

According to John
by

David John Preece

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DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

	Actor One	
Bishop Richard Andrews Pilate		High Priest
	Actor Two	
Steven Land Blind Man		Inquisitor
	Actor Three	
Susan Andrews Samaritan Woman Family Member Two		Mary Martha
	Actor Four	
Larry Schofield		Jesus
	Actor Five	
David Jackson		John
	Actor Six	
James Zealot One Roman Soldier		Bishop Paul York
	Actor Seven	
Matthew Family Member One Roman Soldier		Bishop Walker Pharisees Man
	Actor Eight	
Judas Roman Soldier Bishop Alan DeClair		John the Baptise Zeloit Two

The **Set and Staging:** The set resembles the Apse, a semicircular architectural feature of a church with a radiating vault. The Apse will have two acting levels, representing the Chancel and Sanctuary. The choir seats occupy the Chancel area with two additional areas representing the lectern and pulpit. The choir seats are arranged in order to give direct access to the altar from a center aisle. The altar in the Sanctuary area, will served as a table and desk. Three stained glass windows will encircle the wall of the Apse. Minimum props and furniture allow easy flow from one scene to another, without pause.

Characters appear and disappear, and may even be present onstage when not in a particular scene. This play is of light and shadows.

The play is written for a company of eight actors, seven males and one female. All of actors will play at least two roles. The distribution of these roles will be at the discretion of the director.

Costumes for the actors retelling the gospel are black contemporary, with minimum colored accessories to distinguish the different characters. For the trial, the actors will be conservatively dressed in contemporary clothes or appropriate church attire.

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Act One

(Darkness. Solemn organ music is faintly heard as dark figures of men slowly walk onto the stage, carrying lit candles. They sit on benches in a half circle with their backs toward the audience. The lights softly rise on BISHOP PAUL YORK, a man in his sixties who is standing in the center of the stage. He starts to deliver the burial liturgy.)

YORK

I am the Resurrection and the Life, says the Lord. Whoever has faith in me shall have life, even though he die. And everyone who has life, and has committed himself to me in faith, shall not die forever.

(beat)

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last day he will stand upon the earth. After my awaking, he will raise me up; and in my body I shall see God. I myself shall see, and my eyes behold him who is my friend and not a stranger.

(beat)

For none of us has life in himself, and none becomes his own master when he dies. For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord and if we die, we die in the Lord. So, then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's possession.

(beat)

In the midst of life we are in death; from whom can we seek help? From you alone, O Father, who by our sins are justly angered.

(beat)

Father, you know the secrets of our hearts; shut not your ears to our prayers but spare us, O Father.

(beat)

O worthy and eternal Father, do not let the pains of death turn us away from you at our last hour.

(The candles are extinguished and lights change to reflect an earlier time. The ensemble rearranges the stage to reflect a waiting room.)

BISHOP RICHARD ANDREWS, a man in his late sixties, is sitting at the small conference room table with his wife, SUSAN, a woman in her early sixties, and his attorney, STEVEN LAND, a man in mid-fifties, who is reviewing his files and papers.)

LAND

(Without looking up from his papers)
We've a few minutes before we go into the courtroom and there are a few things to go over with you before the proceedings begin.

ANDREWS

I've not committed any crimes nor broken any laws.

LAND

(Looks up)
It is the Court that you have to convince. I hope that they will listen with an open heart and mind.

SUSAN

What are his chances of being acquitted?

LAND

It depends upon the Court's interpretation.

SUSAN

But the facts are there in black and white.

LAND

Your husband's accusers are using their own narrow interpretation of the laws and doctrine. The question is whether the Court will accept their interpretation.

(beat)

But in the meantime, it's important that you do not stoop to their level or tactics.

SUSAN

So we'll have to keep turning the other cheek, right?

(To Land)

Because of their accusations, we have received hundreds of hate calls, emails, and letters...some even threatening our lives.

ANDREWS

Susan, didn't he teach us to love our enemy?

SUSAN

I believe that they've forgotten about his teachings...and at times, I believe he has forsaken us.

ANDREWS

As hard as it is, he has not forsaken us.

LAND

We only have a few minutes before we go into the court.

ANDREWS

Yes.

(to Susan)

Do you mind getting me some something to drink?

SUSAN

What would you like?

ANDREWS

I would love martini...but you know it's too early.

(beat)

Water would be fine.

SUSAN

I'll see what I find.

ANDREWS

Thank you.

(Susan leaves the room.)

LAND

Can we proceed?

ANDREWS

Please.

LAND

I know we have been through this several times
...but I just want to go over a few more questions
before we go in.

ANDREWS

Okay.

LAND

Now to the person in question.

(beat)

How many years have you known Larry Schofield?

ANDREWS

(Remembering)

I don't know...I first met when I had just become
the Bishop of the diocese....about ten years ago.

LAND

Was it at this time that you knew of Mr. Schofield's
desire to be a priest?

ANDREWS

No...it was several years later.

LAND

Where were you?

ANDREWS

I believe I was in my office preparing a sermon.

(tries to remember)

You know the older one gets, the harder it is to keep track of time...or the sequence of events. It all blends together.

(thinks for a moment)

What if?

LAND

What if what?

ANDREWS

What if I haven't been there...if I haven't met him...if none of this had happened?

(beat)

What if?

(The lights change to reflect an earlier time. Andrews moves to a crowded desk with a stack of reference books next to it. LARRY SCHOFIELD, a young man in his mid-thirties, sticks his head in the door. With a saddlebag over one of his shoulders, his arms are full of files and books.)

LARRY

Hello.

ANDREWS

(Looks up from his work.)

Oh..hello. Can I help you with something?

LARRY

Yes...I have an appointment with you.

ANDREWS

You do? Does my assistant know?

LARRY

She should have. I made the appointment through her.

ANDREWS

Oh, I see.

LARRY

If this is not a good time, I could come back.

ANDREWS

(Stands up at his desk as he shuffles his papers around)
 Oh no...no. This is as good as time as any.
 (beat)
 Come in...please.

LARRY

Are you sure? If you are busy, I...

ANDREWS

No...no. This fine. I'm just working on my sermon for Sunday. It's on the life of John.

LARRY

John, the beloved?

ANDREWS

That's the one.

LARRY

The Gospel of John is my favorite.

ANDREWS

Is it? Why's that?

LARRY

I don't know...I guess it's because he was there with Him.

ANDREWS

Who was?

LARRY

John. He was personally there with Him, unlike some others in the Gospels.

ANDREWS

You mean Paul, don't you?

LARRY

Who else?

(beat)

And besides, he tells it like it is. There's no personal agendas. There's no beating around the bush with John.

ANDREWS

No beating around the bush, you say?

LARRY

It's one thing to write about someone else's experiences and stories; but it's another thing to write about your own.

(more)

LARRY (cont'd)

His picture of Jesus is one who promises love and hope, what most people want.

(beat)

I can't speak for anybody else but I need to believe in love and hope.

ANDREWS

We all need to believe.

LARRY

And also there's no harsh judgment in John as there is in the other gospels...just acceptance. That's what I believe Jesus was all about.

ANDREWS

I agree.

LARRY

The other gospel writers tend to forget the basic message of love and forgiveness in place of their own agendas.

ANDREWS

I see.

(beat)

So...

LARRY

So...

ANDREWS

Is there anything else you wanted to talk about or did you just stop by to say hello?

LARRY

Yes...there is.

(beat)

I want to be ordained.

ANDREWS

Ordained?!

LARRY

Yes, as a priest.

ANDREWS

A priest?

LARRY

Yes. I submitted all of my paperwork months ago to this office. And I would like for you to ordain me.

ANDREWS

You would?

(beat)

Just like John...no beating around the bush. Right to the point.

LARRY

But I'm qualified and ready.

ANDREWS

Not to mention being humble, too.

LARRY

If I don't speak up for myself...who will?

ANDREWS

Good point.

(beat)

Well. Please come in and sit down.

LARRY

(Walks in and sits down next to the desk.)

Thank you.

ANDREWS

So...tell me about yourself.

LARRY

Myself? Well...I think you know already. We've talked with each other nearly everyday since you first came here.

ANDREWS

And what I've seen since I've been at the Diocese is that you're a very active, creative and a hard worker. Is that right?

LARRY

Yes.

ANDREWS

Sometimes I've noticed that you get things stirred up.

LARRY

I do have a flair for color and controversy.

ANDREWS

I don't believe you ever told me where you are from originally.

LARRY

I thought I had.

(beat)

A small town in Delaware.

Really? Where?

ANDREWS

Lewis.

LARRY

No...Lewis by the ocean?

ANDREWS

(Thinks for a moment)

That's the same Lewis...unless it has been washed away by the winter storms.

LARRY

I grew up in Lewis, too. But of course, that was many years before you were born.

(beat)

Larry Schofield. Who was your father?

ANDREWS

Daniel...Daniel Schofield.

LARRY

No kidding! I went to school with Danny. How is he?

ANDREWS

Dead.

LARRY

Oh.

(beat)

I'm sorry to hear.

ANDREWS

No...don't be. He died over 20 years ago.

LARRY

How may I ask?

ANDREWS

Cancer.

LARRY

It seems so unfair.

ANDREWS

Like AIDs.

LARRY

(Caught off guard)

Yes.

(beat)

How true. So tell me...what are your interests in the church?

LARRY

Well...there are so many.

ANDREWS

For instance?

LARRY

For instance, I'm interested in developing new ideas in Christian education and outreach.

ANDREWS

I agree.

LARRY

There are so many hungry souls out in the world, wanting a place at the table and finding that they're not welcome.

ANDREWS

Of course, they are. Everyone is welcomed at God's table.

LARRY

I'm glad to hear you say that. Not everyone feels that way.

ANDREWS

There are always exceptions.

(beat)

Tell me more about you.

LARRY

(Takes some papers out of his saddlebag.)

Here is another copy of my application for you. But I think you already know.

ANDREWS

Refresh my memory.

LARRY

Okay. I'm a graduate of Berkeley Theological Seminary, a part-time lay assistant to the rector of the Good Shepherd, and I also work part-time at the diocese with the young adults and homeless outreach ministries.

ANDREWS

Ahhh...that's right.

(beat)

How long have you been a Candidate for Holy Orders?

LARRY

Several years.

ANDREWS

Where are the findings for your preliminary interviews?

LARRY

(Hands Andrews his files)

The recommendations are included.

ANDREWS

(Takes the files)

I see.

(beat)

So do you think you're qualified?

LARRY

I wouldn't be here if I didn't think I was.

ANDREWS

(Looks at the files)

Just looking at these, by your background and education as well as the screening process of every diocese in the Church, it looks like you're qualified for Holy Orders.

LARRY

What did I tell you?

ANDREWS

Yes, you're qualified.

LARRY

I've worked hard and I want my place at the table. I want to serve God.

ANDREWS

I can't see anything that would prevent me from ordaining you.

(DAVID JACKSON, a young attractive man in his late thirties walks past the office door and looks in. He sees Larry.)

DAVID

There you are.

LARRY

(Surprised)

David.

DAVID

(To Andrews)

Excuse me for barging in like this.

ANDREWS

Not at all.

DAVID

(To Larry)
How much longer do you think you will be? The kids are getting very restless in the car.

LARRY

(To David)
I'm almost through.
(to Andrews)
Bishop Andrews...you know David, my partner.

(David walks over and shakes Andrews' hand.)

ANDREWS

Oh yes, I've met you at several church meetings.
(taken back)
Your partner?!

LARRY

Yes, David and I have been together for close to seventeen years now.

ANDREWS

Seventeen years?! You've out lasted most marriages in this diocese.

DAVID

Tell me about it.

ANDREWS

(Speechless)
So that means you're hommmmmooooooo....

DAVID

Homosexual...gay, fag, queer. Pick your label.
(beat)
My mother calls us "special." But she is biased.

