

WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED MY LORD

by Myra Shofner



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When They Crucified My Lord

A Tenebrae service of monologues

by Myra Shofner

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Child

His mother sent him to buy the chalice for Jesus
to use in the Upper Room.
May be played by either a boy or girl.

Pharisee

He paid Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus.

Woman Who Followed Jesus

She followed Jesus during his ministry.

Secret Disciple

He believed, but was silent.

Roman Slave

He fashioned the thorns into a crown.
May be played by a male or female.

Carpenter

He furnished the wood for the cross and
the spikes for the Crucifixion.

Wife of the Sign Maker

She and her husband delivered the
sign decreed by Pilate.

Grieving Woman

She is the last at the cross and
witnesses the burial of Jesus.

Death

Optional nonspeaking role.
May be played by a male or female.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Props: Candelabrum that holds eight candles, eight candles of varying colors, silver chalice for child, thirty pieces of silver for Pharisee (may be a cloth bag with quarters inside), veil for Woman Who Followed, pitcher and basin for Secret Disciple (a small bird bath was used in the original production), crown of thorns for Roman Slave (may be made of grapevine, available in craft stores), nails for Carpenter, sign in three languages for Sign Maker’s Wife (it reads “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek), and has a hole punched in the top so it may be hung on the cross, and a length of white linen cloth for Grieving Woman.

The wording of the sign is as follows:

Hebrew — HaYehudim vMelech HaNazarei Yeshua

Latin — Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum

Greek — Iesous Nazaraios Basileus Ioudaios

Costuming: For a somber effect, we chose to dress each speaker in a black tunic. We made a brightly colored “toga” to drape from the shoulders. Traditional Bible dress may be used if desired.

Set: You may use eight cubes in painted bright colors on which each actor sits until it is time for his/her monolog. The candelabrum may hold candles corresponding to the colors of the cubes and togas. Death blows out a candle after each speaker. There should also be a wooden cross with a small nail to hold the sign.

Cast: We used Death as a non-speaking character — dressed in black with headdress covering all of his face, except for the eyes — who, after each monolog, moves slowly across the stage, extinguishing a candle, then moving to another position on stage, as the actor leaves the stage. The director might choose for each actor to extinguish a candle before he/she exits instead. The actors do not return, and we included instructions at the beginning that there should be no applause at the end of the performance.

Music: We used the song “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” (melody only). We enlisted both voice and instrumental solos. As each actor leaves the stage, soloists sing or play the song to establish a haunting, plaintive sound. The last speaker exits, followed by Death

(director's discretion), lights out and silence. When lights come up, pastor stands facing the congregation and Communion is observed or the pastor may close the service by asking the congregation to exit quietly; we requested no applause.

Scripture: This service draws from the biblical accounts of Jesus' crucifixion in the gospels. While certain words or phrases may be the same, overall the quotations are the author's paraphrase.

(All eight candles are lit. ACTORS are on the stage, seated on the cubes and holding their respective props. CHILD, holding chalice, stands to speak.)

CHILD: My friends and I ran through the streets of Jerusalem. Jesus was coming, and we wanted to see him. There were so many people in the street. They were shouting and singing and waving palm branches. They shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." A man handed branches to us, and we waved them and sang, too. We loved Jesus so much.

Then the streets grew quiet. There he was. Sitting upon a young colt, surrounded by his disciples. Again we shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

That was last Sunday.

Thursday afternoon my mother sent me on an errand to the silversmith to pick up this chalice (*Holds chalice up high*). Jesus and his disciples were going to eat the Passover meal in the upper chambers of our house. She wanted the cup for Jesus — her gift to him. While she and the servants prepared the meal and baked the unleavened bread, I ran to the silversmith.

Thursday night, I watched Jesus and his disciples climb the stairs to the room. They closed the door behind them. After a while, Judas, his treasurer, came down the stairs and disappeared into the darkness. "Did my parents forget to buy something?" I wondered. "Is that why Judas is leaving?"

I waited under the steps, hoping to see Jesus when they finished the meal. Judas did not return. I was getting sleepy when Jesus and his other disciples came down the stairs, singing a psalm of David. I decided to follow them. "Maybe I can talk to Jesus," I thought. They went to the Mount of Olives and entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

1 Jesus and three of his disciples left the others and
 2 disappeared into the darkness to pray. I grew tired and I
 3 thought I was going to fall asleep, but I was determined
 4 to talk to Jesus.

