

The Road to Calvary

Reflections on the Passion

A SANCTUARY DRAMA BY ROBERT BLASKEY

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The events at Calvary changed the history of the world. It's easy to identify with the people involved as you listen to their stories. Characters include Peter, Pilate, Mary Magdalene, Judas, Caiaphas, and Mary. Each perceptive monologue is followed by a special prayer given by the leader or minister. Like the Christmas play, "The Road to Bethlehem," this drama can be performed almost anywhere with little rehearsal.

Performance time: 15 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PRAYER LEADER
PETER
PILATE
MARY MAGDALENE
JUDAS
CAIPHAS
MARY

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE ROAD TO CALVARY can be performed anywhere. Each character should stand in the center where everyone in the congregation can see him/her, with or without scripts. The Prayer Leader(s) are off to either side.

Ideally, lighting should be changed to shift the focus from character to Prayer Leader.

Costumes are optional. Since this is an exercise relating the Passion to contemporary concerns, it might be preferable to wear modern clothes appropriate to each character.

OPENING

By PRAYER LEADER

Picture yourself in Jerusalem. It's Friday, almost 2,000 years ago ... the first Good Friday.

Jesus was arrested and brought before Caiphas, the Jewish High Priest, where He was charged with blasphemy. The high court, the Great Sanhedrin, sentenced Jesus to die. He was brought to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, to confirm the sentence. Pilate could find nothing to convict Jesus but finally gave in to the wishes of Caiphas and the crowd.

Jesus was led to Calvary, a place of execution outside Jerusalem, where He was crucified between two criminals. At midday, an eclipse of the sun brought darkness on the land until mid-afternoon. From the cross, Jesus said "Father, into Your hands, I commend my spirit."

And He died.

These events changed the history of the world, reconciling man to God. But those involved weren't conscious of changing the world. They were individuals with feelings and emotions, just like you and me.

As we listen to the stories of the people involved in the Passion, with whom do you identify? Which role would you have played 2,000 years ago? What can we learn from these people as we try to grow closer to God?

PETER

That look! That look He just gave me! My Lord just stared at me as if ... as if He knew. As if He knew I denied Him ... just as He said I would.

My name is Simon ... Simon Peter. That's a laugh. "Peter" means rock. I was anything but a rock today. When Jesus needed me the most, I deserted Him.

Just tonight I had boasted of my love for Him. When He started washing our feet at dinner, I objected. "There's no way you should wash MY feet!" But Jesus calmly told us why He was doing this ... that we should be like Him and serve others.

Later in the meal Jesus said He would be betrayed by one among us and handed over to be crucified. Again I strongly objected and announced I would stay by His side, even to the death.

But He said I wouldn't be at His side ... in fact, I would eventually deny Him three times. How could I deny the man I believe in, the man who is nothing if not love itself? Jesus just stared at me and smiled.

I let Him down in the garden of Gethsemane. He asked me to stay up with Him as He prayed to His Father, but I fell asleep ... several times. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak," my Lord said.

Then He was arrested and led away! We all panicked and went in different directions. I followed as close as I could to see what would happen to Him. I tried to hide myself and not attract attention, but I was spotted ... and asked if I was a follower of Jesus.

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I didn't know what to say. I wanted to stick up for my Master. But the way they were looking at me, the way they asked it ... I knew I'd be in trouble. So I denied Him! I denied my Lord and Master to save myself!

I didn't want Him to suffer, but what good would it have done to speak out? I may have been arrested too! Again the spirit was willing but my flesh was weak ... do I have faith and loyalty only when it's convenient for me?

Just a moment ago, He saw me as they led Him away. Our eyes met ... and He knew. He knew I had denied Him, just like He said. How could I have done this to the Messiah, my teacher, our leader? How could I have denied my friend? Oh, Lord, if only I could take it all back ... don't you know how much You mean to me, how much I love You? Can I EVER be forgiven?

Wait ... that look. It wasn't condemnation. Jesus wasn't abandoning me. It was pity. He shares what I'm going through. He's hurt that I denied Him ... not so much because it hurt Him ... but because it hurt ME.

It was more than a look of pity. It was ... love. Yes, Jesus always was love. We're meant to forgive others, just as He'll always forgive us.

PRAYER by LEADER: Jesus, so often we're like Peter, boasting of our faith and love for You when things are going the way we want them, but changing our tune when we feel You let us down. Help us to know that even when we deny You, You will never deny us. Help us to stick up for our principles even when it may be difficult. And help us to always be there for our friends when they need us the most.

End of Freeview

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