Give Yourself Away: An Original Easter Drama

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UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - PROSPECTUS

Name: Justin Petrowski
College: Arts & Sciences Department: Mathematics
Faculty Mentor: Dr. David Brunell
PROJECT TITLE: "Give Yourself Away:"
An Original Easter Drama

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Attach not more than one additional page, if necessary):

Original Easter drama. I will write the dialogue, and arrange the background music and vocal parts. Music will be arrangements of the songs of the pop group U2.

Projected completion date: May 17th
Signed:

I have discussed this research proposal with this student and agree to serve in an advisory role, as faculty mentor, and to certify the acceptability of the completed project.
Signed: David Brunell, Faculty Mentor
Date: May 6, 2003

Return this completed form to The University Honors Program, F101-Metrose Hall, following your first presentation in the Senior Project Seminar.
UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Justin Petrowski

College: Arts & Sciences  Department: Mathematics

Faculty Mentor: Dr. David Brunell

PROJECT TITLE: "Give Yourself Away"
An original Easter drama

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: David Brunell, Faculty Mentor

Date: May 6, 2003

Comments (Optional):
GIVE YOURSELF AWAY
JUSTIN PETROWSKI

SCENE 1

A field next to a stream.
CHORUS wanders in from different points on the stage, staying in a loose mass throughout
the whole first scene.

SONG: “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For”

PETER:
I have climbed the highest mountain,
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you, only to be with you
I have run, I have crawled
I have scaled these city walls
These city walls, only to be with you.

But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for

CHORUS:
But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for

JUDAS:
I have kissed honey lips
Felt the healing in her fingertips
It burned like fire, this burning desire
I have spoke with the tongue of angels
I have held the hand of the devil
It was warm in the night, I was cold as a stone

JUDAS AND CHORUS:
But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for

CHORUS:
But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for

CHORUS VOICE 1:
He will lift you higher and higher

CHORUS VOICE 2:
He will pick you up when you fall

CHORUS VOICES 1 AND 2:
He’ll be your shelter from the storm
JOHN THE BAPTIST:
I believe in the kingdom come
Then all the colors will bleed into one
Bleed into one, well yes I'm still running
You broke the bonds and You
Loosed the chains, carried the cross
Of my shame
Of my shame
You know I believe it

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHORUS:
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for (2x)

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
I have climbed the highest mountain,
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you, only to be with You
I have run, I have crawled
I have scaled these city walls
These city walls, only to be with You.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for (2x)

CHORUS:
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for (4x)

(end of song)

Crowd disperses into background. Some, including PETER, ANDREW, JOHN, JAMES and JUDAS, gather around and listen to JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is coming!

Crowd murmurs in response to this. JESUS enters and stands in the background, watching the crowd of JOHN’s followers.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
I say it again! Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is coming! The LORD is coming, and great is his power! You will be judged according to your hearts and minds.

STEPHANIAH:
And who are you, man, to declare the works of the LORD? Who dares to proclaim God’s judgement on this earth, especially one who has clearly not even seen the house of the LORD, nor given sacrifice that his injustices be forgiven?
JOHN THE BAPTIST:
You may read it in your own scriptures, Stephaniah. For the king David wrote concerning these things:

"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

So do not think that your rituals and your sacrifices will do you any good in the sight of the LORD! You must repent! For I may baptize you with water, as a sign that you have turned from your sins. But there comes one after me, who is so great that I am not even worthy to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with God’s Spirit.

STEPHANIAH:
I know of whom you speak, the one the prophets foretold. He will come one day to free us from our bondage, our slavery.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
Yes, but do not misunderstand the prophets you speak so highly of. Remember that not all men’s chains are on their hands and feet. (TO THE CROWD) I come to prepare the way for this man! I come, that one greater may receive the honor!

STEPHANIAH:
Your arrogance has sent you mad, Baptist.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
Who is the arrogant one? Who walks through the streets every day in a cloud of his own glory? Surely you must know what David said of this too:

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

What right has any man to be proud then? (TO THE CROWD) We all are fallen creatures! But God offers forgiveness to those who ask and mean it! Come, be baptized to show you are truly repentant!
Several members of the crowd rise and gather near John. Jesus approaches from the background.

CROWD MEMBERS:
I wish to be baptized. So do I (ad lib.)

JESUS:
Will you also baptize me, my friend?

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
My lord?

JESUS:
I said, will you also baptize me, my friend?

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
I will.

JOHN baptizes the crowd members in succession, with Jesus last. After Jesus is baptized, a bright light shines down.

GOD:
This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:
My LORD!

Immediately the crowd members who have just been baptized fall in a posture of reverence. PETER, JUDAS, JAMES, JOHN and ANDREW stand in the background, watching. Crowd freezes in this posture.

PETER:
What do you think, Andrew? Never heard of either of these guys.

ANDREW:
I have. I’ve seen the Baptist preach before. He always announces that there will be one coming who (does finger quotes) “is greater than I am” and “whose shoe I can’t untie”. I don’t know. I don’t remember that much from going to the Temple when we were boys.