LARRY

(To David)
Please go and wait in the car. I'll be out in a moment.

DAVID

Take your time, but hurry up. The "kids" are becoming restless.

(David kisses Larry on the cheek and then leaves.)

ANDREWS
 (Looks through the file)
 I didn't know.

LARRY
 That I'm gay?

ANDREWS
 Yes.

LARRY
 You're surprised?

ANDREWS
 I am. You don't seem the type.

LARRY
 What is the type?

ANDREWS
 You know what I mean.

LARRY
 No, I don't. I'm sorry to disappoint you but I
 don't carry a purse and I'm not into leather.
 (beat)
 Now Martha Stewart is another thing.

ANDREWS
 That's not what I mean.
 (beat)
 What I meant is that you're very open.

LARRY
 As opposed to what? Being Catholic and either
 permanently in the closet or damned?

ANDREWS
 Are those my options?

LARRY
 I've never hidden anything or done anything that I
 should be ashamed of.

ANDREWS
 I didn't say you have.

LARRY
 Does it bother you?

ANDREWS
 What?

LARRY
 That I'm gay.

ANDREWS

No...why should it?

(beat)

Your family knows?

LARRY

Of course. I don't believe in the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy or the mother church's version, "Suppress and molest".

ANDREWS

Oh yes...and the band plays on.

(beat)

What about your father? Did he know?

LARRY

Yes...I told him before he died.

ANDREWS

What was his reaction?

LARRY

He told me that he knew all along but could never accept it. He blamed himself and my mother for it...and then he asked me to forgive him. I told him that there was nothing to forgive and that I loved him. He then told me how proud he was of me but that he was worried about my safety.

(beat)

And then he died.

ANDREWS

I see.

(beat)

Well. It might put a different light on your ordination.

LARRY

What does? Is it that I've been in relationship with a man for over seventeen years? We're very committed to each other.

ANDREWS

Glad to hear that. Your commitment is admirable, actually.

LARRY

David is on the vestry at our parish...He serves as the Senior Warden.

ANDREWS

You don't say. Well, how about that.

LARRY

We're just like any other family. We have two children.

(pulls out his wallet and pulls out a picture.)
Here they are. That's Lucy and here's Ethel.

ANDREWS

(looks at the picture)
But they're dogs.

LARRY

Sssshhhh.
(puts back the picture into his wallet)
Don't let them hear you say that.

ANDREWS

I won't even mention it.

LARRY

Well...now you know.
(beat)
Are you still willing to ordain me?

ANDREWS

(Thinks for a moment)
Why shouldn't I be? Ordaining a man who is qualified? That's not even a question.

LARRY

Even a man who happens to be gay and who's living in monogamous same-sex relationship?

ANDREWS

(Difficult)
Does this mean you're still having...intimacies with him?

LARRY

You mean, sex?

ANDREWS

That's one way of putting it.

LARRY

Yes...at least four times a week.

ANDREWS

At least four times...really?!

LARRY

We would have it more...but I have to be at the cathedral early to administer the Eucharist on three days.

ANDREWS

All I can say is...God bless you.

LARRY

(beat)

So?

ANDREWS

So what?

LARRY

Are you still willing to ordain me?

(beat)

There will be consequences.

ANDREWS

Consequences of what? I'm not aware of any laws or canons of the church that prohibits me from doing so.

(beat)

But with said, there will be others who will not understand and will act out of fear to oppose your ordination. The question is whether you are ready and strong enough to be subjected to the firestorm that will erupt when I ordain you? And unfortunately, there will be a firestorm.

LARRY

I can take it.

(beat)

Can you?

ANDREWS

Well I...I don't know. One can't..or shouldn't worry or spend much time about the unknown, should they?

(changes the subject)

John was younger than you when he started his ministries.

LARRY

And he had to endure persecution.

ANDREWS

He wasn't the only one. All the disciples were persecuted.

LARRY

But his was more personal.

ANDREWS

Why do you say that?

LARRY

Because of his relationship with Christ.

ANDREWS

That's just speculation...there's no proof.

LARRY

No...It's there in the Gospel. If he could endure it to the end, I should also be able to do the same.

(beat)

So what will it be?

ANDREWS

I have a sermon to prepare.

(stands up)

So...what if we could continue this discussion next week?

LARRY

(Stands up quickly)

Of course.

(beat)

You're not going to change your mind, are you?

ANDREWS

Why should I?

LARRY

You said that I was qualified.

ANDREWS

I have a responsibility to make sure you are ready to take the vows.

LARRY

But I'm ready. I've been ready for a long time.

ANDREWS

And I'm not saying that you're not. There is procedure that I need to follow.

LARRY

I don't know...but it sounds more like a delaying tactic to me.

ANDREWS

I assure you it is not. Do you think I would stoop to do something like that?

LARRY

I don't know...but others have done so in the past. "If you wait long enough, they'll get tired and go home." Well...I'm not going home.

ANDREWS

Patience is a virtue, my son.

LARRY

I will work on it.

ANDREWS

(Stands up at his desk)
So we will talk next week?

LARRY

We will.
(beat)
Good day, Bishop Andrews.

ANDREWS

Good day.

(Andrews watches Larry leave the room and then sits down slowly at his desk and looks at his piles of papers. He picks a worn bible and flips through the pages and starts to read.)

ANDREWS

(continuing)
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."
(looks up with the dreaded realization of what is about to happen.)
Oh Father...what I am I doing?

(The lights fade out on Andrews and comes up on the INQUISITOR.)

INQUISITOR

Bring the prisoner in.

(Soldiers drag a beaten and tortured JOHN into the room, his arms are tied together in the back, into the room.)

INQUISITOR

(continuing; Points to a lone chair.)
Put him over there.

(Soldiers drag John over to the chair.)

INQUISITOR

(continuing; walks over to John)
Are you ready to talk now?

(John says nothing.)

INQUISITOR

(continuing)
Guards.

(The guards come toward John.)

JOHN
 (Tries to protect himself)
 Don't. Don't let them hit me.

INQUISITOR
 Then tell me what you know.

JOHN
 There's nothing to tell.

(Inquisitor loses his patience and
 slaps him hard across the face.)

JOHN
 (continuing)
 Please...don't.

INQUISITOR
 You can make it easy on yourself.

JOHN
 I've told them already what I know.

INQUISITOR
 Tell me.

(Inquisitor slaps John again..hard
 enough that John falls off the chair.)

JOHN
 (cries out)
 Please don't...I've done nothing wrong except to
 love him.

INQUISITOR
 Tell me what you know.
 (beat; threatens to strike him again)
 TELL ME!

(John tries to protect himself.)

JOHN
 All right...all right. I'll tell you what I know.

INQUISITOR
 Untie his hands.

(The guard removes the restraints.)

JOHN
 Thank you.

INQUISITOR
State you name for the record.

JOHN
John.

INQUISITOR
Parents?

JOHN
I'm the son of Zebedee and Salome.

INQUISITOR
Where are you from?

JOHN
From a small village on Lake of Genesareth,

INQUISITOR
What kind of work do you do?

JOHN
I was a fisherman with my father and brother.

INQUISITOR
When did you meet this man Jesus?

JOHN
I don't know...three years ago or so.

INQUISITOR
Where?

JOHN
I was hanging out with my brother, James, and his friends one day.

INQUISITOR
The one who is a fisherman?

JOHN
Yes.

INQUISITOR
The one we have just put to death for abetting the enemy.

JOHN
(beat)
He was only preaching the truth.

INQUISITOR
(With disgust)
The truth?! He was a terrorist.

JOHN
He wasn't.

INQUISITOR
Finish your story.

JOHN
Well...we had heard about this performer.

INQUISITOR
What was his name?

JOHN
He called himself John the Baptist.
(beat)
I don't know how to describe him. People who saw him said that he was a prophet--

INQUISITOR
A prophet?

JOHN
That's what they said. He claimed he was sent by God to show the way to the "life-light."

INQUISITOR
Life-light? What's that?

JOHN
The real thing.

INQUISITOR
What?

JOHN
You see, for every person who enters life, he brings into light.
(beat)
Does that make sense?

INQUISITOR
No.

JOHN
I didn't think it would. It's complicated.

INQUISITOR
(Starts to lose his temper)
I don't care what it is. Who are you talking about? This John character?

JOHN
You see...he wasn't.

INQUISITOR

He wasn't what?! What are you talking about.

JOHN

He wasn't the light.

INQUISITOR

He wasn't?

JOHN

No.

INQUISITOR

Then what was he doing there?

JOHN

He was there to show the way to the light.

INQUISITOR

Show the what?

(slaps John hard)

Quit messing with me.

JOHN

I'm not...I'm not.

(beat)

He was kinda there to warm-up the crowd.

(beat)

We heard that he was performing in the next village...so a group of us went to check him out.

(The light comes on JOHN THE BAPTIST, a rugged-looking man in his thirties, as he is performing at a rock concert.)

JOHN B

I'm not the Messiah nor Elijah, nor the Prophet. I only baptize using water.

INQUISITOR

What?

JOHN B

Here he is...the one you're been waiting for...God's Passover Lamb! He forgives the sins of the world. This is the man I've been talking about.

JOHN

And then I turned and saw him for the first time.

(JESUS, a young, handsome man, appears from the darkness.)

INQUISITOR

Who?

JOHN

Jesus. He was different from the rest...and suddenly, this feeling...this spirit, flies down out of the sky like a dove, making himself at home in him. It was incredible.

INQUISITOR

Were you on anything...like herbs or mushrooms?

JOHN

No. Why do you ask?

INQUISITOR

You sound like you were high on something.

JOHN

I was...but not on anything like that. There was no question about it...He was the Son of God.

INQUISITOR

Was he?

JOHN

Yes...I didn't have any doubts. From the moment that I saw him, I knew that He was the one I was waiting for all my life.

(beat)

My brother went over to him after the show to get his autograph.

(James and others go over to him. John walks over and joins his brother.)

JAMES

We loved the show. You were great.

JESUS

Thanks. I appreciate you're coming. So...where are you guys from?

JAMES

In the next village over.

JESUS

Oh...really. Are you staying in town tonight?

(Jesus looks around and sees John.)

JAMES

No...I don't think so. All of the inns are sold out. We'll probably just camp out along the road somewhere on the way back.

(To John)
 What about you?

JESUS

Me?!

JOHN

You.

JESUS

No....I'm with them.

JOHN

I see.
 (beat)
 So what are your plans?

JESUS

When?

JOHN

Tonight...tomorrow...the next day.

JESUS

I...I don't know. I guess just hanging out with my brother and friends.

JOHN

(Jesus touches John's face.)

JESUS

You're beautiful.

JOHN

(Becomes self-conscious)
 Oh yeah? You think so?

JESUS

Yes.

JOHN

Thanks.
 (beat)
 You're not so bad either.

JESUS

I have an idea. Why don't you come back with me?

JOHN

What? Where?

JESUS

I'm staying at the camp down the road.

JOHN

I would like to...but I can't tonight. I couldn't leave my friends behind...especially my brother. He doesn't know.

JESUS

About what?

JOHN

You know...about me.

JESUS

Oh.

(beat)

Well, bring them along.

JOHN

What?!

(beat)

I'm close to my brother but not that close...if you know what I mean.

JESUS

What is there to know? I will teach you.

JOHN

I bet you will.

(beat)

No, I don't think so. I'm still pretty new about all of this...and no one knows.

JESUS

You seem surprised.

JOHN

Well I am...you know...I just thought--

JESUS

That's okay. There's room for all of you.

(Lights dim over Jesus. John returns to his chair with Inquisitor.)

INQUISITOR

So did you go home with him?

JOHN

Yes...but we all did.

INQUISITOR

Like an orgy, huh?

JOHN

Oh, no...no. It was nothing like that. He was very loving...but very private. No...none of that.

INQUISITOR

And then what happened?

JOHN

And I ended up staying with him...along with the others.