5 Suddenly the noise of marching feet and angry voices
 6 startled me. Now I was wide awake. I peered into the
 7 darkness, made brighter by flaming torches. Soldiers and
 8 men from the temple filled the garden.

9 Then Judas stepped out of the darkness. He went up to
 10 Jesus and kissed his cheek, then quickly disappeared
 11 into the night. The soldiers grabbed Jesus and took him
 12 away, and I ran home to tell my parents what I had seen.
 13 *(CHILD leaves chalice on his/her seat. Music up as DEATH*
 14 *blows out CHILD's candle and CHILD exits. PHARISEE, with*
 15 *thirty pieces of silver, stands to speak when music ends.)*

16 PHARISEE: I gave him thirty pieces of silver to point out
 17 Jesus of Nazareth, the one who called himself the Christ.
 18 I can't speak for the motives of a man who had been a
 19 disciple of Jesus for three years — a trusted disciple,
 20 keeper of the treasury for the group. Some of the
 21 Pharisees said that he was greedy and that he would do
 22 anything for money. But others said that Judas had
 23 political ambitions and believed that if they forced the
 24 hand of Jesus by having him arrested, he would rally the
 25 people who followed him, and they would rebel,
 26 overthrow us, and declare Jesus the Messianic king.

27 Some said Judas was angry because Jesus
 28 embarrassed him in the home of Mary and Martha of
 29 Bethany. Judas had complained that Mary had wasted
 30 money when she used priceless ointment to anoint the
 31 feet of Jesus. When Jesus disagreed with him and said
 32 that Mary had done a good thing, Judas left the house in
 33 disgust.

34 Who can say? The truth is, he took the thirty pieces
 35 of silver, led us to the Garden of Gethsemane, planted a

1 kiss on the cheek of Jesus in the darkness, and stepped
2 aside as the guards arrested Jesus.

3 But then, early Friday morning before the sun rose,
4 while Jesus stood trial before the high priest in the
5 temple, Judas changed his mind. He came to the temple
6 and tried to return the money. He said that he had
7 never intended for Jesus to be harmed, that he was
8 sorry that he had betrayed innocent blood.

9 One of the elders said, "What is that to us?" And with
10 unanimous agreement, we refused to accept the money
11 or alter the course of events.

12 Then Judas flung the money into the sanctuary
13 (*PHARISEE dumps the coins from the bag across the stage*)
14 and rushed from our midst. We looked at one another
15 and at the scattered coins. One of the temple priests
16 said, "What are we going to do with the money? It's
17 against the law for us to return it to our sacred treasury
18 because it has been used to purchase blood."

19 We discussed the matter at length until someone
20 suggested, "We can use the money to buy burial ground
21 for the poor — a potter's field."

22 And they pointed at me and said, "You must take care
23 of this matter." I nodded and bent down and scooped up
24 the coins in my hand.

25 By the time the temple trial had ended, the dawn was
26 breaking and Jesus had been bound and carried away
27 to Pilate the governor. I joined the Pharisees and
28 priests outside the palace. We couldn't go inside the
29 Gentile establishment. If we did, according to our law,
30 we would be defiled and wouldn't be able to eat the
31 Passover.

32 Instead, Pilate came out to us and asked, "What is
33 your accusation against this man?"

34 We told him that Jesus was an evildoer, and that he,
35 as the Roman governor, should hear the case and pass

1 judgment.

2 Oh, Pilate didn't want to do that. He said, "Take him
3 yourselves and judge him according to your law."

4 But we protested, "It is not lawful for us to pass the
5 judgment of death on any man."

6 Pilate turned to Jesus and said, "Are you the King of
7 the Jews?"

8 And Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this
9 world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my
10 servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the
11 Jews."

12 Pilate asked, "Well, are you a king?"

13 Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. To this end
14 have I been born and to this end am I come into the
15 world, that I should bear witness of the truth."

16 Pilate replied, "What is truth?" And he looked at us
17 and said, "I find no crime in him."

18 And Pilate dismissed us, telling us to take Jesus to
19 Herod Antipas and let the Jewish King decide his fate.
20 On our way, I learned that Judas Iscariot had hanged
21 himself. *(PHARISEE leaves empty bag on his seat. Music up
22 as DEATH blows out PHARISEE's candle and he exits.
23 WOMAN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS, wearing veil, stands to
24 speak following the music.)*

25 **WOMAN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS:** I covered my face with
26 my veil because I was afraid that someone would
27 recognize me and arrest me because I was a follower of
28 Jesus. *(Lifts veil.)* But even though fear pierced my heart,
29 I couldn't resist following him through the streets as
30 the elders took him first to the high priest and then to
31 Pilate.