JOHN:
Neither do I. But I do seem to recall something about a man coming who would free us. They called him Hamashiach. Anyway, I heard that he was going to a wedding in Cana tonight. One of his cousins, maybe? James?
JAMES:
I think so. Peter, Andrew, I was going to go. You can come with me if you want. These people are loaded, I don’t think there will be a shortage of the eats.

PETER:
Food...I could go for a good meal. Who’d you say was getting married?
SCENE 2

At the wedding. PETER, JAMES, JOHN, ANDREW and JUDAS are seated at a table. Other members of the crowd are at other tables. SERVANTS are bringing food and drink out to some other tables.

JAMES:
I can't believe it. They overcooked this lamb too.

PETER:
Oh, would you pipe down already? It's free, so why should you care?

JAMES:
Who cares if it's free, if you can't eat it? I might as well wear it on my feet.

JUDAS:
Hey, I'm out of wine. Anybody else need some?

PETER:
Yeah, I'm out, Judas.

ANDREW:
Could you get me some, too?

JUDAS:
All right. I'll try to find a house servant. (Leaves the table.)

JOHN:
So, has anyone seen Jesus?

PETER:
Yeah, I did a little while ago. He was bringing wine to some other table. I didn't know he was a servant here?

JOHN:
He's not. That's what's so strange about it.

PETER:
Hey...that's him across the way, isn't it?

They all notice that JESUS is now seated, along with MARY (Jesus' mother), two tables away.

JAMES:
Well what do you know. I knew we'd find him sooner or later. Want me to call him over here?
PETER:
Why?

JAMES:
So we can meet him. How are we supposed to know that he is The Great Man if we don’t even talk to him?

PETER:
He doesn’t want to talk to us.

JAMES:
You never know…

ANDREW:
And besides, the worst he could say is “no”. I’ll get him. (Walks over to Jesus’ table.)

PETER:
Andrew…

JOHN:
Oh come on Peter. Who knows. Maybe he’s a nice guy. He certainly seems it.

PETER:
Well, alright. But I don’t like it.

ANDREW returns with JESUS.

ANDREW:
Guys, this is Jesus.

JOHN, JAMES, and PETER:
Honored to meet you, Jesus.

JESUS:
Honored to meet you, too. So Andrew tells me you are fishermen?

PETER:
Yes, the four of us work for John and James’ father. But I wouldn’t recommend my services right now… We don’t seem to be finding any of the right spots. Bad luck, I guess.

JESUS:
Quite all right. But I do think you are mistaken. I’m not a believer in luck.

PETER:
You don’t fish much, do you?
JESUS:
Funny you should ask. I do fish, and what's more, I have come to make you some of the greatest fishermen the world has ever seen.

Judas returns, disappointed and empty-handed.

JUDAS:
They're all out of wine...oh, hello Jesus. My name is Judas. I am the financier for their fishing operation.

JESUS:
Judas. A pleasure to meet you. You have no wine, you say?

JUDAS:
None. The storehouse is empty.

JESUS:
Yes. My table was just about out of wine too.

MARY comes over to JESUS.

MARY:
Jesus, the kitchen is all out of wine. Can you help them?

JESUS:
(to MARY, under his breath) I'm not sure that it is time for such things...

MARY:
Oh come now, Jesus. They need your help.

JESUS:
Very well. (to a SERVANT) Young man, come here.

SERVANT:
Sir?

JESUS:
Could you bring me one of those jars full of water?

SERVANT:
As you wish, sir.

PETER:
Well, I suppose water is better than going thirsty.
JESUS:
Just wait and see.

The servant returns with the water jug. JESUS pours water into their glasses, which changes into wine. The disciples drink and are satisfied.

PETER:
That’s amazing! How did you...

JESUS:
You will soon see, Peter. (to SERVANT) Tell all the other servants to do this for the rest of the tables.

SERVANT:
Yes, sir!

JESUS:
I will speak to you soon, Peter. Andrew, John, James, Judas, a pleasure.

JESUS returns to his table.

PETER:
Well, that was certainly interesting.

ANDREW:
“Interesting?” Admit it, you liked him.

PETER:
He’s not so bad. After all, he did get us more wine, however that works. Drink up!
SCENE 3

A harbor on the Sea of Galilee. PETER, JOHN, JAMES, and ANDREW are mooring their boat after another fruitless day.

PETER:
I can’t believe it. We can’t make it if we keep having more days like this.

JOHN:
I’ll say. How will we ever stay afloat?

JAMES and ANDREW snicker.

PETER:
Come on, you guys, this is serious. Judas told me that if kept having days like this, we’d all be thrown in the debtor’s prison within a week. We have got to find some fish.

JAMES:
Peter, do you remember what Jesus said to you at the wedding two weeks ago?

PETER:
About being great fishermen? Of course I do. But why would he want to come and help us? I’m sure he’s got much more on his mind. He’s probably forgotten about us.

JAMES:
Don’t be so sure, Peter.

PETER:
Why not? The man has got to be one of the most popular people in Galilee right now.