INQUISITOR

The others?

JOHN

You know...my brother, James, Andrew...Andrew's brother Simon Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, Judas...

INQUISITOR

Judas?! The one who--?

JOHN

Yes. The one and only.

INQUISITOR

What kind of a person was he?

JOHN

In the beginning, Judas was like the rest of us, trying to find himself. He just wanted to be loved and accepted.

INQUISITOR

So what happened?

JOHN

I don't know exactly. But I think he wanted Jesus exclusively. But when it became clear that he couldn't have him, he started to hang out with a different group of people.

INQUISITOR

How were they different?

JOHN

Their priorities were all screwed up. Everything was money and instant fame and self-gratification to them. You know the type who would sell their own mothers if they thought they could get ahead.

INQUISITOR

I know the type. Who was this Paul character?

JOHN

I don't know. Despite what he says, Paul didn't show up until it was all over.

INQUISITOR

Interesting. Paul gives you the impression that he was there.

JOHN

Yeah...talk is cheap. But the fact of the matter is that he wasn't there.

(beat)

I don't even think he even met Jesus. He just heard of him through friends.

INQUISITOR

But the way that he talks --

JOHN

I know.

(beat)

He talks and talks...but he keeps forgetting that it's not about him.

(beat)

Three days later we all went to a wedding in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there.

(The lights go up on MARY, an exasperated, older woman in late forties, hurries over to Jesus and the other men.)

MARY

Where have you been? You were supposed to be here an hour ago.

JESUS

What can I say? I'm sorry.

MARY

You've got to do better than that.

JESUS

We were held up in traffic.

MARY

Traffic?! Oh come on.

JESUS

We were. There was this three camel pile-up outside of Magadan.

MARY

Tell me another one.

(referring to the disciples)

And who are these people?

JESUS

They're my friends.

MARY

(Distaste)
You're friends?! Where do you find these people?
Don't answer me.

JESUS

What are you implying?

MARY

You know. People are beginning to talk. You're always hanging around with young men. It's pretty obvious what's going on. You can't pull the wool over my eyes.

JESUS

I wasn't trying to.

MARY

Just remember...I know what's going on and I don't like it. Mothers always know. They may be in denial...but believe you me, they know.

JESUS

There's nothing to hide. You knew from the beginning.

MARY

Yeah...I knew all right...but I had no idea.

(beat)

At times, I wish you would settle down and find yourself a nice woman to marry so I can retire and wouldn't have to cater these weddings.

JESUS

(Looks back at John)
I have met someone--

MARY

Who?
(Catches his glances)
I said a woman.

JESUS

But mother...

MARY

I don't want to talk about it.
(beat)
I told the Bernsteins that they should have "four glasses of wine per guest." But they're so cheap and they wouldn't listen to me. And now we're running out of wine.

(beat)

Isn't there anything you can do?

JESUS

Like what?

MARY

You know...use your magic powers.

JESUS

Is that any of our business, Mother?

MARY

Of course it is. Who do you think supports this family? We can't make it off of your father's carpenter salary.

JESUS

He's not my father.

MARY

(In private)

You know that...and I know that...but I don't think you have to advertise it. People will talk...more than they do already.

(beat)

Can you do something about the wine?

JESUS

It's not my time.

MARY

When is it going to be? You were born with talents...use them!

JESUS

Don't push me.

MARY

You're really trying my patience. Don't sit around, do something with your life.

(Mary storms off. John walks over to Jesus.)

JOHN

So what are you going to do?

JESUS

What else can I do but "honor thy mother."

JOHN

You can ignore her like I do mine.

JESUS

Mothers...you can't live with them and you can't live without them.

JOHN

(To the inquisitor.)

And then he ordered the servants to fill the
pitchers with water and take them to the host.

(beat)

The water had become wine.

INQUISITOR

Wine? How did he do that?

JOHN

I don't know and it wasn't the cheap stuff that you
buy in a box...but a fine wine.

(Mary comes running back.)

MARY

I knew you could do it if you put your mind to it.

JESUS

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

MARY

They love the wine...and they want to know where
they can buy a case of it.

(beat)

You know...I've been thinking, and I...

JESUS

(About to lose his temper)

Mother...don't go there.

MARY

Well...I just thought we could use the extra money.

JESUS

No.

MARY

But there would be hardly any cost involved...except
for bottles and labels...and a good source of water.

JESUS

Mother. No.

(The lights dim on Jesus and come up on
Land and Andrews at the conference
table.)

LAND

Your presenters have accused you of teaching a
Doctrine contrary to that held by this Church and
that you violate his ordination vows to conform to
the Doctrine of the Church by ordaining of a
practicing homosexual to the priesthood.

ANDREWS

The Doctrine arises out of the Gospel itself and is rooted and grounded in Holy Scripture. But the development and change in the Church's Doctrine; teaching has occurred in various aspects of the Church's life.

(beat)

For example, for most of its history the Church understood slavery as normative in society and acceptable within Christian life and practice. Gradually, we've come to accept that the enslavement of human beings violates the Gospel's gift of freedom and dignity to every human being. The continuing struggle to understand and overcome the effects of racism in contemporary culture indicates this work has not been completed, nor have we fully grasped its implications for faith and morals.

(beat)

Another example, the Church for generations also interpreted New Testament passages on divorce and remarriage as a fixed and unchangeable law which prohibited remarriage in the Church after divorce. We've come to see and understand that marriages can die and even be places of destruction which may justify their termination. The Church now recognizes remarriage in the light of the Gospel can be a new beginning grounded upon God's forgiveness and reconciliation.

(The lights dim on Andrews and Land comes up on John in his chair with the Inquisitor.)

JOHN

There was an incident at a well in Sychar with a Samaritan woman.

(beat)

The Pharisees were harassing us in Judea and so we decided to head back to Galilee.

INQUISITOR

Why were they harassing you?

JOHN

I don't know...the length of our hair? The way we were dressed?

INQUISITOR

Were you flaunting sexuality?

JOHN

Flaunting what?

(beat)

No, we were just being ourselves.

INQUISITOR

So what happened?

JOHN

(beat)

It was noon. We had been traveling for a while and Jesus was worn out. So he sat down at a well to rest. Some of the disciples decided to go into the village and get some lunch.

(The lights come up on Jesus at the well.)

INQUISITOR

And?

JOHN

Apparently this Samaritan woman came out to get some water from the well.

(SAMARITAN WOMAN, in her thirties, walks over to the well.)

SAMARITAN WOMAN

New to town?

JESUS

Yeah, I'm on my way home to Galilee.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Galilee, huh? Oh, I'm impressed.

JESUS

Could I have a drink of water, please?

SAMARITAN WOMAN

(Taken back. Laughs to herself)

How come you, a Jew, are asking me for a drink?

JESUS

I guess it's because I'm thirsty. I've been traveling a long time.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

You and the rest of them wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans. And you're asking me for some water?

JESUS

I'm not like the rest.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

They all say that.

JESUS

If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink and I would give you fresh, living water.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

'Fresh, living water.' That's a new one. So where's your bucket?

JESUS

I don't have one.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

You don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? You're no better than anybody else in this town.

JESUS

Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

And...?

JESUS

Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst again.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Yeah, sure. Like "the check's in the mail."

JESUS

It's true. The water I give will be an artesian spring within gushing fountains of endless life.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Oh brother, you're something else.

(pours him some water)

So okay...why don't you give me some of this water of yours so I won't ever get thirsty and I won't ever have to come back to this lousy well again?

JESUS

Go call your husband and then come back.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

I'm not married.

JESUS

Not now, you're not. But you've had five husbands.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

How do you know? Who told you?

JESUS

And what about that man who's living with you now?

SAMARITAN WOMAN

What about him?

JESUS

He isn't even your husband.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

(Defensive)

Yeah...so. He's separated from his wife. He told me that he'll marry me after the divorce comes through.

JESUS

Sure he will.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

He will. He told me that he loves me.

JESUS

Does he?

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Listen mister...I'm not that kind of a woman.

(beat)

Okay...so I've been around the block a couple of times and I've made some mistakes...but I'm not a slut.

JESUS

Who said you were? You're the one that's keeping yourself down.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Hey...what are you, a psychic or something?

JESUS

No...I'm the Prophet.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

(Disbelief)

Sure you are...and I'm the Queen of Sheba.

JESUS

I am.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Yeah...sure.

(beat)

So tell me this. Our ancestors have always worshiped God at this mountain.

JESUS

And....?

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Why is it you people insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship?

JESUS

Believe me, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Where?

JESUS

Where you go to worship will not matter, and what you're called will not matter.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Let me get this straight. What you're saying is that I can go anywhere to worship and I won't be discriminated against because of who I am, right?

JESUS

Right.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

That's easy for you to say. You're a Jewish man and I'm a Samaritan woman.

JESUS

It doesn't make a difference. It's who you are and the way you live that counts before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

You mean I've got to level with Him?

JESUS

That's the idea. The kind of people the Father is out looking for are those who are simply and honestly themselves before Him in their worship.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

But what if He--?

JESUS

He won't. God doesn't discriminate about whom He loves. God is sheer being itself--Spirit. Those who worship Him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves in adoration.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

You make it sound so easy.

JESUS

It is.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

I don't know about all of this. What I do know is that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we'll get the whole story.

JESUS

But you don't get it...I am the Messiah. You don't have to wait any longer.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

You?!

(Disbelief)

Get out of here. What do you think I am, blond or something?

(realizes)

You're not kidding me, are you?

(The disciples come back, talking amongst themselves when they see Jesus with the Samaritan Woman. Speechless, they stop. The Samaritan Woman looks at them and takes the hint and starts to leave.)

SAMARITAN WOMAN

(continuing; To the disciples)

I'm going.

JESUS

Don't.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

But--

JESUS

You don't have to go, if you don't want to.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

But it's pretty obvious that I'm not welcome here.

JESUS

Forget about them. They're still learning.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

I know...we're all have a lot to learn, right?

JESUS

Right.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

Thanks for talking with me and for making me feel like I'm somebody special.

JESUS

But you are.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

I don't know if I am or not but thanks anyway.

(The Samaritan Woman starts to leave.)

JESUS

(calls out)

Remember what I told you.

SAMARITAN WOMAN

(turns around)

I will.

(beat)

See you in church.

(The Samaritan woman leaves.)

MATTHEW

What's going on around here?

JUDAS

(Hands Jesus a sandwich.)

I got you your favorite...white fish on rye, hold the mayonnaise.

JESUS

(Takes the sandwich; to Judas)

Thank you.

(to Matthew)

Talking with one of the locals. Do you have a problem with that?

MATTHEW

But she's a Samaritan!

JESUS

Yeah...and?

JUDAS

I would have gotten some figs for you but they didn't look fresh...and so..

JESUS

(To John)

Do you want some of this sandwich?

JUDAS

(To Jesus)
I didn't buy it for him.

JOHN

(To Jesus)
No...I'm fine.

(As he eats his sandwich, Jesus becomes engaged in a conversation with his disciples and doesn't hear Judas.)

JUDAS

How's the sandwich? Is it good?
(gets no response; to himself)
Thanks...you're welcome.

JAMES

Aren't you afraid of what others will think if they see you talking with people like that?

JUDAS

(To Jesus)
Did you hear what I said?
(beat)
It's me...Judas. Remember?

JESUS

(To James)
No...not really.
(to John)
Please take some of this sandwich. I can't eat all of it.

JOHN

(Takes some of the food)
Okay...thanks.

MATTHEW

But people will talk.

JUDAS

Hello...there are others besides John.

JESUS

(To Matthew)
And what's your point?

JAMES

Aren't you concerned about what others will think?

JESUS

I'm not interested in a popularity contest.

MATTHEW

Well...you should be.

JESUS

Why?

MATTHEW

Well...because.

JESUS

So that I can be like the rest of them...shallow?

JUDAS

We're not being judgmental, are we?