32 Pilate! The temple rulers knew he was weak and
33 afraid of getting in trouble with them. That's why they
34 dragged Jesus to stand trial before the Roman
35 governor. They knew Pilate could be persuaded to do

1 their bidding.

2 So Pilate questioned Jesus. Then he said, “I find no
3 crime in him.”

4 He wanted to release Jesus, but when his advisors
5 informed him that Jesus was a Galilean, he thought he
6 had found a way out of his predicament. He would send
7 him to Herod, the King of the Jews, and in that way
8 escape any responsibility for what might happen to
9 Jesus — and stay in good graces with the Sanhedrin.

10 The early morning sun was bright as Herod came out
11 of his palace to meet Jesus. Strangely, he was happy to
12 see him, thinking he could make sport of Jesus for his
13 amusement.

14 “I have thought much concerning this man,” he said.
15 “I have heard he does miracles. Perhaps he will do a
16 miracle for me so that I might see for myself.”

17 But when Herod questioned Jesus, Jesus remained
18 silent.

19 Then Herod’s men began to threaten Jesus, shouting
20 at him and insisting that he reply to the King. But Jesus
21 refused to speak. After they had wearied of making
22 sport of him, the soldiers dressed Jesus in royal apparel
23 and mockingly called him “King” because they knew
24 that people thought Jesus was the King of the Jews. At
25 first Herod was amused, but he soon grew tired of the
26 game and sent Jesus back to Pilate.

27 Pilate was upset about this. He scolded the chief
28 priests and the rulers and the people. “You have
29 brought him to me once before. You said that he has
30 distorted the truth and has moved the Jews away from
31 your leadership. Listen, I have questioned him —
32 thoroughly — and I tell you I find this man innocent of
33 your accusations. Likewise, Herod found no reason to
34 accuse him. Now Herod has permitted you to bring him
35 before me again — demanding his death. I tell you, this

1 man has done nothing worthy of death!”

2 But the people shouted angrily at Pilate, and Pilate
3 the coward tried to appease them. He timidly said, “I
4 will chastise him before I release him.”

5 Oh, now the people were really angry, and they
6 shouted louder and raised their fists in the air in
7 protest. This time Pilate’s voice trembled as he told
8 them, “There are those among you who have called him
9 King. It is the time of the Passover, and according to
10 law I can release a prisoner. Let me release the King of
11 the Jews.”

12 The chief priests moved among the people and
13 stirred up their anger. The shouts of the assembly
14 increased. “Come on,” Pilate begged. “Permit me to
15 release the King of the Jews.”

16 Barabbas, an insurrectionist and a murderer, stood
17 nearby, also bound and awaiting trial. Pilate pointed at
18 Barabbas, hoping to intimidate the people and bring
19 back the voice of reason. He asked scornfully, “Or
20 would you rather I release to you this evil man — this
21 murderer — this Barabbas?”

22 And the chief priests led the shout. “Yes! Barabbas.
23 Release Barabbas.”

24 And the crowd joined in. “Give us Barabbas.”

25 Pilate was plainly frustrated. Things were not going
26 as he hoped. “And what then shall I do to the one you
27 call the King of the Jews?” he asked weakly.

28 Again the chief priests led the way with their shouts,
29 “Crucify him. Crucify him.”

30 And the crowd shouted even louder, “Crucify him!”
31 And Pilate himself shouted, trying to be heard above
32 the noise of the crowd. “What evil has this man done? I
33 have found no cause that he should be crucified.”

34 But nobody was listening and their cry grew louder
35 and louder. “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

1 My heart was breaking and tears stung my eyes as I
2 realized the awful truth. Jesus, the friend of little
3 children, the man who healed the sick, the friend who
4 taught us about the kingdom of God, was going to die.

5 I suddenly remembered Mary, the mother of Jesus,
6 and wondered if she had heard of his arrest. I lowered
7 my tear-stained eyes and eased through the shouting
8 mob and went to tell her. (*WOMAN replaces veil. Music up*
9 *as DEATH blows out WOMAN's candle and she exits. SECRET*
10 *DISCIPLE, with pitcher and basin, stands to speak when the*
11 *music ends.*)

12 SECRET DISCIPLE: I was among the Pharisees during his
13 trial before Pilate. I cringed as they incited the crowd
14 to call for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. I
15 remained silent even though I knew that Jesus had
16 done nothing wrong. I was certain he was a teacher
17 commissioned by God. He was able to do great miracles
18 because God lived in him.

