I think we'll have to pass on that offer.

MARK: *(Returns to book club GROUP.)* If you really must know, I wrote the book not just to paint a picture of Jesus' life, but to help develop disciples for Jesus. Fishing for men. That was my motivation, not the notoriety.

MARY MAGDALENE: Christians were experiencing struggles back then—even persecution. I think you did a marvelous job, Mark. *(She tries to walk MARK out.)* I think this book is so important.

KAROL: *(She follows MARY MAGDALENE and MARK.)* Your book is like... good news!

1 **MARK:** Exactly! You took the words right out of my mouth. Are you
2 sure you guys don't want me to come back next month? I'm
3 working on a sequel.

4 **MARY MAGDALENE:** *(Forcing him to exit.)* Sorry, Mark. We've
5 already got someone else set up for next month. Good-bye!

6

7 *Sees MARK out, then returns to GROUP.*

8

9 **MOTHER MARY:** So, ladies, all we need for next month is the host
10 and a date.

11 **BRIDE:** I'll check with my groom and see if he has some friends,
12 but if I bring the dates, someone else will have to host.

THE END

Teaching, Tending, and Tithing

Week 2

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 10: 38-42 and Luke 21: 1-4

SYNOPSIS: Luke is guest author. Jesus' mother Mary talks about her son's teaching at the temple, Mary and Martha's story unfolds at their home, and the Widow gives all she has.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 female, 2 male, extras)

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (9 lines)
 WIDOW (f)..... (8 lines)
 MARY MAGDALENE (f)..... (8 lines)
 KAROL (f) (11 lines)
 SISTER MARY (f)..... (5 lines)
 SISTER MARTHA (f)..... (12 lines)
 JESUS (m) (4 lines)
 LUKE (m)..... (11 lines)
 AUTHORITY (f/m)..... extras, any number (Non-Speaking.)

PROPS

- ☐ suitcase
- ☐ bibles for all
- ☐ cleaning supplies
- ☐ dishes
- ☐ offering plate
- ☐ three large wads of cash
- ☐ two pennies



- 1 **AT START:** Scene begins with everyone seated and ready to
- 2 discuss the book. As with the first drama, the biblical scene will
- 3 unfold during the sketch in front of or beside the book club setting.
- 4

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MARY MAGDALENE: Greetings, ladies. I hope everyone is enjoying our new book club. By bringing together women who followed Jesus, I think we can better understand the true message of these authors.

MOTHER MARY: Not to confuse anyone, but we have three Marys here tonight. I'm Mary, Jesus' mother; our hostess is Mary Magdalene; and tonight we're excited to have sisters Mary and Martha join us.

MARY MAGDALENE: And we can't forget our friend, the widow next door, and Karol, a devoted follower of Jesus.

They all wave or nod as they are introduced.

I'm dying to know—did everyone get to the end of the book, or did you just come for dessert?

KAROL: Downloading the Bible on my old Kindle wasn't the best idea. That one book took up all my space!

MARTHA: I had so much housework that I didn't finish, but I plan to check out the audiobook later this week, if you all don't get to the library before me.

WIDOW: I'm looking forward to the movie myself. I wonder who will play Jesus. My vote is for Harrison Ford.

MARTHA: Sorry, widow. Harrison Ford is far too old. The guy who played Thor wouldn't be bad, though. Chris Hemsworth, remember?

SISTER MARY: Oh Martha, my dear silly sister. Hugh Jackman's our pick, remember?

MARTHA: Hugh Jackman *was* very good-looking in *Van Helsing*, *X-Men*, and *Australia*. Karol, who gets your vote?

KAROL: I wasn't really thinking about the movie. I'm more interested in who the special guest author is this month. I emailed the group, Mary Magdalene, but you apparently didn't give hints to anyone.

1 **MARY MAGDALENE:** I wanted to keep it a secret 'til tonight.

2
3 *She rises and gets LUKE near Backstage.*

4
5 Ladies, I'd like you to give a warm Jewish welcome to the
6 Apostle Luke.

7 **WIDOW:** *(Rises.)* Oh, Luke the physician. I've got this mole, *(Points*
8 *to her shoulder.)* if you have any time after.

9 **LUKE:** Whoa. I was told I would only be appearing at this book club
10 in the capacity of an author. I didn't really bring my medical bag,
11 and don't you all have universal health care by now? I'm simply
12 here to teach. *(He sits.)*

13 **SISTER MARY:** Jesus was always teaching us something, wasn't
14 he, sister?