JAMES:
Look behind you, standing on the shore.

PETER turns to see JESUS standing away off, on the shore.

JESUS:
Ahoy there, boys! Catching anything?

ANDREW:
Come again?

JESUS:
I said, did you catch anything?

PETER:
Yes, enough for dinner tonight, that’s about it.
JESUS:
Well climb back in! Throw your net over the other side!

PETER:
With all due respect, Jesus, we have fished all night and not caught a thing.

JESUS:
I can see that! You have to trust me. Throw your nets out once more. Remember what I told you?

JAMES:
Come on Peter, what will it hurt? It’s not like we’re going to lose the fish we didn’t catch.

PETER:
Well, I suppose. (to himself) Let’s see about this Jesus.

They climb back into the boat, cast the net. When they pull it back, it is about to burst from the weight of so many fish. After dragging the net onshore with great strain, the men come over, with JUDAS, to JESUS.

PETER:
My LORD, please leave me, for I am a sinful man, not worthy!

JESUS:
Don’t be silly, Peter. I would not have come to you if I did not want to help you. You saw the amazing catch of fish you just made? You will do this again, and much more, only with my help, you will be catching men. But you must leave everything you have, and everything you know and are familiar with. And you must come and follow me.

SONG: “I Will Follow”

ANDREW:
I was on the outside when you said
You said you needed me
I was looking at myself
I was blind, I could not see

JOHN:
A boy tries hard to be a man
His father takes him by his hand
If he stops to think he starts to cry
Oh why

JOHN AND ANDREW
If you walkaway, walkaway
I walkaway, walkaway...I will follow
If you walkaway, walkaway
I walkaway, walkaway...I will...follow

PETER:
I was on the inside
When they pulled the four walls down
I was looking through the window
I was lost, I am found

PETER AND JAMES:
Walkaway, walkaway
Walkaway, walkaway...I will follow
Walkaway, walkaway,
Walkaway, walkaway...I will...follow

JUDAS
Your eyes make a circle
I see you when I go in there
But it's your eyes
But it's your eyes
But it's your eyes
Your eyes

PETER, JAMES, JOHN, ANDREW, JUDAS
If you walkaway, walkaway
I walkaway, walkaway...I will follow
If you walkaway, walkaway
I walkaway, walkaway...I will follow
I will follow
I will follow
I will...follow
I will follow
I will...follow
SCENE 4

A room in the temple. A meeting of the Pharisees.

STEPHANIAH:
I haven’t actually seen him or heard him. All I know is if these reports are true, then he could be ten times as bad the Baptist ever was. Can you imagine the mass hysteria? Every man leaving work to follow this Jesus...people committing acts of religious hysteria...the country in chaos. Rome would squash us in a second if they got wind of it, and then we would be in danger of another horrible desecration like we had in the times of the Maccabees.

NICODEMUS:
Can we be sure of this? Has anyone actually seen him or heard him speak. Perhaps these reports are nothing more than rumors blown out of proportion. He has not claimed to be the Messiah, as far as we know. It is only the proclamation of the Baptist.

STEPHANIAH:
I assure you, Nicodemus, that if he was nothing more than another Baptist, then we would have not have a serious problem. Religious eccentrics come and go, and are forgotten as soon as the next comes along. But this Jesus has created a stir around the whole country, not just in Galilee. Your excellence, I move that our council sends out a delegation to hear this man.

CAIAPHAS:
Very well, then. It is true that this may prove to be a serious problem for us. However, perhaps we should hear his words before we make rash decisions. Elias, Nicodemus and Josias, you will travel to Galilee and hear this man speak.
SCENE 5

At night, outside a house. NICODEMUS stands alone, waiting impatiently. The owner of the house, BENJAMIN, comes outside.

NICODEMUS:
You are the one he is staying with tonight, you say?

BENJAMIN:
Yes sir, it’s me. He’s traveled a long way today, you know. Helped a lot of people, they say. Hope he’s not too tired when he gets here.

NICODEMUS:
Well, if he’s anything like the people say he is, I’m sure he won’t be.

BENJAMIN:
Well, either way, good luck, my lord. I’m going inside to put my children to bed. Here’s the lantern. If you leave, just hang it above the door.

NICODEMUS:
He knows to come here?

BENJAMIN:
Yes sir. Levi, one of his close friends, is my cousin. Good night.

NICODEMUS:
Good night, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN goes back indoors. After several townspeople pass by, JESUS, LEVI and JUDAS approach the house. They are stopped by an older couple; the man has considerable difficulty walking.

OLD WOMAN:
Jesus, son of David, help us, please!

LEVI:
Quiet! Don’t you know there are people who sleep in this town?

OLD WOMAN:
I’m sorry, good sir, I didn’t mean to wake no one, it’s just that my husband…

LEVI:
Please try to understand. Jesus has had a long day, he is very tired from travel. Come and talk to him tomorrow morning, and we will see about your husband.
OLD WOMAN:  
But you don’t understand, it takes him all the strength he’s got just to make it into town and back. If we go home now, we’ll never make it back out here.