19 Early in his public appearances, I heard that he
20 healed the sick and taught about the kingdom of God,
21 so I went to hear him for myself. But listening to him
22 only filled me with questions. Finally I decided to seek
23 him out and find out for myself what his answers would
24 be. But by that time, the Pharisees hated him bitterly
25 and were convinced that he must be stopped. They said
26 he blasphemed Jehovah by trying to make himself
27 equal with God. I was afraid that if they knew I was
28 interested in talking with him, they might make life
29 difficult for me. I reasoned, "If I go at night, in secret,
30 they will never know."

31 So one night I sought him out. "Rabbi," I said, "you
32 are a teacher come from God. God is with you and has
33 enabled you to work miracles."

34 But before I could ask him a question, his words
35 caught me by surprise. "Unless a man is born again, he

1 cannot see the kingdom of God.”

2 Perplexed, I questioned, “How is it possible for me to
3 be born again?”

4 Then he expounded complexities of doctrine that I
5 could not comprehend. He spoke of God’s great love
6 which expressed itself in the birth of his Son who made
7 eternal life possible for all who believed. He likened the
8 Son to the serpent in the wilderness which Moses lifted
9 up for those bitten by the serpent, that they might look
10 upon it and be spared. I listened and promised myself
11 that I would think about the things he had told me, and
12 I went my way.

13 His words haunted me, and I came to believe that he
14 was the Son that God had sent. I believed, but I was
15 afraid to express that belief. If I did, I would be
16 ostracized by the other Pharisees! Counted as their
17 enemy! And so I kept silent.

18 After Pilate questioned Jesus that morning, he called
19 for a basin of water and washed his hands in front of
20 the crowd. (*SECRET DISCIPLE washes hands in basin.*) He
21 told the people, “I am innocent of the blood of this
22 righteous man.” And the people cried out, “His blood be
23 on us and on our children.”

24 And Pilate released Barabbas and commanded his
25 soldiers to scourge Jesus, and then he delivered him to
26 be taken to Calvary and crucified. All the time I
27 believed him to be all he said he was, but I did not speak
28 out in his defense. I am ashamed to say that I was
29 nothing more than a secret disciple — a coward. I
30 watched as the soldiers pushed Jesus into the street
31 and toward Calvary. The noisy crowd followed, but I
32 stood paralyzed until they disappeared from view.
33 Alone. Afraid. Ashamed. Then someone tapped me on
34 the shoulder. I turned to face Joseph, a Jew from
35 Arimathea, whom I knew was also a secret believer. He

1 was a very wealthy man and had great influence with
 2 the Roman governor. He motioned for me to follow him.
 3 “I have an audience with Pilate,” he said. (*SECRET*
 4 *DISCIPLE* leaves pitcher and basin on seat. Music up as
 5 *DEATH* blows out *SECRET DISCIPLE*’s candle and he exits.
 6 *ROMAN SLAVE*, holding crown of thorns, stands to speak
 7 when the music stops.)

8 **ROMAN SLAVE:** One of the soldiers threw the thorny
 9 branches in front of my feet and commanded, “Here,
 10 slave, a king must have a crown. Fashion these into a
 11 crown befitting the King of the Jews!” And he began to
 12 laugh harshly and mock Jesus, calling him “King” and
 13 telling him to work a miracle so that they could see for
 14 themselves his great power. The other soldiers joined in
 15 the humiliation of the man.

16 While I plaited the crown of thorns, they stripped
 17 him and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they hit him
 18 with a reed and spit on him, and bowed their knees in
 19 pretense of worship. They grabbed the crown from my
 20 hands and thrust it upon his head (*ROMAN SLAVE*
 21 *extends crown and simulates placing it on Jesus’ head*),
 22 pushing it into his flesh, and the blood trickled down
 23 his head. They put the reed in his hand as a scepter and
 24 bowed down again and said, “Hail, King of the Jews.”

25 When they tired of their game, they took off the robe
 26 and clothed him with his own garments. Then they
 27 strapped the crossbeam to his back and led him
 28 through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary, which is
 29 called “The Place of the Skull.”