15
16 *MARTHA nods.*

17
18 **MARY MAGDALENE:** *(To MOTHER MARY.)* Remember how
19 young Jesus was when he first became interested in teaching?
20 Mary, Luke even wrote about that in this month's book.

21 **MOTHER MARY:** Right. You wrote the story about Jesus listening
22 to the elders in the temple in Jerusalem just like it happened
23 yesterday.

24 **LUKE:** Jesus was only twelve, wasn't he, Mary?

25
26 *Scene unfolds across stage. JESUS is by the cross, miming asking*
27 *questions to AUTHORITIES. LUKE plays one of the authorities and*
28 *joins him at the cross. MOTHER MARY acts out the story.*

29
30 **MOTHER MARY:** *(Moves across stage from book club area.)* Yes.
31 So young, but so engaged. Every year, our family went to the
32 Festival of Passover in Jerusalem. *(She picks up a suitcase and*
33 *wonders around with it, then begins searching through the crowd*
34 *for JESUS.)* We left town and thought Jesus was with our
35 traveling group. But we couldn't find him, so we returned to the
36 city.

37 **LUKE:** That's where Mary and Joseph found him—in the temple,
38 asking questions.

KAROL: Jesus was always asking questions. It's what I found most intriguing in the Bible, in his stories and parables.

LUKE: All who heard him were amazed. *(He engages with JESUS, acting amazed.)*

MOTHER MARY: *(Approaches JESUS by the cross.)* Any parent would have been worried. We asked him, "Why have you treated us like this, Jesus? Not telling us where you were?" He offered the most simplistic of answers.

JESUS: Why were you searching for me? Did you not know I would be in my father's house?

JESUS remains at the cross until the next scene while MOTHER MARY returns to her seat with others and AUTHORITY exits.

SISTER MARY: He was that way even as an adult with us, ladies. Luke, would you mind reading *our* story? *(She opens her Bible and gives it to LUKE to read and says in an aside to him)* I love the way you captured Martha's annoying personality on the page with such finesse.

MARTHA: *(To ALL at book club.)* You know how some authors exaggerate qualities to make a better story? Just sayin'.

LUKE: *(Reading at the pulpit.)* Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village—

WIDOW: *(Aside.)* You'd think that as much as these authors are paid these days, they'd do their research. He could have found out what the name of that village was if he'd really put his mind to it.

Scene is now acted out on opposite side of stage.

LUKE: A woman named Martha welcomed him into their home.

MARTHA rises from book club chairs and moves across stage to meet JESUS and motions him into their home.

She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet...

MARY sits beside JESUS, now Upstage.

LUKE: *(Continued.)* and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks,

MARTHA cleans, prepares the meal, etc.

so she came to Jesus and asked...

MARTHA: Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.

LUKE: But the Lord answered her...

JESUS: Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is only need of one thing.

MARTHA: Swiffering?

JESUS: *(Shakes his head.)* Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her.

CHARACTERS return to their book club chairs and JESUS exits.

MARTHA: OK, so it's not the answer I expected or wanted, but I soon came to understand that Jesus was right.

KAROL: That story has a great message for us today. We put things ahead of our relationship with Jesus because of our busyness and distractions.

SISTER MARY: Like Swiffering, I imagine. *(Pokes MARTHA with her elbow.)*

WIDOW: Like how big our homes are.

MOTHER MARY: Or how many hours we work each week.

LUKE: Or how important sports and extra-curricular activities are.

KAROL: Or how fancy our clothes and jewelry can be.

MARTHA: Or how impressive we look to houseguests.

MARY MAGDALENE: Jesus had a way of teaching us that our faith should be more important than relationships, jobs, homes, gadgets, money—

WIDOW: Now *that's* something I can speak about.

KAROL: Oh, were you a rich widow?

WIDOW: Quite the opposite. I had nothing. Luke knows my story. Why don't you tell it so I don't have to?

1 **LUKE:** The widow's offering is one of Jesus' most famous parables.

2
3 *WIDOW gives him her Bible to read from. LUKE moves to Center*
4 *Stage.*

5
6 Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the
7 treasury.