JUDAS:  
(turning to speak) Madam, what is the problem? Jesus, come over here.

JESUS:  
What do you wish of me?

OLD WOMAN:  
Good teacher, my husband wishes to be healed.

JESUS:  
Who are you calling “good”? No one is good, but God alone. Be careful, you do not know what you are implying. But this I will do, so that God will be glorified. In the name of Jehovah, be healed!

The OLD MAN stands straight up, takes a step or two, then runs to embrace JESUS.

JESUS:  
Tell no one of this. Now go, and sin no more.

OLD MAN:  
God bless you, Teacher!

The older couple dances off, rejoicing.

JESUS:  
Levi, be careful with what you say. I have come to bring hope, healing and forgiveness to all who would receive it. Do not send those away who could believe!

LEVI:  
I am truly sorry, Jesus. I only look after your well-being. You have helped so many today, surely you must be tired.

JESUS:  
My strength comes from doing the will of my Father. Look, isn’t this the house we are staying at? This is your cousin’s house?

LEVI:  
Yes, but he has only prepared beds for two of us.

JESUS:  
You all go ahead. I believe (motions to NICODEMUS, who stands afar off) there is someone who still wishes to speak to me.
JESUS walks over to NICODEMUS and begins speaking to him.

LEVI:
So, what do you think?

JUDAS:
About...

LEVI:
About Jesus? You’ve heard what the people are saying. Do you think he really is the Messiah?

JUDAS:
I certainly hope so. I would hate for us to have given up so much to follow just a nice guy! (they chuckle.) But seriously...I know what they are saying, and I know what I was taught as a little boy...If this Jesus is the Messiah, he’s gonna need some serious miracle power to defeat the Roman guards...don’t get me wrong, these healings are nothing short of amazing. But I’m still not sure about how he plans to overcome the standing army, not to mention the Praetorians.

LEVI:
We’ll soon see, either way.

They enter the house.

NICODEMUS:
So, tell me, Teacher, how is it that I can be “born again”, as you say? I am a full-grown man, and my mother is well advanced in years. How could I enter her womb again?

JESUS:
No, no, Nicodemus. When I say “born again,” I do not mean literally born again, from your mother and such. Every man is born this way. I was, you were, my friends Levi and Judas were. I speak of a second birth, a birth of your spirit. Ever since you were young, all the evil things you did, they create a separation between you and the God you so devotedly follow. But you knew that already, as a teacher of the Israelites. You know that there is no forgiveness of sins without bloodshed. So just like in the Torah, when Moses lifted up the snake and the people were healed, so the Son of Man will be lifted up, so that all can look upon him and be forgiven. God doesn’t want to condemn anyone, but anyone who rejects his gift of forgiveness has no choice to be condemned. That is why God sent His son, that men would not have to be condemned.

NICODEMUS:
What you say is fascinating, Teacher. I wish to think on these things and speak to you further.

JESUS:
Just be careful, Nicodemus. For anything – and I mean anything – that distracts men from God’s will is a thing of darkness. Do not confuse the things you think are good or desirable with the things that truly are. Do think on these things I have said to you. I will pray for you, Nicodemus, that you find God. For you know what the prophet Jeremiah said,
“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Good night, Nicodemus, my friend.

NICODEMUS:
Good night, Jesus.

JESUS enters the house, and NICODEMUS exits back down the street.
SCENE 6

A hillside in Judea, with a crowd gathered around JESUS, waiting to hear Him speak. ELIAS, JOSIAS, and NICODEMUS stand in the background.

JESUS:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them...

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more
important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Do not judge, or you too will be
judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use,
it will be measured to you. Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice
is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and
the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the
rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a
foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds
blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

The people immediately mob JESUS. He does his best to accommodate them. Meanwhile,
the Pharisees wander off from the crowd.

NICODEMUS:
I see nothing in this man worthy even of rebuke. The things he says are things that should be
taught to all men.

ELIAS:
I agree that he says things which are admirable and upright. However, in order to be cautious,
and fulfill our orders, I suggest we hear what he has to say in private.

JOSIAS:
I concur. Let us go to the house of someone he stays with and see what he has to say.

NICODEMUS:
I really don’t think it’s necessary, Josias…

ELIAS:
So, Nicodemus, become one of them, have you? Don’t be deceived. He may work his wonders,
and say his kind words, but all of this will pass. The Law carries on forever. You are a child of
Abraham, Nicodemus. Don’t let anyone convince you otherwise.

NICODEMUS says nothing, but instead, mulls this over.

ELIAS:
Hurry, let’s get on, or we’ll never get a room in the next village.

A group of Jesus’ disciples escapes the mob and wanders off to talk.

PETER:
What do you suppose this means? I’ve heard that same speech the last four places we’ve
stopped. I really don’t get the part about the meek and the peacemakers. I thought Jesus had
come to free us from our slavery to the Romans.