30 I followed to see what would happen to him, but the
 31 crowd kept pushing me back until all I could see was
 32 the top of his head, on which rested the crown of thorns
 33 that I had made. (*ROMAN SLAVE* places crown on seat.
 34 Music up as *DEATH* blows out *ROMAN SLAVE*’s candle and
 35 he exits. *CARPENTER*, holding nails, stands to speak when

1 *music finishes.)*

2 CARPENTER: The soldiers came to my carpenter shop for
3 wood and spikes. I was busy filling orders — you know,
4 tables, chairs, and such, but the soldier commanded me
5 to stop what I was doing and get him the items he asked
6 for.

7 “What’s the rush?” I asked. “And why do you need
8 wood and spikes?”

9 He laughed and said, “Oh, today Pilate has ordered
10 the crucifixion of some Jew. The wood is for his cross,
11 and we need the spikes to nail him to the cross.”

12 Now the thought of someone being crucified was no
13 big deal to me. The Romans were always hanging
14 murderers and thieves and, well, anyone they had no
15 particular use for. But he said they were crucifying a
16 Jew! This didn’t happen often. I thought to myself that
17 whoever he was must have done something to really
18 make them mad. He must have refused to show them
19 respect or failed to pay his taxes. I was curious so I
20 asked, “Why are you crucifying a Jew? Did he offend
21 some rich Roman?”

22 The soldier laughed again and spit on the ground.
23 “No,” he replied. “He has offended no Roman. It’s the
24 Jews themselves who are demanding his death. They
25 say he is guilty of blasphemy. Now hurry up, will you?”

26 But I wanted to know more. “Who is he?”

27 “Some Galilean. Jesus is his name. Calls himself the
28 King of the Jews, which has made him the enemy of the
29 temple leaders. They think that his ragged little band of
30 followers are going to put him on the throne and start
31 an uprising and cause trouble for them.”

32 “Jesus,” I whispered. My sister had followed him
33 since the day she heard him speak on the Mount of
34 Olives. She’d told me about him. He seemed harmless.
35 But now they were going to kill him? What about his

1 followers? What about my sister? Where was she now?
 2 Was she with him? Was she, too, in danger?

3 I was anxious for the soldiers to be on their way so
 4 that I could go and find her. I pointed out the wood to
 5 them and gave them a handful of spikes. (*Holds out nails*).
 6 They tried to pay me, but I shook my head and refused
 7 their money. I wanted no part in the death of this man.
 8 When they departed, I closed my shop and headed to
 9 Pilate's palace to search for my sister. If she was there,
 10 I was going to beg her to come home with me where she
 11 would be safe.

12 When I arrived at the palace, the guards had placed
 13 the beam of wood from my shop upon his shoulders and
 14 were hustling him toward the street. The people were
 15 yelling and screaming their hatred for the man. I fell in
 16 behind them. I craned my neck, searching for my sister
 17 among the multitude of people. Then I saw a young
 18 woman with her back to me who looked like she might
 19 be my sister. I moved toward her, but the crowd pressed
 20 forward, moving her along with them. I pushed men
 21 and women aside and fell in step with the crowd as we
 22 followed Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem.
 23 (*CARPENTER places nails on seat. Music up as DEATH blows*
 24 *out CARPENTER's candle and he exits. WIFE OF THE SIGN*
 25 *MAKER, holding sign, stands to speak when music is finished.*)

26 **WIFE OF THE SIGN MAKER:** My family had eaten breakfast
 27 that Friday, and I was cleaning up when the envoy from
 28 Pilate arrived. They stood in the doorway, the morning
 29 sun against their backs, casting long shadows on the
 30 floor.

31 "We come with a demand from Pilate," one of them
 32 said to my husband. "You are to make a sign which
 33 reads 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Write it
 34 in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek!"

35 My husband looked confused and confessed, "I do not

1 know the Latin language.”

2 “Here,” one of the men said as he thrust a piece of
3 paper into my husband’s hand. Pilate has written what
4 he wants the sign to say. Copy it.”

5 “When do you want it?” my husband asked, the paper
6 trembling in his hand.

7 “Immediately!” The man replied.

8 “It will take time for the paint to dry,” my husband
9 protested.

10 “Then bring it to us. Bring it to Golgotha as soon as
11 you can.” And with that command, the men turned and
12 left our house.