JESUS

(To Matthew and James)

I hate to be the one to break the news to you, but love, especially God's love, is not on your agenda.

JUDAS

If you only knew how much I love you.

JAMES

But--

JOHN

(To Jesus)

You know how I feel for you. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you.

JESUS

(To John)

I know. You're an exception.

JUDAS

It's always about John, isn't it? What about me?

JESUS

(Ignores Judas and speaks to the rest)

I came with the authority of my Father. You can either love me or leave me. If another came, acting self-important, you would welcome him with open arms.

(to Judas)

Did you say something?

JUDAS

No...it's not important. I'm not important.

JAMES

No, we wouldn't. You make us sound like groupies.

MATTHEW

(To James)

Now that you've mentioned it...you kinda look like--

JAMES

Takes one to know one.

(He shoves Matthew.)

MATTHEW

Oh yeah?

JESUS

Knock it off. How do you expect to get anywhere with God when you spend all your time jockeying for position with each other?

JAMES

He started it.

MATTHEW

No...you did.

JESUS

I don't care who started it. Love each other.

(The lights dim over Jesus as John returns to his chair with the Inquisitor.)

INQUISITOR

What happened to the Samaritan woman?

JOHN

She went home and told all of her neighbors what He had said to her. They came to Him and asked Him to stay. And He did.

INQUISITOR

And the Samaritan woman?

JOHN

You won't believe it. She became a new woman...completely changed and finally took control of her life.

INQUISITOR

In what way?

JOHN

Well, from what I heard, she threw out that loser she was living with.

INQUISITOR

She what?

JOHN

Threw him out.

INQUISITOR

She had no right to do that. She's a woman. She should have been stoned to death.

JOHN

For what? For being a woman or getting her self-respect back?

INQUISITOR

(Threatens John)

What was that?

JOHN

(Trying to shield himself)

Nothing...nothing. Don't hit me, please.

INQUISITOR

Just answer my questions.

JOHN

Alright.

INQUISITOR

Do you know anything about the Galilee incident? We had reports that you were there.

JOHN

Well...I...I

INQUISITOR

(Threatens to hit John)

Answer my question...what happens next?

JOHN

Okay...okay. Don't hit me.

(beat)

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A huge crowd followed him, attracted by the miracles they had seen him do among the sick. When he got on the other side, he climbed a hill and sat down, and suddenly he was surrounded by his followers...there were hundreds of them.

INQUISITOR

When was this?

JOHN

(Tries to remember)

I think it was in the spring sometime.

INQUISITOR

Then what happened?

JOHN

Well, before we knew it, word spread and an even larger crowd had arrived.

(Lights come up. Sounds of a growing crowd are heard.)

JAMES

(Surveys the crowd.)

Holy Moses! Where did all of these people come from?

MATTHEW

It's a mob down there.

JUDAS

Can you imagine how much money we could have made if we charged admission.

(to himself)

Then there is the concession and souvenirs --

JESUS

There's no admission charge for God.

JUDAS

I was just thinking.

JAMES

Yeah...you're always thinking and it's always about money.

JUDAS

I'm just trying to improve my finances...I mean our finances.

JESUS

But not off the backs of other people.

JUDAS

Everybody does. They teach it in Business 101 at the Temple.

JESUS

This individual doesn't.

(looks over the growing crowd of people)

Where can we buy food to feed these people?

JAMES

You're not serious, are you?

JESUS

It's the Passover. We've got to feed them something.

JAMES

With what? Twenty silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for all these people.

MATTHEW

Don't look at me. I don't have that kind of money.
I'm just a tax accountant.

JESUS

And besides, we can't just serve them bread. That's
not even an appetizer.

MATTHEW

I recall seeing a little boy in the crowd selling
barley loaves and fish.

JAMES

I saw him, too. He only had less than a half dozen
loaves and a couple of fish left.

JESUS

That's not enough.

JAMES

Maybe three or four dozen sandwiches at the most.

MATTHEW

And with no condiments.

JUDAS

And nothing to wash it down with.

(thinks to himself)

What if....?

JAMES

(To Judas)

Don't even go there.

JUDAS

What? I was just thinking.

MATTHEW

(To Judas)

Do us a favor and don't think?

JESUS

That's enough. Quit fighting. There are people who
are hungry down there and they need to be fed.

JUDAS

But it's not our responsibility.

JESUS

And whose responsibility is it?

JAMES

I don't know...but surely the Roman government must
have a program to handle this.

MATTHEW

Yeah...it's called market-based starvation. It's one of their faith-based programs. If you have the money, then you can eat. If you don't, well.....

JESUS

(To James)

Now why don't you go down and buy the loaves and fishes from the boy?

JAMES

I don't think I have enough money.

JESUS

(To Matthew)

Do you have some silver on you to give to him?

MATTHEW

(Hands over some money)

Not much...but here's what I got.

JESUS

(To Judas)

Could you have the people sit down?

JUDAS

I still think it's a bad idea. The more you give them, the more they'll want.

JESUS

But what if they want to hear the message? Do you discriminate then?

JUDAS

Well...

(beat)

Okay, so I'm not perfect.

JESUS

Then go and have the people sit down.

(beat)

Matthew, help him.

MATTHEW

Okay.

(beat)

Come on John. Put that journal down and help us.

JOHN

(To James)

All right.

(Lights go down on Jesus and his disciples.)

INQUISITOR

How many people were there?

JOHN

(To Inquisitor)

I don't know exactly. I heard it was about five thousand.

INQUISITOR

Five what?!

(threatens John)

Don't play games with me.

JOHN

I'm not. Don't hit me, please.

(beat)

There were a lot of people.

INQUISITOR

Then what happened?

JOHN

Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and passed to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish.

INQUISITOR

Was he able to feed them all?

JOHN

Yes...they ate as much as they wanted.

INQUISITOR

How did he do it?

JOHN

I don't know...he just did it.

(beat)

When the people had eaten their fill, Jesus told all of us to gather the left over food so nothing was wasted. They went to work and filled twelve large baskets.

(Lights go up on the disciples)

MATTHEW

So...what are we going to do with all this?

JAMES

It's all going to spoil if we don't do something.

JUDAS

What if we repackaged it and then sell it back to the people?

JESUS

(In disbelief. To Judas)

You still don't get it.

(to James and Matthew)

We'll feed the poor.

(Lights go down on the disciples.)

INQUISITOR

What happened after that?

JOHN

The people realized that God was at work among them in what he had just done.

INQUISITOR

(Laughs)

What?! They probably had food poisoning from the fish.

JOHN

No. They knew he was a Prophet for sure.

INQUISITOR

A Prophet?!

JOHN

Yes.

INQUISITOR

Yeah...right.

(beat)

So then what happened?

JOHN

The crowd went wild.

INQUISITOR

You mean a riot broke out.

JOHN

Whatever...he saw the crowd's enthusiasm. As they rushed toward him, shouting that they wanted to make him king, he slipped off and went back up the mountain.

INQUISITOR

What did he do up there?

JOHN

I don't know. He wanted to be by himself.

INQUISITOR

There was another incident happened shortly after that involving a blind man.

JOHN

Yes. How did you know?

INQUISITOR

We have our ways.

(beat)

What happened?

JOHN

Well...we were walking down the street one day and saw a blind man.

(The lights go up on the blind man, sitting on the floor, begging for money.)

INQUISITOR

Blind, huh? How could you tell?

JOHN

I don't know...but you could.

INQUISITOR

Was he begging for money?

JOHN

He wasn't a beggar. He needed help.

INQUISITOR

And you fell for his act?

JOHN

It wasn't an act. He was blind.

(The lights go up Jesus and the disciples.)

BLIND MAN

Can you spare some change? Anything?

MATTHEW

(To the others)

Keep walking and don't look at him.

JAMES

There should be laws about panhandlers.

JUDAS

He's disgusting.

MATTHEW

The more you give them, the more they want.

JESUS

Remember...he's your brother.

MATTHEW

No, he's not. My brother sells water-front properties by the Red Sea.

(to the blind man)

No. I don't have any money. Now go away and earn your own.

JESUS

That wasn't very loving.

MATTHEW

Loving?!

(to Jesus)

I'm still paying for that little "on the mount" picnic of yours.

JESUS

Picnic?

MATTHEW

Don't you remember? You know...five thousand of your closest friends.

JESUS

You don't get it, do you?

MATTHEW

Oh yeah...I get it all right.

(to himself)

Talk about a "fulfilling" experience.

JAMES

(to Matthew)

What you are complaining about? We had leftovers for days.

MATTHEW

Days...and days...and days. If I never see another loaf of barley bread, it will be too soon.

JUDAS

And the fish!

(to James)

You can still smell the fish on my fingers.

JAMES

So that's why there were so many cats and Lesbians following you around.

JUDAS

Very funny.

MATTHEW

Maybe I should go home and get some of that bread for him. That would make him quit begging.

JESUS

You should feel sorry for him. He's blind.

JUDAS

That's just a poor excuse for not getting a real job.

JAMES

(Thinks to himself)
I wonder...who sinned?

JESUS

What do you mean?

JAMES

Who sinned? Was it this man or his parents who caused him to be born this way?

JESUS

Neither.

JAMES

But it has got to be one of them.

MATTHEW

Yeah...someone has to be blamed.

JESUS

No one is to blame. Look instead for what God can do.

JUDAS

Like getting rid of freeloaders like that?

JAMES

You should talk.

JESUS

(Disappointed)
James, you know better.
(beat)

We need to be working hard for the One who sent me here, working while there's still time.

JOHN

(walks over to Jesus)
What? Time? Is there a deadline that we should know about?

JESUS

When night falls, the workday is over.

JOHN

And....?

JESUS

For as long as I'm in the world, there's plenty of light.

JOHN

What are you talking about? You're not going anywhere, are you?

JESUS

Not yet.

(beat)

Why do you ask?

JOHN

I couldn't bear it if you did. You're everything to me...you're my light.

JESUS

(Touches John's face)

And you to me.

JUDAS

But what about the rest of us? Are we chopped liver?

JESUS

You're all loved.

(Jesus bends down and picks up some dirt from the ground, makes a paste, and covers the blind man's eyes with it.)

BLIND MAN

Hey...what are you doing?

JESUS

Relax.

BLIND MAN

All I wanted was some change...not a facial.

JESUS

Now go wash at the Pool of Siloam.

BLIND MAN

Excuse me...but aren't you going to give me a hint where it is...since I'm the one who's blind here?

JESUS

(Points him to the direction)

Here. Now go.

BLIND MAN

(sarcastic)

Great. That's a big help.

(He walks off, bumping into people as he goes.)

JOHN

(To the Inquisitor)

And the man went to the pool and washed...and he was able to see.

INQUISITOR

What?

JOHN

Yes. It was another miracle.

(beat)

Soon the town was buzzing.

(Lights come back on the blind man's family.)

JOHN

(continuing)

His family and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were astounded.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

I can't believe it. Is that cousin Jerry?

FAMILY MEMBER 2

No, Jerry was the one who sat around and whined all day. Marvin was the blind beggar.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

But he looks so clean. That couldn't be him.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

Marvin...is that you?

(The blind man walks on. There's a noticeable change in this appearance.)

BLIND MAN

It's me.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

Oh my God! How did you get your vision back?

BLIND MAN

You won't believe me.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

We probably won't, but go ahead and give it a try.

BLIND MAN

Well...there's this man called Jesus...and he made some sort of paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, "Go to Siloam and wash." I did what he told me to do. When I washed, I could see for the first time in my life.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

That was it?

BLIND MAN

Yes.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

That's amazing. How much did he charge?

BLIND MAN

Nothing.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

Nothing?!

FAMILY MEMBER 1

You can't beat that.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

There's must be a catch to this.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

Do you think he can do anything with the bags under my eyes?

BLIND MAN

I don't know. He's a good miracle worker but isn't that asking a lot?