JUDAS:
So they say. I really can’t see Jesus playing an angle for all these people, though. It just goes
against everything we know about him.
PETER:
I guess you’re right, Judas, but that still doesn’t answer my question. Suppose he is the honest and upstanding fellow that we all think he is. How exactly do we “peacefully” and “meekly” overthrow Caesar?

JOHN:
I’ve always thought it’s dangerous to fit the will of God into our own boxes. Who knows what Jesus’ purpose is? We will all see soon enough.

JUDAS:
I wish I had your faith, John. I’m just afraid for all their (points to the crowd) sakes. If this man is not the Messiah...there are going to be a host of disappointed people, and what’s worse, when the real Messiah comes, everyone will assume he’s just another impostor.

JOHN:
Judas...honestly, don’t worry about things like that so much. Remember what Jesus told us...don’t worry about anything, if we follow God’s will, He will guide our paths. And honestly, Judas, I’ve never felt so close to God as when I’m with Jesus. Whether or not Jesus is the Messiah, he definitely has a message from God. And that’s something we should all take to heart.
SCENE 7

A crowded house. This time, ELIAS, JOSIAS and NICODEMUS are up front listening.

JESUS:
A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

JOSIAS:
What is the meaning of all this? Explain what you are trying to say!

JESUS:
The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

He who has ears, let him hear.

During JESUS’ explanation, men have slowly been opening a hole in the roof and lowering a paralyzed man down on a stretcher.

As soon as he is lying on the ground, JESUS smiles and kneels to speak to him.

JESUS:
Friend, your sins are forgiven.

Immediately ELIAS turns to JOSIAS and begins whispering in his ear.

JESUS:
(to the PHARISEES) Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? Because anyone could merely say the first, and no one would know but God. However, if one says the second, and nothing happens, everyone knows he is a fake. So, that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....(to the PARALYZED MAN) I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.

Immediately the paralyzed man jumps up, picks up his mat and leaves, praising God. The whole crowd is awestruck, except for the PHARISEES, who are visibly upset over this.
SCENE 8

A house of SIMON the PHARISEE.

JOHN:
(aside) Jesus did hundreds and thousands of other miracles. He healed those who could not walk, gave sight to those who could not see, raised the dead to life, and most importantly, healed broken hearts. And all along the way, he always preached that the love and forgiveness of God had come to earth and was with His people.

However, Jesus made enemies, too. The Pharisees questioned him mercilessly. They would try to trap him in legal issues, but Jesus always knew the right answer. He often tried to show the Pharisees that their laws and regulations were entirely human in origin and did not reflect what God originally intended. Sometimes, he merely corrected them; sometimes, he poked fun at them; and, much to their chagrin, frequently he accused them.

JESUS:
So you see, Simon, that your neighbor is not merely someone you prefer to associate with, but anyone who is in need. God wants us to serve our neighbors and love them just like we love ourselves.

At this point MARY MAGDALENE bursts into the room, ducking under the arms of a couple of men who try to stop her. She falls at the feet of JESUS, weeping bitterly. She then takes a jar of oil, and after breaking it, pours the entire contents on JESUS’ feet. She then wipes JESUS’ feet with her hair. SIMON rises to stop her, furious.

SIMON:
Get out, you whore! How dare you even come within eyesight of our Master! Take her away, and have her imprisoned!

JESUS:
Wait just a moment, Simon. She has done nothing that displeases me. She may stay. I have something to tell you, Simon.

SIMON:
Speak, Master.

JESUS:
Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred dollars and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?

SIMON:
The one who has been forgiven more, my lord.
JESUS:
You have judged correctly.
(to Simon, but looking at MARY MAGDALENE) Do you see this woman? I came into your
house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped
them with her hair. You did not even shake my hand, but this woman, from the time I entered,
has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on
my feet. She is preparing me for the death that I must die soon. Therefore, I tell you, her many
sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little. (to
MAGDALENE) Your sins are forgiven.

ELIAS:
Who are you that forgives sins? Who made you a judge of man?

JESUS:
And who made you a judge of man? I know what is in your hearts, that you would use your
position that God has given you for evil and selfish gain.
Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven
in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to
Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to
win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as
you are. Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing;
but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which
is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by
the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You
blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who
swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple
swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's
throne and by the one who sits on it. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you
hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the
more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced
the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a
camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of
the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean
the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the
law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the
outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way,
on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and
wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for
the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days
of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.
So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the
prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!
You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I
am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify;
others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth.

Immediately there is an uproar. SIMON, ELIAS, JOSIAS and the other PHARISEES rise indignantly. JESUS and the disciples rise to go out the other way. However, LEVI and JUDAS go out the way of the Pharisees.

LEVI:
Death? What death? I don’t get it.

JUDAS:
Nor do I, Levi. Obviously this is not what I thought it was. I am beginning to think that Jesus is severely hurting his own cause by attacking the Pharisees.

LEVI:
Perhaps we are looking at this all wrong. Maybe he means he will die a hero’s death.

JUDAS:
I don’t think so. He keeps referencing that he will sacrifice his own life in a very short time. I do not think such talk will gain him much support; it will either cast him as a suicidal mercenary or an overcompassionate weakling. I do not think that Jesus meant for either of these to occur.