13 It was an hour before noon when the sign was
14 finished. I decided to accompany my husband to
15 Golgotha, to see what Pilate wanted with such a sign.
16 And I wondered who this Jew was that Pilate would
17 make a sign which declared him king in three
18 languages.

19 “It must be some joke,” I told myself. Some perverted
20 joke Pilate was carrying out at the terrible place where
21 thieves and murderers were executed.

22 As we drew near to Golgotha, an unusual darkness
23 had descended upon the land so that we could scarcely
24 see the large crowd gathered on the hill or the three
25 crosses which had been placed there. My heart beat
26 rapidly, and I wished that I had not come. This joke of
27 Pilate’s was a deadly one, and I could sense the evil all
28 around me.

29 A soldier spotted us and came toward us. “Ah, the
30 man with the sign. Give it to me!” And he grabbed the
31 sign, climbed up, and nailed it to the center cross. (*SIGN*
32 *MAKER’s WIFE hangs sign on cross*). Then he yelled from
33 his perch, “Behold the King of the Jews. Bow down and
34 worship the King of the Jews.” And he laughed as he
35 made his descent.

1 Chaos ruled at Golgotha. People shouted angrily
2 while others cried and screamed in agony. Old men
3 shook their fists and hurled insults at the men on the
4 crosses. The priests mocked him. "He saved others;
5 himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of
6 Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see
7 and believe!"

8 Some of the soldiers engaged in a frenzied game of
9 gambling at the foot of the center cross, and when the
10 game ended, one of them held up the garment he had
11 won as though it were a great trophy. He draped it
12 around his shoulders and did a victory dance, yelling
13 up at the man on the cross, "Doesn't your robe fit me
14 well?"

15 My husband and I looked at each other and I saw
16 flight in his eyes, but neither of us could move. The
17 cross was so close that I could see the blood from the
18 man's wounds running down his legs, and there was
19 sweat mingled with blood on his forehead.

20 Then the criminal on his left asked bitterly, "Are you
21 the Christ? If so, why don't you save yourself and us?"

22 But the man on his right scolded him, "Don't you fear
23 God, seeing as you are condemned to die as I am? And
24 justly so. But this man has done nothing wrong!" And he
25 turned his face toward Jesus and said, "Jesus,
26 remember me when you come into your kingdom."

27 And the one whom Pilate had deemed King of the
28 Jews spoke for the first time. "I will tell you the truth.
29 Today you will be with me in Paradise."

30 And then Jesus cast his eyes downward, and for the
31 first time I noticed the woman standing next to me,
32 clinging to the arm of a young man. Jesus spoke
33 directly to her. "Woman," he said, "Behold your son."
34 And then he looked at the young man and said, "Behold
35 your mother!"

1 “It’s his mother,” I breathed, and stepped closer to
 2 my husband. “How awful it must be for her to see her
 3 son put to death in such a horrible manner.”

4 The young man placed a comforting arm about the
 5 woman, and the two of them lowered their heads and
 6 slipped away as I lay my head upon my husband’s
 7 shoulder and wept. (*Music up as DEATH blows out WIFE*
 8 *OF THE SIGN MAKER’s candle and she exits. GRIEVING*
 9 *WOMAN, with white linen cloth, stands to speak when music*
 10 *stops.*)

11 GRIEVING WOMAN: The shouts had ceased, and all around
 12 me I heard the muffled sounds of sobbing. My eyes were
 13 red and swollen from shedding so many tears as I knelt
 14 beneath the cross and witnessed the suffering of my
 15 Lord.

16 At noon the sky suddenly darkened and most of the
 17 crowd rushed away from the scene, but I couldn’t move.
 18 I bowed my head and remembered how good and kind
 19 Jesus was. How could anyone want to crucify such a
 20 righteous man? I searched my mind for reasons.

21 I knew the religious leaders were jealous of him.
 22 They thought the people were paying more attention to
 23 his teachings than to theirs. They feared they would
 24 lose their power over them if the people followed Jesus.

25 Some of them were angry because he had condemned
 26 their actions on more than one occasion. As recently as
 27 last Sunday, he had entered the temple in Jerusalem
 28 where he drove out the money-changers who were
 29 taking advantage of their fellow Jews who had come
 30 from all over Israel to worship at the temple.

31 “But most of all,” I told myself, “They are afraid of
 32 him because of his teachings about the kingdom of God
 33 and what a person must do to enter that kingdom. He
 34 said that unless one humbles himself and becomes as a
 35 little child, he cannot go to heaven. They are too



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