FAMILY MEMBER 2

So where is he?

BLIND MAN

I don't know.

FAMILY MEMBER 1

You better come with us.

(The family members leads the blind man to the Pharisee.)

JOHN

(To Inquisitor)
They marched the man to the Pharisee.

PHARISEE

(To the blind man)
So what are you telling me? You were blind and now you're able to see?

BLIND MAN

Yes.

PHARISEE

How is this possible?

BLIND MAN

I told you already. This man put some sort of paste on my eyes and then I washed, and now I can see.

PHARISEE

And that was it?

FAMILY MEMBER 1

And he didn't charge anything.

PHARISEE

He what?!

(beat)

And now you're going to tell me that he walks on water?

BLIND MAN

I don't know about that. All I know is that he made me see.

PHARISEE

Does he have a license to practice?

BLIND MAN

I don't know.

PHARISEE

Obviously, this man can't be from God. He doesn't keep the Sabbath and I doubt that this paste has been approved by the High Council.

FAMILY MEMBER 2

But how can a man do miraculous stunts like this?

FAMILY MEMBER 1

And not charge anything? It's not natural.

PHARISEE

(To the blind man)
You're the expert. He opened your eyes. What do you say about him?

BLIND MAN

I don't know...I think he's the Prophet.

PHARISEE

He's what?! You don't know what you're talking about.

(To the Family Members)

Are you sure that he's your cousin who was born blind?

FAMILY MEMBER 1

Why would I lie? That's Marvin.

PHARISEE

Are you sure he's been blind since birth?

FAMILY MEMBER 1

As far as I can remember he was always walking into things.

(to the Family Member 2)

Isn't that right?

FAMILY MEMBER 2

You're right. I still can't believe that he didn't charge anything. There must be a catch to it.

PHARISEE

He's probably operating without a license. He sounds like an impostor.

BLIND MAN

I know nothing about that one way or the other. But I know one thing for sure. I was blind...and now I can see.

PHARISEE

And you expect us to believe that. What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?

BLIND MAN

I told you over and over but you're still not listening. Why do you want to hear it again?

PHARISEE

Because I don't believe you.

BLIND MAN

What do you want me to say? That I'm a disciple of his?!

PHARISEE

What?!

FAMILY MEMBER 2

You became a disciple?!

FAMILY MEMBER 1

Oh my God. What have we done?

FAMILY MEMBER 2

And this man doesn't charge anything?

PHARISEE

Are you a disciple?

BLIND MAN

I don't know. All I know is that I can see for the first time in my life.

PHARISEE

(To the blind man)

I don't know what he has done to you but we're disciples of Moses. We know for sure that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man even comes from and who is speaking to him.

BLIND MAN

You claim to know nothing about him, but the fact is, he made me see! If anyone came from God, he did.

PHARISEE

How dare you take that tone with us. You're nothing but dirt.

PHARISEE

(continuing; beat)
Get out here!

(Pharisee throws the blind man out into the street.)

JOHN

(To the Inquisitor)
Jesus heard that they had thrown him out and went and found him.

(Jesus looks around and sees the Blind Man on the ground. The Pharisees hide in the shadows as they see Jesus bend down and comfort the blind man.)

JESUS

Are you okay, my brother?

BLIND MAN

(Without looking at him)
Leave me alone.

JESUS

Do you believe in the Son of God?

BLIND MAN

Tell me who he is so that I can believe in him.

JESUS

You're looking right at him.

BLIND MAN

What?

JESUS

Don't you recognize my voice?

BLIND MAN

(Looks up and sees Jesus)

It's you, master.

JESUS

I came into the world to bring everything into the light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind.

(The Pharisees come out of the shadows.)

PHARISEE

Are you calling us blind?

JESUS

(To the Pharisees)

If you were blind, you would be blameless. But since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure...and there are plenty to account for.

(helps up the Blind Man)

Come on, my friend.

(The lights dim over Jesus and blind man and come up on Andrews and Land.)

ANDREWS

This is what Jesus is about...living in communion with a wide range of people, including those who are considered by some as undesirables, sinners, and outcasts. We can't always manage to live by Jesus's two great commandments - to love God and one's neighbor - but if we take ourselves seriously as Christians, it seems to me, we're compelled to try.

LAND

But your accusers say that this case is about order, authority, and family values.

ANDREWS

What?! Order, authority, and family values?

(beat)

No. This case is about whether there is a doctrine in the Church prohibiting this orientation.

LAND

Your presenters accused you of saying that a wholesome example of the flock of Christ does not exclude a person of homosexual orientation nor does it exclude those homosexual persons who choose to live out their sexual orientation in a partnership that is marked by faithfulness and life-giving holiness.

(beat)

You knew Larry Schofield was a practicing homosexual, living in a sexual partnership with a person of the same sex prior to ordination and intending to continue in that relationship after ordination.

ANDREWS

First, I don't believe you don't have to practice to be a homosexual. It's not like playing the piano. Either you are or you're not.

LAND

In the presenters' eyes, homosexuals in a committed relationship are morally objectionable as being promiscuous.

ANDREWS

My accusers' vision are clouded with their own personal fears and prejudices for Larry and his partner's relationship embodies Christian values of faithfulness, compassion, love and forgiveness. How many marriages do we know do the the same?

LAND

I don't know.

(The lights dim on Land and Andrews, and light up on the John, sitting in his chair, being questioned.)

JOHN

(Recalling an incident)

In the winter months that we went to celebrate the Festival of the Dedication of the Temple.

(beat)

The people started to surround us.

(The Zealots start to circle and harass Jesus.)

JOHN

(continuing)

They wouldn't leave us alone. They kept trying to start something.

ZEALOT 1

How long are you going to keep us guessing?

ZEALOT 2

If you're the Messiah, tell us.

JESUS

I've told you already but you don't believe me.

ZEALOT 1

(Pushes Jesus to the ground)

Oh yeah?

ZEALOT 2

Tell us who you are.

(John and Matthew run toward Jesus and offer to help him.)

JOHN

Come on. Let's get out of here.

JESUS

(To John)

No.

(to the Zealots)

You don't understand. Everything I've done has been authorized by my Father.

ZEALOT 1

Your father?

(beat)

Yeah...right. Tell me another.

JESUS

My actions speak louder than my words. You don't believe because you won't listen...and you don't want to hear the truth. It's too close to home and you can't take it.

ZEALOT 2

What are you saying?

JESUS

You heard me. You're threatened by the truth...of who I am.

(beat)

The people know and accept me. There's no role playing...no pretense. They know who I am. They recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

ZEALOT 1

Those people are nothing but a bunch of freaks and degenerates, like you.

ZEALOT 2

Yeah, you and your people better watch yourselves or else.

JESUS

Or else what? We have nothing to fear. I give them real and eternal life. They're protected from the Destroyer of Good.

ZEALOT 1

Are you calling us the Destroyer of Good?

MATTHEW

No...but you work for him.

ZEALOT 2

What are you implying?

JESUS

(To Matthew)
Ignore them. They are just looking for a fight.

MATTHEW

But they're...

JESUS

Turn the other cheek. They will not steal my people away from me.

ZEALOT 1

(To Jesus)
What did you say?
(threatens)
And I'll slap you in the head if you keep it up.

JOHN

I'd like to see you try it.

JESUS

(To John)
Turn the other cheek.

JOHN

I've run out of cheeks to turn.

JESUS

Start over.
(beat)
The Father who put them under my care is so much greater than the Destroyer and Thief.

ZEALOT 1

Are you calling us a thief now?
(starts to go after him with his fists)
I've had enough of your crap.

JESUS

You mean truth, don't you? No one will ever get the people away from me...for I and the Father are one heart and mind.

(The Zealots starts beating and kicking Jesus. John and the other disciples go over to shield Jesus from the attacks.)

JOHN

(To the Zealots.)
Leave him alone.

MATTHEW

Yeah.

JOHN

(Helps Jesus up.)
Don't agitate them. Come on, let's get out of here.

JESUS

(As he leaves, he turns around.)
I have made a present to you from the Father of many good actions. For which of these acts do you attack me?

ZEALOT 2

It's not about anything good you did, but for the way you flaunt yourself and what you said...calling yourself God.

MATTHEW

I say, "If he has it, flaunt it."

ZEALOT 1

You're nothing but a faggot.

JESUS

Call me what you may. I'm not flaunting...this is the way I am.

(beat)

I'm only quoting your inspired Scriptures, where God said, "I tell you...you are gods."

ZEALOT 2

Blasphemer!

ZEALOT 1

Faggot!

JESUS

If God called your ancestors "gods"...and the scripture doesn't lie...why do you yell, "Faggot!" at the one the Father consecrated and sent into the world, just because I said, "I am the Son of God"?

ZEALOT 1

Faggot!

ZEALOT 2

You distort the truth.

JESUS

No, I speak the truth but you choose not to listen.
If you don't do the things my Father does, that's
fine...don't believe me.

ZEALOT 2

Don't worry, we won't.

JESUS

But if I'm doing the things my Father does, put
aside for a moment what you hear me say about myself
and just take the evidence of the actions before
your eyes.

ZEALOT 1

They're nothing but illusions.

JESUS

Once you open your eyes and see, then perhaps things
will come together for you, and you'll see we are
the same...Father and Son.

(beat)

He is in me and I am in him.

ZEALOTS

Faggot! Faggot!

(beat)

Get him.

(The lights dim down as the angry
zealots strike Jesus. A fight breaks
out between them and the disciples.
John hurries Jesus away to safety.)

INQUISITOR

And where did you take him?

JOHN

(To the Inquisitor)

Back to Jordan.

INQUISITOR

From our reports, many people followed him over. Is
that true?

JOHN

Yes...many people believed in him.

INQUISITOR

What happened in Jordan?

JOHN

We had only been there for a couple of days when he heard that Lazarus was very sick.

INQUISITOR

Who is Lazarus?

JOHN

Oh...someone Jesus used to know.

INQUISITOR

Were they friends?

JOHN

Yes.

(uncomfortable)

I guess they were at one time...I don't know for sure.

INQUISITOR

Why don't you?

JOHN

There are things you just don't want to know, and the details of their relationship was one of them.

INQUISITOR

Were you jealous of this Lazarus?

JOHN

How can I be jealous when I don't even know him?

(beat)

And besides, it didn't really matter. He told me that I was the one...the only one.

INQUISITOR

Is that what he said?

JOHN

No...not in so many words.

INQUISITOR

And you believed him?

JOHN

Yes.

INQUISITOR

You don't think that he was using you, do you?

JOHN

No...no. I believe him.

(beat)

Whatever happened between them was over.

(beat)

Anyway, we went back after a couple of days.

Lazarus' sister, Martha, came to Jesus.

(The lights come on Martha as she turns and sees Jesus. Surprised, she hurries over to him.)

MARTHA

Oh my God!!! I don't believe it.

(realizes what she said and corrects herself)

I mean...It's so good to see you again.

(They embrace.)

JESUS

And you, too.

MARTHA

I heard you were in town. When did you arrive?

JESUS

This afternoon.

MARTHA

(Steps back to look at him)

I can't believe it...you've grown into a handsome man. There's an aura about you.

JESUS

It's called a halo.

(looks at her carefully)

You look different. Did you have something done?

(beat)

Your nose?

MARTHA

(laughs to herself)

No.

(as a secret)

It's not who you know, it's who you know had a nose job.

JESUS

(Laughs)

Isn't that the truth.

MARTHA

(Stands back and takes a look at him.)

But you!

JESUS

What about me?

MARTHA

Tell me...how do you do it?

JESUS

Don't know...I guess it's healthy living and good exercise.

(beat)

And you can't beat the genes.

MARTHA

Tell me about it.

(laughs with him)

You're in great shape. What do you do?

JESUS

No...it's kinda like marathon training.

MARTHA

What?

JESUS

You know like running from Zealots and Pharisees and some walking on water.