LEVI:
All in good time, dear Judas. Jesus seems to have everything under control. After three years I’ve never seen him in a situation that got the best of him. I don’t think that’s going to change now just because some of the old stuffed shirts in the Sanhedrin are starting a row.

JUDAS:
I keep hearing that from you and John and Peter, but I can’t help but see the way this could end for all of us; Jesus arrested; we are scattered, jobless; and the rest of the country doesn’t know what to think.

LEVI:
He keeps telling us to have faith in him and the one who sent him. And I know God is definitely not one to disappoint. I just think we need to keep following, and this will all end well.

JUDAS:
I wish that I could believe that.

LEVI:
Either way, we’re going to get left. I’m going out front to catch up with Jesus. See you out there.
(exit)

JUDAS:
(after he makes sure everyone is gone) Elias?
ELIAS and JOSIAS reenter.

JUDAS:
You wish to speak to me?

ELIAS:
I could not help but overhear your conversation. I have a deal that may interest you.

JUDAS:
Go on.

ELIAS:
We have been following the Nazarene on and off for a long time now. My council is growing increasingly impatient with his insolence. We wish to take him into custody to do with as we please. However, we need an inside man to make this work. We will pay you a reasonable sum.

JUDAS:
And all you ask is Jesus to be delivered?

ELIAS:
Yes, but it must be done in such a way as to not raise alarm. I do not wish to have an angry mob to deal with. We must have reasons.

JUDAS:
I will think it over. But you and your council must provide some sort of reason, be it real or false, to take him into custody. Else, I refuse. I certainly do not want a mob after me, either.

ELIAS:
I will meet with my council, and we will draw up a proposition. We will speak again soon. Good day, Judas.
SCENE 9

The triumphal entry. JESUS comes walking in to a cheering crowd who has lined the streets for his arrival. As he makes his way through them, they shout “Hosanna” loudly and lay their coats for him to walk on. JESUS makes his way through the crowd, and exits.

Meanwhile, ELIAS and CAIAPHAS are watching from afar off.

ELIAS:
We need motive, my lord. We cannot merely arrest the Nazarene.

CAIAPHAS:
Suppose we said he killed someone.

ELIAS:
No one would believe it. It goes against everything he has been saying.

CAIAPHAS:
What if we said he disrespected the authority of Caesar?

ELIAS:
It would only make them love him all the more.

CAIAPHAS:
I have it. Suppose we said he blasphemed and claimed to be God. That is an offense that will turn some stomachs. Also, you have spoken of his claims to forgive sin?

ELIAS:
Some have even said he went so far as to make the claim to be God in full.

CAIAPHAS:
Who are these people? We need to speak with them soon. Are you in contact with the Galilean?

ELIAS:
I am, my lord. He will come and speak to us all once we have drawn up a scheme.

CAIAPHAS:
Then summon him. We must have this matter handled as soon as possible.
SCENE 10.

Another meeting of the Pharisees.

STEPHANIAH:
Is he to be here today, Your Excellence?

CAIAPHAS:
Indeed, good Stephaniah. I fear that if what Elias and Josias told us is true, then this matter may have advanced beyond our control, however. If we simply have him assassinated, it will do nothing but make another martyr for the people to worship. I believe that it is time to leave matters in the hands of the Romans.

NICODEMUS:
Are we talking seriously of assassinating this man? What has he done wrong, to deserve such? I have traveled with this man for several months now, and he has done nothing but help his fellowman. Caiaphas, if you would but listen to what this man has to say...

STEPHANIAH:
So now you are one of his followers, too, Nicodemus? I would have thought a man of such noble upbringing and fine education would have the wisdom to see through such a ploy...

NICODEMUS:
(agitated) Ploy? I see no ploy? You are the one who does not even know the face of this man you wish to kill. That is the only ploy that I have the wisdom to see. As for this Jesus, I have seen this with my own eyes: the lame are made to walk, the blind are made to see, and the dead live again. This man is filled with the very love and power of YHWH himself, and I see nothing in him that merits this kind of scheming. (pauses to gather his thoughts) For fifteen years I have served on this council, and we have not helped our brothers as much in this whole time as Jesus has in a single day. If YHWH is a loving and providing God, are we not to emulate Him and be loving and providing ourselves? I see no profit from this council other than fifteen years of hypocrisy, intrigue and subversion. (growing stronger) Were my life to end today I could not stand before YHWH and say I have done anything to profit His cause. I used to believe that Jesus came to reform the lives of our people. But now I see the people that need it the most are the ones who are not going to even receive it. It is for this reason that I hereby resign from this council. I pray that YHWH has mercy on you all for the wrongs you have done to others. (takes off robe and heads for the door)

CAIAPHAS:
Nicodemus, if you walk out that door, you know you are resigning the favor of the Lord also!

NICODEMUS:
(stops near the door) I do know that I am resigning the favor of this council, which is not anything I truly need. I have the favor of the Lord; this I know, because I am favored by the one He sent. Good day, Your Excellence. (exits)
STEPHANIAH:
(after an awkward silence) Shall I call him in, Your Excellence?