8
9 *KAROL, MARTHA, and SISTER MARY pretend to be rich, dropping*
10 *large wads of cash in the offering plate.*

11
12 He also saw a poor widow put in two small coins.

13
14 *WIDOW crosses to the offering plate and drops two pennies in.*

15
16 **JESUS:** Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of
17 them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance,
18 but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.

19 **KAROL:** That was very brave, widow.

20 **MARY MAGDALENE:** Or very stupid. Seriously—weren't you
21 afraid in the least bit that you'd go home and starve or be evicted
22 from your home? I would have been.

23 **WIDOW:** Jesus was impressed that I gave everything, while others
24 only gave a small portion. Those with much were giving only
25 what was required, or perhaps a little more. I held nothing back
26 from my offering.

27 **MOTHER MARY:** Yes, he was impressed by your willingness to
28 hold nothing back, but he was also speaking against our culture.

29 **MARTHA:** *Duck Dynasty* and *Real Housewives*? I know exactly
30 what he was talking about. Pitiful.

31 **KAROL:** Jesus wasn't talking about TV. What did he really mean,
32 Mother Mary?

33 **MOTHER MARY:** Jesus was also asking, "What kind of a culture
34 do we live in where we allow women like this widow to live in
35 such poverty? We have a responsibility to care for one another,
36 from the richest to the poorest.

37 **KAROL:** So that's it! That's what the author tried to impart in his
38 entire book.

- 1 **MARTHA:** To play the lottery?
2 **KAROL:** No, silly. To have compassion! Are we right, Luke?
3 **LUKE:** You're right, friends. My book shows Jesus' concern for the
4 poor and our responsibility to care for those less fortunate.
5 There's social justice occurring everywhere in this book.
6 **MARY MAGDALENE:** So gals, the Gospel of Luke can be our
7 motivation on how to live our lives. I say we give our author a
8 round of applause. *(They do.)*
9 **LUKE:** *(Rises to go.)* Well, ladies, I've got a few other appearances
10 to make now that I'm on the book club circuit. Be sure and watch
11 my website and blog for updates.
12 **ALL WOMEN:** *(Ad lib farewells.)* 'Bye, Luke! Good night. We love
13 your work! See you at Barnes and Noble!
14 **MARTHA:** That's just like Luke to leave us with one more of Jesus'
15 parables: Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye but
16 do not notice the log in your own eye?
17 **MOTHER MARY:** That's log, Martha. The log in your own eye.

THE END

Dreams and Deamons

Week 3

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 27:15-23

SYNOPSIS: Matthew is guest author. Pilate's Wife warns her husband to have nothing to do with Jesus, and the Canaanite Woman entreats Jesus to help her possessed daughter.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 female, 2 male, extras)

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother. *(6 lines)*
 MATTHEW (m) *(15 lines)*
 MARY MAGDALENE (f) *(9 lines)*
 KAROL (f) *(6 lines)*
 PILATE'S WIFE (f) *(11 lines)*
 CANAANITE WOMAN (f) *(12 lines)*
 JESUS (m) *(3 lines)*
 PILATE (m) *(6 lines)*

PROPS

- ☐ bibles
- ☐ watch
- ☐ pen
- ☐ paper



- 1 **MARY MAGDALENE:** Welcome back, book club! I hope you've
- 2 read the next section in our book, the Bible, because tonight
- 3 we're hosting another special guest.
- 4 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** Can't we find out who wrote some of the
- 5 most obscure books like Philemon, Titus, or Revelation? Let's
- 6 invite those guys.
- 7 **MOTHER MARY:** My dear Canaanite woman, you have a point.
- 8 Revelation is the most confusing of them all.

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KAROL: Wouldn't it be glorious to find out what those authors were spiking their tea with? I agree.

MARY MAGDALENE: I'll be speaking to John, the author of Revelation, but we're not quite there in the book yet. I'm sure John would love to explain to all of you exactly why he wrote Revelation in such a confusing manner.

CANAANITE WOMAN: Tell us again, Mary Magdalene, where you met these authors. A writing conference? Barnes and Noble? The library?

MARY MAGDALENE: As a Canaanite, you're one of the few new book club members who might not remember my own story of Jesus entering my life, loving me despite my questionable past, and then calling me as his own disciple, along with his other followers.