MARTHA

They're an angry group of men. If you ask me, they probably had too much taken off at their bris or something.

JESUS

(Shocked)

Martha!! Listen to you.

MARTHA

You never know.

(beat)

You've really gotten a name for being a radical.

JESUS

Yeah...I seem to really stir things up.

MARTHA

You always had that special knack of pissing people off...like rabbis...and that doesn't take much.

JESUS

They're so touchy at times.

MARTHA

Especially when you're challenging them all the time.

(remembers fondly)

Oh...the fun times we used to have together when we were growing up.

(beat)

I've missed you. How come you don't call or visit?

JESUS

That's what my mother says.

MARTHA

Does she? Mine, too. You know...without our mothers, we wouldn't need therapy.

JESUS

And I have things to do...a message to get out.

MARTHA

I know...but still --

JESUS

And your brother? How's Lars?

MARTHA

(Difficultly)

He's been sick...very sick.

JESUS

What's going on?

MARTHA

The doctors don't know. They think it's only a virus. But it's going on for several months now.

JESUS

That's a long time for a virus. How are you treating him?

MARTHA

What else? Chicken soup. It doesn't cure anything, but it makes you feel better.

JESUS

But there are limits to that.

MARTHA

But between you and me, I think it's depression.

JESUS

Depression?! What does he have to be depressed about?

MARTHA

He's a thirty-four year old "single" man, living home with your mother...you answer me that question.

(beat)

Say...it would mean so much to me...to him...if you could come by and see him.

JESUS

I...I can't. I'm too busy right now.

MARTHA

(Heard it before)

I know...I know.

(beat)

Tell me something...what happened between the two of you? At one time you were inseparable. What happened? He once confided in me how much he loved you...and I could tell that you loved him, too. It was pretty obvious.

JESUS

We were only friends.

(beat)

I loved him as a brother.

MARTHA

Friends, brothers...or lovers, whatever you want to call it. The trouble is...he hasn't forgotten.

(beat)

He still talks about you.

JESUS

That's in the past. I had to move on...I have a message to get out.

MARTHA

Yeah, you've told me that already. But don't you also have a responsibility to people who love you.

JESUS

I can't go back. There's too much to do in too little time.

MARTHA

But he still loves you...after all these years. Frankly, I don't know why...but he does.

(beat)

Please go to him.

(The lights dim over Martha and Jesus.)

INQUISITOR

Did he go to his friend?

JOHN

No. Oddly, after his conversation with Martha, Jesus stayed on for a couple days more. And then, something came to him.

(The lights come up on Jesus and the disciples. John walks over to them.)

JESUS

I need to go back.

JOHN

Where?

JESUS

Judea.

MATTHEW

Are you crazy?

JOHN

They are out to harm and possibly kill you, and you're going back?

JESUS

Yes.

JAMES

But why?

JESUS

Aren't there twelve hours of daylight?

JAMES

Is this another quiz?

JESUS

Answer the question.

JAMES

Okay...yes. What do I win?

JESUS

Anyone who walks in daylight doesn't stumble because there's plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, he might very well stumble because he can't see where he's going.

MATTHEW

What does it have to do with anything?

JESUS

Think about it.

JAMES

Okay...you light yourself a torch.

JESUS

You still don't get it, do you?

(to John)

I need to go and see someone.

JOHN

Who?

JESUS

Lazarus.

JOHN

I thought you said it was all over between the two of you.

JESUS

It's nothing. We're just friends.

JOHN

Yeah, if you say so.

JESUS

You shouldn't be jealous.

JOHN

That's easy for you say. I'm the one who's human.

JESUS

He's very sick.

JOHN

But there's a lot of sick people out there. Why you? Aren't there doctors around?

MATTHEW

There are...but they'll cost you an arm and a leg.

JUDAS

Even if you could afford insurance.

JESUS

I've a feeling that he may have died.

JOHN

So send your condolences and some flowers.

JESUS

(Annoyed)

John, come on.

JOHN

Come on, what?

JESUS

You're more understanding than that.

JOHN

There are limits to my understanding.

JESUS

I'm going to him. If you want to come along with me, that's great. If you don't, well....

(Jesus walks away and some of the disciples hesitatingly follow. John stands alone.)

JOHN

(To Inquisitor)

When Jesus finally got there, he was told that Lazarus had died.

(Martha comes over to Jesus.)

MARTHA

If you'd been here, my brother would still be alive.

JESUS

What else can I say...except that I'm sorry.

MARTHA

Being sorry will not bring him back.

JESUS

What do you want me to do?

MARTHA

Talk with him.

JESUS

Who?

MARTHA

You know. Whatever you ask God, he will give you.

JESUS

That's asking a lot.

MARTHA

I know he will.

JESUS

Okay...I'll see what I can do.

(beat)

Your brother will be raised up.

MARTHA

Raised up?! Is that the best you can do? I know that he'll be raised up at the resurrection at the end of time.

JESUS

You don't have to wait for the end.

MARTHA

There's no waiting? So what's the catch?

JESUS

I am the Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all.

MARTHA

If you say so.

JESUS

Do you believe me?

MARTHA

What do I have to lose?

JESUS

(beat)
Where is he?

(The lights dim over Martha as she leads Jesus away.)

JOHN

(To Inquisitor)
She showed him where Lazarus' body was lying and he went in to the room by himself and closed the door.

INQUISITOR

And then what?

JOHN

About a couple of hours later, he came out of the room with Lazarus.

INQUISITOR

What?! Are you telling me that Lazarus was alive?

JOHN

He looked alive to me.

INQUISITOR

How did it happen?

JOHN

I don't know.

INQUISITOR

What do you mean you don't know?

JOHN

I said I don't know.

INQUISITOR

What went on in that room between the two of them?

JOHN

I told you I wasn't there.

INQUISITOR

Why didn't you ask?

JOHN

There are things better left unknown. You know...don't ask, don't tell.

INQUISITOR

What? I don't understand.

JOHN

I don't either.

INQUISITOR

What did you do?

JOHN

Kept believing in him.

INQUISITOR

That's it? Boy, he really had a spell over you.

JOHN

Yeah...he was something else.

INQUISITOR

What happened next?

JOHN

Word got out about Lazarus' awaking. Some of them who saw what he did went back to the Pharisees and informed them what had happened.

INQUISITOR

Were they upset?

JOHN

They were not pleased to say the least. Apparently, there was this big meeting that night.

(The lights go up on the Pharisees who are having a heated discussion.)

HIGH PRIEST

What do we do now? This man keeps on upstaging us...He's always creating these God-signs.

PHARISEE

Does he have a permit?

HIGH PRIEST

I've checked. He doesn't need a permit.

PHARISEE

So what's the problem?

HIGH PRIEST

If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have.

PHARISEE

That's it.

HIGH PRIEST

What?

PHARISEE

We'll make him the fall guy.

HIGH PRIEST

What do you mean?

PHARISEE

Can't you see...it's to our advantage for one man to die for the people rather than have the whole nation destroyed?

HIGH PRIEST

So he takes the rap?

PHARISEE

You've got it.

HIGH PRIEST

(Thinks to himself)
HMMMMM....that's a concept.

PHARISEE

It's a high concept.

(The lights dim over the Pharisees.)

INQUISITOR

Interesting. So what you are telling me is they had unwittingly prophesied that your friend was about to die sacrificially?

JOHN

Right. And from that day, they plotted to kill him.

INQUISITOR

When was that?

JOHN

Sometime before the Passover.

(beat)

Crowds of people were making their way from the country up to Jerusalem to get themselves ready for the Feast. They were curious about Jesus and there was a lot of talk about him. The high priests and Pharisees sent out the word that anyone hearing from him should inform them. They were set to arrest him.

(beat)

During that time, Lazarus and his sisters invited Jesus and a group of us over for dinner. One of his sisters came in with very expensive aromatic oils. The fragrance of the oils filled the house.

(beat)

He was also there.

INQUISITOR

Who?

JOHN

Judas.

INQUISITOR

Oh. And how did he react to all of this?

JOHN

He complained for days afterwards.

(The lights come up over Judas and the disciples.)

JUDAS

I can't believe why we didn't sell this oil at the market.

JAMES

Yeah, right.

JUDAS

We could have easily sold it easy for hundred silver pieces.

MATTHEW

As what? Oil of Oy Vay?

JUDAS

I'm serious. Look at the poor we could have helped.

JAMES

The poor? When did you suddenly develop a social conscience?

JUDAS

I've always had one.

MATTHEW

What?! You don't care about the poor unless there is some money to be made off of them.

JUDAS

I do, too.

MATTHEW

Get off of it, you don't either.

JUDAS

I do, too.

JAMES

Then how come there's never any money in our community fund when we want to contribute something to a poor family?

MATTHEW

Yeah, how come?

JUDAS

I don't know.

JAMES

Why is it we're always putting money into the fund but there's never any money in it when we want it?

JUDAS

What are you insinuating?

MATTHEW

Do the math. There's money going in...but there's nothing coming out.

JAMES

It's called trickle-down economics.

MATTHEW

Trickle?! It's a major drought.

(beat)

Have we had an audit recently?

JAMES

Not that I'm aware of.

JUDAS

What are you saying? That I'm dishonest?

(Jesus tries to break up the argument among the disciples.)

JESUS

Knock it off, you guys.

JUDAS

They started it.

JAMES

We did not.

MATTHEW

We were just asking him some questions.

JAMES

Like where's the money going?

JUDAS

I've told you already. It's overhead.

MATTHEW

Yeah...it's for your head.

JESUS

Why do you always have to have a fight at every passover dinner? Why can't you love one another like I love each one of you?

JUDAS

Yeah, tell me about how much you love us.

JESUS

What do you mean by that crack?

JUDAS

I'll tell you. It's always John...John, this...John, that....John, the beloved. It's never been me. Why? I've been here waiting for you.

(Uncomfortable by the conversation, Matthew and James leave.)

JESUS

I have loved you like I have loved the rest.

JUDAS

It's not enough. I want more.

JESUS

I wanted to love you more but I had this strange feeling like you're going to betray me.

JUDAS

Betray you?! Like you have betrayed my feelings toward you.

JESUS

Like how?

JUDAS

Like how you have led me on.

JESUS

What are you talking about? I haven't led you on. I love you like I love everyone.

JUDAS

Please, you haven't either.

JESUS

Believe me or not...I do care for you.

JUDAS

I wish I could believe you...but I can't.

JESUS

Then go and do what you have to do.

(As Judas turns and leaves, he bumps into John as he walks away from the others.)

JOHN

(To Judas)

Hey.

(to the others)

Was it something that I said?

JESUS

(Watches Judas leaves)

No.

(beat)

I need to get going.

JOHN

Where? Back to Lazarus for another personal resurrection?

JESUS

(Annoyed)

Knock it off, John. I expect this from others...but not from you.

JOHN
Sorry. Weren't we going to talk about the poor?

JESUS
You will always have the poor.
(beat)
You won't always have me.

JOHN
"Won't always have you?" What's that about? You're not thinking about leaving me, are you?

JESUS
I'm with you for only a short time.

JOHN
And then what? Do you know something that I should know?

JESUS
You're making this harder for me.

JOHN
You?! What about me? You come into my life, make me love you and then you leave?

JESUS
Where I go, you won't be able to come...not right now.

JOHN
Why? Are you ashamed to be seen with me?

JESUS
No.

JOHN
Then why?

JESUS
It's not your time.

JOHN
Then when is it?

JESUS
I don't know but not now.

JOHN
Great. And what am I supposed to do in the meantime?

JESUS
I'll send you a message.

JOHN

Yeah..."Start worrying; details to follow."

(beat)

This is not fair.

JESUS

I didn't say it was going to be.

(beat)

If you want to do something, you can love others the same as I've loved you.

JOHN

There will be no others.

JESUS

Of course there will be...many others...if you just give your love to them.

JOHN

But how will I know?