CAIAPHAS:
Yes, Stephaniah.

Stephaniah goes to the door and admits JUDAS.

CAIAPHAS:
So, you are the one? I have heard that you were one of his closest friends. How then did it come to this?

JUDAS:
Have you ever had a friend, Caiaphas, that you loved dearly? So dearly, that you would do anything for them? This was Jesus to me. I fear that something has driven him out of his head and off of his course. I waited for the time when he would rise up and lead us to victory over the Romans. But that time never came. He never lived up to his billing, so to speak. He’s going to deceive a lot of people if he keeps this act going. But I think some prison time may help him regain his focus. So I am here to help you. I will give you the Nazarene. But I want 50 silver.

STEPHANIAH:
Are you insane? We will pay you no more than 15 pieces.

JUDAS:
How badly do you want him in custody? I dare not think Peter and John would be so easily swayed.

CAIAPHAS:
Please be reasonable, Judas, realize that it is not prudent for us to spend such a sum on one man’s head. However, due to the nature of the situation, and the urgency of the matter, we will pay you 30. That stands as the Council’s final offer.

JUDAS:
I accept, then. Thirty it shall be. I will deliver him within the next week. I will advise you to the best time. I shall be in contact with you. (takes the money from CAIAPHAS and exits.)
SCENE 11.

The garden of Gethsemane. JESUS is alone, praying.

JESUS:

Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. 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. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

At this point JESUS walks over to PETER, JAMES and JOHN who are lying asleep.

JESUS:

Rise, friends! The hour has come; I am about to be delivered into the hands of wicked men.

No sooner does he say this than an angry mob bursts in the door, led by JUDAS and ELIAS. JUDAS runs to JESUS and kisses him, then backs away as the soldiers grab JESUS and take him away. He does not struggle. Meanwhile, the apostles scatter.
SCENE 12.

Pharisees’ meeting hall.

JUDAS:
(storms in, furious) What is the meaning of this? This type of death was not in the agreement. And on these charges? What has he done to you, that he deserves such vicious punishment? I thought you wanted him in custody!

STEPHANIAH:
Indeed, good Judas. Please try to understand. We had no other course of action. Were we to merely imprison him, there would be a riot for his release. Were we to have him killed, our leadership would be in jeopardy. We had to paint him up as a blasphemer and treasonous; this would be the only reason the people would want him dead.

JUDAS:
You disgust me. How dare you call yourselves agents of YHWH!

CAIAPHAS:
Careful, Judas. Do not be so quick to cast all blame on us. Surely you had motive in your heart to get rid of him. You knew that Jesus did not fit into your mold, and for that you felt lied to and misled. Admit it, you wanted him out of your life, too.

JUDAS:
But did it have to come to this? All that you say is true... I did feel misled. But I still can't help feeling that I am the one who did wrong here! He never did anything but help me. And isn't it our fault if Jesus wasn't the person we expected him to be? What kind of delusion do we live in? Such love, such wisdom, such power, and we try to cage it and sell it to get what we can out of it, or worse, keep it around to be a wishing well. We are the ones to blame. We are the blasphemers and the treasonous. We are the ones who ought to hang for our crimes, for we are the only ones who are truly guilty! (pulls the bag out) Here, I don't deserve a single cent of this. Neither do you, for that matter, but since it was yours to start with, I'll just leave it with you. (extends the bag)

ELIAS:
We cannot take this back into our tithes and offerings; it has the price of blood on it.

JUDAS:
You fools! Does your hypocrisy ever end? You will surely answer for your misdeeds, as will I; but this I have in favor; at least I realize my wrongs. You are the most wicked of all; for you pose as agents of good, all the while working for the most evil of causes. And you think you do well! As the Master has said, woe to you all! You will burn for this! (empties bag into his hand, and casts the fistful of money at CAIAPHAS; then turns and runs out.)
SCENE 13.

The hill where Jesus is crucified. (all characters in biblical dress for this scene only) We see Jesus is already laying on the cross. There is a large crowd surrounding him; most are giving approval or consent. As the SOLDIERS (a Roman quaternion) nail him down, Jesus screams horrifically, obviously in intense pain. They lift him and drop the cross in place.

A few of the women who are with JOHN are weeping uncontrollably; however, MARY stands and watches as her son is executed.

With every word JESUS speaks, the jeers and taunts from the crowd grow more intense.

JESUS:
(weakly) John...John...Take care of my mother...

JOHN:
Yes, Jesus.

JESUS:
Remember what I told you, John, I have come to give you life, and life abundant! Do not think of this as the end, but only the beginning! (pauses, then stronger) I know it may sound empty, but do not lose hope! I will see you again. (to the sky) Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!

Suddenly there is a titanic crash of thunder and the sky goes dark.

JESUS:
GOD! (pause, then louder) GOD! (another pause, as if he is awaiting a reply) FATHER! Why have you left me? (pauses a final time) Father, speak to me!

He receives no reply, and realizing there will not be one, hangs his head.