PILATE'S WIFE: I hope Jesus didn't call you on one of those dreadful Droids. Surely Jesus would have been savvy enough to go for the iPhone Nineteen, or whatever the latest model is these days. But calling is so passé. I wonder if he ever considered texting.

MARY MAGDALENE: *(To other LADIES.)* Say hello to a very special guest joining us for the first time at book club. I'd like to introduce a very influential socialite, the lovely and wise wife of Pontius Pilate.

PILATE'S WIFE smiles and nods in acknowledgement.

KAROL: If I knew book club was open to just anyone in history, I would have invited Sherlock Holmes or Marie Antoinette.

MATTHEW: *(Enters.)* Speaking of questionable characters, I'm here, Mary Magdalene, just as you requested. Matthew, former tax collector and disciple of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *(He shakes a few hands around the room, then looks at his watch.)* Am I late?

MOTHER MARY: Matthew, we were just talking about you and your associates. As Jesus' mother, I didn't entirely approve of the friends my son hung out with. But then, as Jesus' ministry progressed, I finally understood his message of unconditional love and forgiveness of sins.

MATTHEW: If you don't already understand my book, I hope to shed some light on that tonight, ladies. I had my own book club discussion questions prepared, but the publishers of the Bible chose to leave them out. They said the book was already far too long.

MARY MAGDALENE: I think that's an invitation, ladies. What questions might you have for the author?

KAROL: Since both Matthew and the Canaanite Woman are here, I'd like to ask about Matthew chapter fifteen, verse twenty-two. You wrote that the Canaanite Woman started shouting...

CANAANITE WOMAN rises to move to opposite side of stage. She acts out the story with MATTHEW by her side as narrator. JESUS enters as well.

CANAANITE WOMAN: *(She is supposed to be shouting at JESUS, but she does it softly the first time.)* Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. My daughter is tormented by a demon.

MATTHEW: Cut, people. *(Aside to CANAANITE WOMAN)* Canaanite woman, these folks are here to get a firsthand witness to these biblical stories that I poured my blood, sweat, and tears into writing. Let's do it again, and this time, let Jesus have it. Really shout it out!

CANAANITE WOMAN: *(Shouting at JESUS, emotional.)* Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. My daughter is tormented by a demon!

MATTHEW: *(Talks to congregation first.)* But Jesus did not answer her at all and we, his disciples, came up to Jesus *(MATTHEW approaches JESUS.)* and said, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."

CANAANITE WOMAN: *(To congregation.)* But they didn't convince Jesus to stop listening to me—not one bit.

MATTHEW: Jesus answered...

1 **JESUS:** I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

2 **MATTHEW:** That's when the woman came right up to Jesus (*She*
3 *does so.*) and knelt before him. She said...

4 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** (*Kneeling.*) Lord, help me!

5 **JESUS:** It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the
6 dogs.

7 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the
8 crumbs that fall from their masters' table.

9 **MATTHEW:** Then Jesus answered her....

10 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** Cut! Wait. It's my turn to ask that author.
11 You can't just keep going and not explain my line to this crowd.
12 What does that mean, "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall
13 from their masters' table"?

14 **MATTHEW:** It means even the lowest—dogs, in this example—
15 and possibly the poorest, such as widows, are looked after by
16 someone. That's what it means. Let's try your line again.

17 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** (*Back in character.*) Yes, Lord, yet even
18 the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.

19 **MATTHEW:** Then Jesus answered her....

20 **JESUS:** Woman, great is your faith! (*He helps her rise.*) Let it be
21 done for you as you wish.

22 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** And that's all it took.

23
24 *She returns to the book club seating. JESUS exits.*

25
26 Instantly, ladies, my daughter was healed! Jesus healed my
27 daughter simply because I believed.

28
29 *MATTHEW also returns to his seat.*

30
31 **PILATE'S WIFE:** (*Stands.*) There was so much more to Jesus than
32 met the eye, wasn't there? I was amazed at how many women
33 of means actually followed him. I also know authority when I see
34 it, and Jesus wielded an otherworldly authority like no other.

35 **MATTHEW:** (*Moves to the edge of his seat.*) That's what my entire
36 book—my manuscript— strived to do, Mrs. Pilate. I wanted to
37 illustrate Jesus' authority given by God to forgive sins and to
38 preach, teach, and heal.

PILATE'S WIFE: You accomplished your mission, author of stories. You were so convincing, emotional, and descriptive that even my powerful husband and his right-hand men keenly understood Jesus' position on Roman law.