JESUS

You trust God, don't you?

JOHN

Yeah.

JESUS

Trust me.

JOHN

I don't want others...I just want to be with you.

JESUS

You can't go with me now.

JOHN

Why not?

JESUS

You must stay. But believe me, there is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get our room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And we'll be together forever.

JOHN

But until then...what am I supposed to do?

JESUS

If you love me, show it by doing what I have told you. I'll even be with you.

JOHN

Don't leave me, please.

JESUS

I'll not leave you. I'll come back. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you're going to see me because I'm alive and you're about to come alive.

JOHN

How?

JESUS

At that moment, you'll know absolutely that I'm with my father.

(beat)

Remember...you're in me, and I'm in you.

JOHN

You make it sound so easy.

JESUS

It is. The person who knows my commandments and keeps them, that's who loves me.

JOHN

But I love you. Don't you believe me?

JESUS

And the person who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I'll love him and make myself known to him.

JOHN

Your mother is another story.

JESUS

John...I know she is difficult at times.

JOHN

Difficult?!

JESUS

Being the only son, she just wants the best for me. She has never forgiven me for not going in medical school.

JOHN

When are you going to tell her?

JESUS

About what?

JOHN

About us.

JESUS
I've got to go.

JOHN
No...please. Don't go.

JESUS
I told you I'll be back.
(looks around)
It's time to leave.

(Judas and Roman soldiers enter.)

JUDAS
There he is.

(Roman Soldiers start to arrest him.
John tries to stop them.)

JOHN
Take your hands off of him. He has done nothing
wrong.

JESUS
John, you're only making matters worse.

(A fight breaks out. Roman Soldiers
beat John mercilessly and drag him back
to his chair, next to the Inquisitor.)

JESUS
(continuing)
Leave him alone. It's me you're after. I'm the one
you want.

(The lights dim as the Roman soldiers
tie Jesus's hands up and lead him away.
Powerless, John stands watching as the
lights go up on Land and Andrews. Susan
and BISHOP JAMES WALKER walk into the
room, followed by Bishop York.)

SUSAN
(Hands Andrews a bottle of water)
Bishop Walker wants a word with you.

ANDREWS
(Looking at Walker but talking to Susan)
There's nothing he can say in front of me that he
can't say in front of you and attorney.

WALKER

Alright.

(beat)

Bishop DeClair and your other accusers believe that a trial would not be in the best interest of the church and are willing to withdraw their petition against you for heresy--

ANDREWS

And?

WALKER

If--

ANDREWS

If?

WALKER

If you renounce what you have done and have everyone in the House of Bishops promise not to ordain a non-celibate gay or lesbian person until the church makes up its mind about the matter.

ANDREWS

Is that it?

YORK

Richard...it's a win-win for everyone.

ANDREWS

Except for me...and the gays and lesbians.

YORK

We can't please everybody.

WALKER

Richard, be reasonable.

ANDREWS

Reasonable?! I can't believe what they're asking. What are they trying to do...hold the other bishops hostage...with me and the gay community as ransom?

WALKER

They're not holding anyone hostage.

ANDREWS

They're not?

WALKER

No. All they want is to have the House make the decision.

ANDREWS

But they have made the decision. Several times, the General Convention has refused to take the position that DeClair...and his henchmen wanted. And now...they want the bishops to agree to do what the General Convention has never agreed to do.

YORK

They are trying to find compromise.

ANDREWS

Compromise?! Is that what you call it...a compromise? I don't.

LAND

It's more like admitting to the crime.

ANDREWS

And a crime that I have not committed.

(beat)

Using me as the straw dog to impose their will...the will of a minority by ignoring the mandates of the clergy and lay delegates to the General Convention. And they call themselves men of God!

WALKER

The Church's view has been constant for close to seventeen hundred years and you're trying to force us to change.

ANDREWS

But we have changed...the world has changed. The Church's view is outdated and was created by fear.

YORK

I was hoping we could reach a settlement.

(beat)

We need to go in. The trial will be starting soon.

(York and Walker leave the room as Land packs up his files and papers from the table and follows them.)

SUSAN

(Thinking out loud to herself)

What I find to be so interesting is that the Church's clerical ranks have long been disproportionately populated by homosexuals. And that among the church's scores of closeted bishops are several who are now accusing my husband of heresy.

ANDREWS

Susan, please.

SUSAN

It's a such a paradox!

(beat)

And when people ask me if there's a homosexual lobby in the church, I say, "Why yes...in fact, there's two. There is the pro-gay group which has been around for couple of decades or so...and there's the closet, anti-gay homosexual lobby that goes back much further.

(beat)

They're your fiercest enemies.

LAND

I think it is pretty clear what they are doing.

ANDREWS

You mean using this trial to force the reversal on gay and lesbian ordination.

LAND

By using you as the extortion.

SUSAN

Ecclesiastical blackmail pure and simple...if you ask me.

LAND

Sad but true.

(beat)

Would you be willing to make any kind of deal?

ANDREWS

A deal?!

LAND

That they drop the charge if you -

ANDREWS

The answer is no.

(beat)

Wouldn't that be hypocrisy after the General Convention of our church has refused again and again to say that gay men and lesbian women in committed relationships could not be ordained? Are those my options...hypocrisy or heresy?

(beat)

May I have a moment with my wife?

LAND

Yes. I'll be in the hall if you need me.

(As Land walks out the room, Larry and David come in.)

LARRY

Excuse Bishop.

ANDREWS

(turns around)
Yes, Larry.

LARRY

I was hoping to see you before the trial started.

ANDREWS

What is it?

LARRY

Despite what the accusers say, I didn't have a political agenda when I asked you to ordain me as a priest.

ANDREWS

I know.

LARRY

(laughs to himself)
And I still don't preach a political agenda.

DAVID

Believe me....it many ways, he's more orthodox than many of his heterosexual priests.

LARRY

You know about my growing up as a religious mongrel...raised by Baptist-Methodist father and Roman Catholic mother.

ANDREWS

Yes, I was aware of pedigree.

LARRY

And I told you that I had attended array of protestant churches and that I rejected organized religion when I realized that I was gay. Traditional Christian teachings on homosexuality was unambiguous and was directly at odds with the truth I now felt at the depths of my heart. To be a Christian, I thought, meant giving assent to that teaching and such assent, I knew, would violate my conscience and integrity.

(beat)

Then I met David and fell in love with him.

(beat)

And I followed him, at first screaming and kicking, into this Church. I soon realized, with astonishment that I was in a denomination that respected my conscience and integrity.

(more)

LARRY (cont'd)

The Church recognized the individual mind as a gift of God, not a threat to institutional authority. It didn't offer a confining straitjacket of dogma. What it offered was distinctive way of thinking about God and a setting in which different people, coming together in worship, could travel their own roads to God. It did make demands, and hard ones...that I think independently and that I be true to my conscience.

(beat)

As I came to understand all this, I fell in love again...this time with this church.

(beat)

I know that many of the church members looked at me and saw changes they didn't like in the church they had loved far longer than I. In me, they saw those changes being rooted in transitory values and not in eternal truths. It seemed to them that these changes were from my callous disregard for their beloved institution that had sustained them and their ancestors for many generations.

(beat)

But it isn't.

(beat)

Many of them wondered why I don't go away and attend the predominantly gay Metropolitan Community Church.

(beat)

But why should I leave something that I love.

ANDREWS

You shouldn't have to leave.

LARRY

(Deeply moved.)

Thank you.

(Larry and David leave the room.)

SUSAN

Richard, he's only trying to help you out of this situation.

ANDREWS

The situation is this...these ten bishops are trying to impose their will on the church.

SUSAN

I know.

ANDREWS

And I for one am not going to stand by and let them do it. I cannot and will not.

SUSAN

That's all well and fine. But can we afford it? You know that the Church is broke and we're on our own.

ANDREWS

But I have my principles.

SUSAN

Yes, I'm aware of them. We've both worked all of our lives and we're about to retire. A good portion of our savings has already been spent on your legal defense. If this trial continues, all of our savings will be spent.

ANDREWS

Can I afford not to?

SUSAN

(Looks at him for a moment.)
Come on. Let's go into the courtroom.

ANDREWS

They are attempting to dishonor my ministry. Forty years I have been a priest, out of which, twenty-three I have served as bishop.

SUSAN

I know.

ANDREWS

They have thrown a heinous label at me because it might conceivably serve their purposes to do so. And am I supposed to turn my other cheek and say, "The Peace of the Lord be always with you" when in my heart I cannot?

SUSAN

Christ would have done that.

ANDREWS

Well I am not Christ! Stop comparing me to him.

SUSAN

Sorry.

(Susan turns to leave.)

ANDREWS

(Calls after her.)
There's something more.

SUSAN

(Turns around)
Like what?

ANDREWS

When I was growing up in a small town in Delaware, sexuality, especially homosexuality, was seldom discussed in my family. If it was, it was usually done in hushed whispers, behind closed doors. Images of feminine men...freaks of nature...conjured up in the consciousness. Questions were never asked in fear of what others may think and subsequently, answers were never given.

SUSAN

This is all well and fine...but what does this have to do with anything? They're waiting for us in the hall.

ANDREWS

I need to say this...I need to ask for forgiveness.

SUSAN

Forgiveness from what? What are you talking about?

ANDREWS

There has been a couple of incidents in my past involving homosexuality that have affected me.

SUSAN

I hope you're not coming out of the closet. I don't think I would have patience for it right now.

ANDREWS

No, that's not it.

SUSAN

Good. Now what are they?

ANDREWS

The first happened in the late thirties. I was a young boy approaching adolescence when a scandal broke out in our town. It involved a uncle of mine.

SUSAN

Which one?

ANDREWS

Uncle Fred.

SUSAN

You never mentioned you had an Uncle Fred before.

ANDREWS

There's a lot I haven't told you.

SUSAN

Oh really? Like what?

ANDREWS

Like Uncle Fred.

SUSAN

Oh. So about telling me now?

ANDREWS

Okay.

(beat)

He was married to my father's younger sister, Judith. Uncle Fred was a quiet...slightly built man...who kept to himself and didn't cause any trouble. Even though he was a school administrator, he had a witty, urbane sense of humor like Noel Coward and I enjoyed being around him a lot.

SUSAN

And?

ANDREWS

He wasn't like the rest of my uncles...men who were always playing masculine games, trying to out butch each other. One day, a rumor broke out. Uncle Fred was "caught" in an embrace with the high school English teacher. I believe the teacher's name was Mr. Scott. Anyway...no trials or hearings were held. Instead, the men were publicly disgraced by being fired from their jobs, and were asked to leave the community and never come back. The next day, Uncle Fred hung himself. I never knew what happened to the other man because he left town that night.

(beat)

I felt bad for my Uncle Fred. He broke no laws. He just fell in love with the wrong person.

(beat)

I wanted to speak out against the injustice but I didn't. No one did.

SUSAN

Why didn't you?

ANDREWS

I was afraid of what the people would think or say. I was afraid my manhood may to be brought into question.

(beat)

The second happened during the war. Stationed in London, I was in a pub one night when a young soldier in my unit, who I had befriended, became drunk and lost his guard and sensibilities. He touched me. Other soldiers saw what had happened. I got scared and did what I was expected to do. I started to hit and kick the young man...my friend.

SUSAN

(In disbelief)
Oh my God.

ANDREWS

You see my masculinity was being threatened. I had to.

(beat)

The other soldiers joined in the bashing. They had to "teach the fag a lesson". They continued hitting and kicking the young soldier until he did not move.

SUSAN

(Not knowing what to say)
Why didn't you tell me about these incidents?

ANDREWS

I couldn't. I've kept them cloistered inside of me...ashamed of myself.

SUSAN

But the incidents happened many years ago...

ANDREWS

They are still happening today. I've got to take responsibility for what I've done. Don't you understand. I cannot let down the young soldier, Uncle Fred, or the millions of others who have been wrongly shamed, beaten and killed for being who they were. They cannot be forgotten.