JESUS:
The time has come to do my task. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. It is accomplished.

There is another titanic crash of thunder and the stage is bathed in red light.
SONG: "MLK/Lamb of God"

MARY:
Sleep
Sleep tonight
And may your dreams
Be realized
If the thundercloud
Passes rain
So let it rain
Let it rain
Rain on him

As the violins continue into "Lamb of God", we see the silhouettes of several people taking the dead JESUS off the cross. Among them are JOHN, NICODEMUS and PETER. They carry the corpse offstage.
SCENE 14

Garden of Gethsemane.

JUDAS:
(pained) Oh Jesus, what have I done? I can't believe I let myself do this.

SONG: “Until the End of the World”

Haven't seen you in quite a while
I was down the hold just passing time
Last time we met was a low-lit room
We were as close together as a bride and groom
We ate the food, we drank the wine
Everybody having a good time
Except you
You were talking about the end of the world
I took the money
I spiked your drink
You miss too much these days if you stop to think
You lead me on with those innocent eyes
You know I love the element of surprise
In the garden I was playing the tart
I kissed your lips and broke your heart
You...you were acting like it was
The end of the world
Love, love, love
Love, love, love
Love, love, love
In my dream I was drowning my sorrows
But my sorrows, they learned to swim
Surrounding me, coming down on me
Spilling over the brim
Waves of regret and waves of joy
I reached out for the one I tried to destroy
You...you said you'd wait
'til the end of the world

As the music fades out, Judas pulls a gun out of his pocket. He puts it to his temple once, then pulls it away. He then kneels, places the gun there once more. As the stage lights go black he screams,

JUDAS:
JESUS!

and we hear the gun go off.
SCENE 15.

A room, where several disciples are gathered.

PETER:
I can’t believe he’s gone. After all that he did for us, now he’s dead. Now they’re going to hunt us down and kill us too.

MARY:
I don’t think we have to worry about that. What good are we? We don’t claim to forgive sins. Nobody’s clamoring to hear us talk. And we can’t even change water into wine, much less make a dead man live again.

PETER:
I sure wish we could, though.

SONG: “Wake Up Dead Man”

PETER:
Jesus, Jesus help me
I’m alone in this world
And a messed up world it is too
Tell me, tell me the story
The one about eternity
And the way it’s all gonna be

Wake up, wake up dead man
Wake up, wake up dead man

Your father, He made the world in seven
He’s in charge of heaven
Will you put in a word in for me

MARY:
Salome and Magdalene and I are going to prepare Jesus’ body. We will come to see you soon.

MARY, MAGDALENE and SALOME exit.

JOHN:
(out of scene) We were certainly unprepared for what happened next. The women told us that the tomb was empty when they got there. So Peter and I went, and sure enough, no one was there, just a pile of old graveclothes. Jesus had risen, as He said, and He has freed us from the chains of our slavery. The only problem is...some of us like our chains too much to enjoy freedom. And even worse, some of us pile the chains on other people.
SCENE 16.

Short vignettes.

A

BUSINESSMAN 1:
So, how are things going? We need to get together and play golf sometime.

BUSINESSMAN 2:
I agree. It’s been awhile, hasn’t it? What do you say this weekend?

BUSINESSMAN 1:
Fine by me. What day, what time?

BUSINESSMAN 2:
How about Sunday morning?

BUSINESSMAN 1:
I don’t know, I have church, and...

BUSINESSMAN 2:
It won’t matter. You’re just missing one Sunday. They won’t even miss you. Just come on and see. Besides, it’s not like that stuff really matters?

BUSINESSMAN 1: (With the voice of JUDAS)
I guess not. It probably is just stories, anyway. Yeah, Sunday morning is fine.

(freeze)

B

PROFESSOR:
So you are a Christian? Everything you know is wrong! You can’t just believe what your parents taught you...that’ll get you nowhere.

STUDENT:
But sir, I believe in the Bible.

PROFESSOR:
Why, that’s ridiculous. It’s full of errors, for one. And we don’t know if we can trust it. Have you ever done any research on it? Do you know? You don’t, do you?

STUDENT: (With the voice of JUDAS)
I guess not. It probably is just stories, anyway. What were you saying about the Cambrian period?
C

HUSBAND:
I can't believe you are dragging me to this ridiculous Easter play. I hate them all, they're all the same. Hokey death scene, with the sappy ending. Oh, and let's not forget the call for alms at the end.

WIFE:
Would you just humor me and go? I don't see why you don't.

HUSBAND:
Because I don't want to, and I don't need to. It's all a game, anyway. They just want us to feel bad and give them money. I'm not buying it this year. We're not going.

WIFE: (with the voice of JUDAS)
I guess not. It probably is just stories, anyway.

JOHN:
And so we live our lives... We that know Him and walk with him... Do we do any better, or are we Judas to the world?

(blackout)
MLK with Lamb of God
Until the End of the World
I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For

(c) 1987 Island Recordings
When Love Comes to Town

(c) 1989 Island Recordings
Wake Up Deadman