MOTHER MARY: He rejected the teachings of others.

MARY MAGDALENE: He rejected the teachings used to condemn others and exalt oneself. He wasn't into that. That's why women followed him.

PILATE'S WIFE: You say his authority came from God, but to state that aloud and make that claim would have been considered blasphemy. To question Rome's authority would have meant instant death.

KAROL: But you were not like the others in your husband's powerful circle of authority, were you? Not according to Matthew's story that I just read. That intrigued me!

MOTHER MARY: The story took place during the festival when your husband, the Governor, was about to release one of the prisoners for the crowd. Remember?

PILATE'S WIFE: Of course. The crowds were volatile and blood - thirsty. *(She moves toward the congregation to suggest they are the crowd.)*

MATTHEW: And at that time, they'd captured a notorious prisoner.

Scene begins on opposite side of stage, PILATE'S WIFE approaches Center Stage with MATTHEW as he retells the story. Other book club members become characters of BARABBAS and PILATE, or other actors may do so.

So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them....

PILATE: *(Center Stage.)* Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?

MARY MAGDALENE: *(To audience.)* For Pilate realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

MATTHEW: *(At the pulpit.)* While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him.

1 **PILATE'S WIFE:** I did indeed send word to him.

2
3 *MATTHEW pulls out a pen and offers it to her. She writes out a note*
4 *on MATTHEW's back, reading it aloud.*

5
6 Dear husband, I need to talk to you now. And pick up milk on
7 your way home from work, please.

8 **MATTHEW:** *(Goes back to pulpit.)* And so Pilate gave his wife an
9 audience with him.

10 **PILATE'S WIFE:** Listen to me, husband. I have had a dream.

11 **PILATE:** Retirement in Greece?

12 **PILATE'S WIFE:** No.

13 **PILATE:** That motorhome we've always dreamed of?

14 **PILATE'S WIFE:** No, not that either.

15 **PILATE:** Season tickets to the _____, then? [Insert name of
16 nearest professional sports team.]

17 **PILATE'S WIFE:** None of those things. I've had a dream about
18 Jesus, the one they call King of the Jews.

19 **PILATE:** *(Determined.)* He's guilty, I tell you. I'll disown,
20 disembowel, and disinherit anyone who goes against me in
21 believing that blasphemer and troublemaker. There's no
22 changing my mind.

23 **PILATE'S WIFE:** I was warned in a dream that Jesus is an innocent
24 man. Wash your hands of him.

25 **PILATE:** *(Softly.)* Of course, darling. Whatever you say, dear.

26
27 *PILATE exits. WOMEN and MATTHEW return to book club seats.*
28

29 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** Now that we know authors take all sorts of
30 liberties with history, tell me, Matthew—why all these stories
31 about Jesus that have little to do with his death?

32 **KAROL:** Can't we just skip to the end of the book? We all know
33 what's going to happen.

34 **MATTHEW:** Because it became my calling and ambition to
35 describe what life was like during Jesus' ministry. We as
36 Christians learn nothing if we skip everything between the dash
37 of his miraculous birth and excruciating death.

1 **CANAANITE WOMAN:** It's true. I would have missed so much
2 about Harry Potter if I'd only read the beginning and end.

3 **MOTHER MARY:** I think Matthew wants his readers to see that
4 Jesus was the Messiah, the Promised One that the Old
5 Testament foretold.

6 **MARY MAGDALENE:** Jesus was our Messiah, illustrated to all of
7 us through his interaction with people and the religious leaders
8 of the time.

9 **KAROL:** I have one more question. While I appreciate your voice,
10 why did you so often end Jesus' teachings with the words,
11 "When Jesus had finished saying these things"?

12 **MATTHEW:** I had to drill into the readers' heads how important
13 Jesus was in fulfilling the prophesy of the Old Testament. Jesus'
14 words always reflected God's covenant with Israel.

15 **MOTHER MARY:** God's promises always come true. That's what
16 Matthew's Gospel is all about.

THE END

Communion and Communing

Week 4

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Matthew 26:26-30; 36-46

SYNOPSIS: The book club meets Dr. Philistine, who examines the Last Supper and Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 female, 2 male, extras)

MOTHER MARY (f) Jesus' mother (8 lines)

MARY MAGDALENE (f) (12 lines)

KAROL (f) (12 lines)

WIDOW (f) (8 lines)

JESUS (m) (10 lines)

DR. PHILISTINE (m) (25 lines)

EXTRAS:

DISCIPLES (Non-Speaking)

PROPS

- ☐ bibles
- ☐ bread
- ☐ napkins



1 **AT START:** Book club still sits in a semicircle, but the serving of
2 bread in this drama is a symbolization of the Last Supper and Jesus'
3 body.

4

5 **MARY MAGDALENE:** Good evening, ladies. Sometimes at book
6 club we talk about everything but the book, but tonight it won't
7 be hard to stay on task, because I have a wonderful surprise for
8 you! Instead of featuring an author tonight, I've invited a special
9 guest to help us reflect upon the hottest-selling book in the world.

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- 1 **WIDOW:** Is it Barbara Walters?
- 2 **KAROL:** Jimmy Fallon?
- 3 **MOTHER MARY:** Billy Graham, Pastor to the Presidents, would be
4 a wonderful choice.
- 5 **MARY MAGDALENE:** All wrong. It's not Oprah or Ellen, either.
6 Instead, I've asked Dr. Philistine to join us. Ladies, give a warm
7 welcome to Dr. Philistine!
- 8 **DR. PHILISTINE:** (*Enters.*) Don't stand up, ladies. Just keep your
9 seats. In Texas, it's the gentlemen that stand up when a lady
10 enters the room.
- 11 **MARY MAGDALENE:** I hope you received the copy of the book
12 we sent so you could examine the Gospels before book club
13 tonight, Dr. Philistine.
- 14 **DR. PHILISTINE:** I didn't need an advanced copy of the best-sellin'
15 book of all time, ladies. Do you honestly think I rose to this
16 famous position as a television psychologist without familiarizin'
17 myself with the Good Book?
- 18 **WIDOW:** (*Aside to KAROL.*) I bet he's practically got the Bible
19 memorized.
- 20 **KAROL:** He does have a big head to store lots of information.
- 21 **DR. PHILISTINE:** Let's turn to the book of Matthew, ladies, where
22 we'll find two of the most poignant stories of the entire Gospels.
- 23 **MOTHER MARY:** Surely Dr. Philistine is talking about chapter one,
24 where I'm first introduced.
- 25 **MARY MAGDALENE:** I don't think so, Mary. Dr. Philistine is known
26 to analyze the meaning behind the meaning. That's why I'm
27 serving snacks first tonight. Nobody in his right mind would find
28 anything symbolic about food, right? (*To rest of group.*) Bread,
29 anyone?
- 30 **DR. PHILISTINE:** You took the words right out of my mouth, little
31 lady. That's been my question ever since I first read Matthew's
32 rendition of the Lord's Supper. Why would Jesus, the promised
33 Messiah, offer bread to anyone in order to remember him,
34 especially to his disciples? You would think he would offer them
35 a gold keychain, a fancy wristwatch, or at least a new donkey.
- 36 **MOTHER MARY:** But Dr. Philistine, my son has never been into
37 material possessions.

DR. PHILISTINE: I know. I just used those things for examples to make a point. Jesus thought of a very unique way to inspire his disciples to remember him.

KAROL: Taking something ordinary that we need and use daily to remind us of him.

DR. PHILISTINE: Exactly. Now, there's nothin' better than hearin' the Good Book spoken in the original English.

KAROL: Dr. Philistine, I'm pretty sure the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, not English.

DR. PHILISTINE: Yes, but nothing gives the Word life like hearing it with a Texas accent. Let me demonstrate. Listen up, ladies.

DISCIPLES and JESUS enter opposite side of stage to act out text while DR. PHILISTINE stands up to read the text.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying...

JESUS: Take and eat; this is my body.

DR. PHILISTINE: Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

JESUS: Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

DR. PHILISTINE: But Jesus didn't stop there. He kept on a-talkin' 'cause he had something real important to get out.

JESUS: I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Scene with JESUS freezes.

DR. PHILISTINE: I'd like to pull one of my favorite questions from nonfiction book discussion groups to begin analyzing this, ladies.

WIDOW: Who was the cutest leading character?

KAROL: What major character flaw caused the downfall of the protagonist?

DR. PHILISTINE: No, ladies. The question is, what specific passage struck you as significant, interesting, profound, or disturbing?



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