SUSAN

What about us? Will all of this be worth it at the end?

ANDREWS

I don't know...I don't know.

(Land walks into the room.)

LAND

The court is about to begin. Are you ready?

(Andrews says nothing. The lights start to dim as Land and Susan walk out of the room. Andrews ponders for a moment and then follows them in the court room. They take their places in the court as the other bishops take their places in the church. York and Walker take their places to conduct the trial proceedings. The accuser, BISHOP DECLAIR sits on the other side of the courtroom facing Andrews.)

The newly ordained Larry and his partner, David walk in and sit next to Susan. Other members of the clergy take their places behind the spectator section.)

YORK

My sisters and brothers, please take your places.
Please.

(Beat)

This trial is not the way. This trial can only disrupt us and divert us from the path that we are on. I pray we will never be required to pay what this could cost us as a church, not only now but in the future. I pray we will never be required to experience one indictment, and then another, and another. This is not a debating society or a court of law. This is a community of God's people. We have another way. To that way, I commend you. I pray that this house will realize that this is not the way.

(to DeClair)

If I could have you please present your accusations against Bishop Andrews.

DECLAIR

It is with great reluctance that we have taken this action. We accuse Bishop Richard Andrews of heresy. The action filed against Bishop Andrews is not a personal attack on him. Simply put, we are convinced that the Church clearly teaches that it is not lawful or appropriate to knowingly ordain a practicing homosexual. We are convinced that Bishop Richard Andrews did so. To ordain or advocate ordination of a known practicing homosexual or a heterosexual engaged in sexual relations outside of marriage, is contrary to the teaching of the Church.

(beat)

We have chosen to make this case against Bishop Andrews because his action is within the current five year statute of limitations.

(beat)

We would also like to make some additional arguments in addition to those we have made in our brief.

LAND

Bishop York and court council, I object to the Church Attorney's request on the grounds that this would lead to mass confusion.

YORK

Why would it? Please explain.

LAND

Well for one, we, the defense, have not seen or heard the arguments and will need time to produce a new, revised brief, then both briefs will have to be recirculated to every member of the House of Bishops to determine if they think those briefs indicated the need for a trial.

(beat)

This would be the only fair and clear way to deal with a complete change of argument.

DECLAIR

Bishop York, these are important issues regarding what the holy scriptures say about homosexuality, and they need to be considered.

LAND

Bishop York, let me remind the church attorney that the issue before the court is not about homosexuality but whether Bishop Andrews has violated the canons when he ordained a homosexual who is in committed relationship.

DECLAIR

The church has doctrine that provides standards of sexual morality. It is important to examine whether non-celibate homosexual practices are consistent with the doctrine. If I may, I would like to ask the accused Bishop a few questions.

LAND

(Objecting to the Presiding Bishop)

This is highly unusual. We haven't even made opening comments yet.

DECLAIR

This is pertinent to this case.

YORK

Let me remind the church attorney that this is not civil court.

ANDREWS

Please. If it moves this court along, let's have the questions.

DECLAIR

Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?

ANDREWS

Of course I do.

DECLAIR

And is it true that all ordinands...including yourself declare that the Bible is the Word of God?

ANDREWS

Yes.

DECLAIR

Isn't it a practice for all ordinands to receive a Bible during the ordination service to emphasize the Church's commitment to the authority of the Scripture?

ANDREWS

I believe it is.

DECLAIR

Doesn't the Bible repeatedly warn against false teaching?

YORK

What does this have to do with whether Bishop Andrews has violated a doctrine?

DECLAIR

Simple. Nothing may be taught as doctrine that is contrary to God's written word. Is that right, Bishop Andrews?

ANDREWS

Yes.

DECLAIR

A bishop must hold and teach sound doctrine.

ANDREWS

I have not gone against any doctrine.

DECLAIR

You haven't? Isn't it true that the creation accounts lay the foundation for the biblical view of sexuality?

ANDREWS

It depends upon how you interpret it.

DECLAIR

In Genesis, God makes humankind in His image, male and female. In the second account, God acknowledges that "thus a helper according to his opposite." The complementary genders of male and female united as one flesh fulfill God's design for the human family. "Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one."

(beat)

Bishop Andrews...where does it say anything about male and another male becoming a family?

ANDREWS

Scientific information throws new light on the subject matter.

DECLAIR

Oh really...like what?

ANDREWS

Like the origin and cause of homosexuality. Information that wasn't available to authors of Holy scriptures.

DECLAIR

Are you suggesting that the Holy Scriptures weren't divinely written?

ANDREWS

The Holy Scriptures were written and rewritten by man...for that particular time and custom. Information available today suggests that homosexual orientation is not a matter of choice but a matter of ontology...that is, it is the being of the individual, and not the doing.

DECLAIR

And God wasn't aware of this information?

ANDREWS

Of course, he was.

DECLAIR

But if the Holy Scriptures represent his word...

LAND

Bishop York...I object to this line of questioning.

DECLAIR

I just want to know what does this "new information" have to do with the Book of Genesis?

ANDREWS

If we take the scriptures as they are written...God makes humankind in His image....then both heterosexuality and homosexuality are morally neutral in God's eyes.

DECLAIR

How convenient!

ANDREWS

And if gay and lesbian persons who do not choose to live alone but forge relationships with partners of their choice that are faithful, monogamous, committed, life-giving and holy, they should be recognized and honored.

DECLAIR

But that's not what Genesis states, is it?

(no response from Andrews.)

Is it, Bishop Andrews? Of course not.

(beat)

What about the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? Do you know it?

ANDREWS

What about it?

DECLAIR

Doesn't it warn of the dangers of violating the creation order as does the parallel story about Gibeah in Judges Nineteen?

ANDREWS

Oh come on. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a much discredited source of biblical homophobia with most scholars recognizing that it is not about homosexuality.

DECLAIR

It's not?

ANDREWS

No, it's actually an indictment of inhospitality to strangers. The later biblical references to Sodom and Gomorrah speak of the cities' injustice, pride, or unspecified sins but nothing about homosexuality.

(beat)

And the story of Gibeah is a brutal story of gang rape. By citing it, you're implying that anyone sympathetic to the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals persons is also in favor of gang rape.

DECLAIR

Now you're reinterpreting my statements.

ANDREWS

When they are so blatantly wrong, someone has to correct them.

DECLAIR

Bishop, you're familiar with the Ten Commandments, aren't you?

LAND

Bishop York, I object to this line of questioning. It's nothing more than a public bashing.

YORK

(To DeClair)

I agree. Where are you going with this line of argument?

DECLAIR

Bishop York...I think that it is important that the court hears for themselves Bishop Andrews' positions.

YORK

What does it have to do with whether or not the doctrines have been violated?

ANDREWS

I don't mind answering his questions.

DECLAIR

Thank you.

(beat)

The Ten Commandments sum up the reverence for God, "I am the LORD your God...you shall have no other gods before me" and the danger of uncontrolled desire..."You shall not covet". Chief among the prohibitions is adultery and related sexual violations.

LAND

Bishop York, I object. Bishop DeClair and the other accusers' discussion is ridiculous.

DECLAIR

I don't believe I was addressing you with the question.

YORK

(To Land)

Please...you're only encouraging him.

LAND

But by citing the Ten Commandments, Bishop DeClair selectively calls out "uncontrolled desire" and "adultery and related sexual violation" as though they have some relation to baptized Christians of the same sex living in faithful, committed relationships with one another.

DECLAIR

Aren't they?

(to Andrews)

Under the Commandments, homosexuality is condemned in the moral law of Moses as an "abomination," an offense both to the holiness of God and to his created order.

LAND

Excuse me, but unless they have been rewritten in the last twenty-four hours, there is no reference in the Ten Commandments that homosexuality is an abomination.

DECLAIR

(Ignores Land; to Andrews)

Do you believe that Jesus incorporates most of the Old Testament teaching about sexuality?

ANDREWS

I believe that the Old Testament was taken into consideration.

DECLAIR

You're familiar with the gospel of Mark, aren't you?

ANDREWS

Yes...as a bishop, I think I've seen his name a couple of times.

DECLAIR

Well then...you would know that in Mark, he declares obsolete the mosaic food laws, but reaffirms the moral connection between sin in the human heart and specific actions: "...fornication, theft, murder, adultery . . ."

ANDREWS

That's according to Mark.

DECLAIR

Isn't it true that Jesus' sexual ethic is more strenuous than the Old Testament?

ANDREWS

It depends on whom you read.

DECLAIR

Doesn't he refer to the creation stories in affirming marriage and identifying exclusive monogamy as the primal purpose of God and exclusive celibacy as a sign of discipleship?

ANDREWS

Yes...according to Mark. But--

DECLAIR

But nothing. For Jesus and the Christian Church thereafter Genesis creation stories were normative references for teaching about human sexual relations.

ANDREWS

That's your interpretation.

DECLAIR

It's not just mine. Isn't it true that the apostolic writers uphold the Old Testament teaching on sexuality as mediated by Jesus?

ANDREWS

I wouldn't say that.

DECLAIR

You wouldn't!? Why?

ANDREWS

Because I wouldn't.

DECLAIR

Isn't it true that while relaxing the food laws, the disciples warn repeatedly against the connection between false religion and false sexuality, i.e., sex outside marriage or "fornication"?

ANDREWS

No, I don't think that's correct.

DECLAIR

You don't?! It's there in the Bible.

ANDREWS

Really?! Where?

DECLAIR

It's there. You haven't been looking for it because you don't want the truth.

LAND

(Objects)

Your honor. I object to this line of questioning. Bishop DeClair is doing nothing more than badgering Bishop Andrews.

YORK

(To DeClair)

I agree. What is your point?

DECLAIR

My point is this while the apostles give instructions for mixed-faith marriages, and single, celibate, and widowed people, they make no provision for any kind of sexual arrangements outside marriage.

YORK

And what does this have to do with the case against Bishop Andrews?

DECLAIR

Simply this...homosexuality is identified as one variety of false sexuality.

ANDREWS

Again, that's your interpretation.

DECLAIR

I would like to point out that the two most important New Testament passages on homosexuality come from Epistles of Saint Paul.

ANDREWS

Paul?! You're basing your argument on what Paul said?

DECLAIR

Yes. Why shouldn't I?

ANDREWS

Well for one, he wasn't even around Jesus when he was alive and so everything that he wrote was nothing but hearsay.

DECLAIR

How can you say that?

LAND

Easy. Look at the historical facts. Paul doesn't even appear until three years after the crucifixion.

DECLAIR

That's not the point.

(to Andrews)

In addressing the Corinthians, he writes: Do you not know...that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, passive or active...will inherit the kingdom of God.

(beat)

Do you believe that is the word of God?

ANDREWS

I believe that Paul was a human like everyone else, filled with uncertainties and fears about himself and his writings as they have been translated many times reflect those feelings. Whether his writings represent the gospel or his personal opinions are subject to debate.

DECLAIR

What?! His personal opinions?

(to York)

Did you hear what he just said?

(to Andrews)

You're questioning the teachings of the church.

ANDREWS

No...it's Paul's teachings that I question; not the church.

DECLAIR

The same tradition of Christian teaching, based on the Old Testament, undergirds Paul's well-known argument in Romans about God's wrath against all human ungodliness and wickedness.

ANDREWS

There's more to the Christian faith than Paul's teachings.

DECLAIR

Paul charges that human sin led characteristically to idolatry and to disordered desires in which their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men.

(to Andrews)

And what do you feel about Saint Paul's statement?

ANDREWS

Saint or no saint, I believe that Paul definitely had some hang-ups about sex.

DECLAIR

Hang-ups?! Excuse me?

(beat)

Are you implying that Saint Paul was a practicing homosexual?

ANDREWS

I'm not implying anything. But I do want to correct something. One does not have to practice to be a homosexual. It's not like riding a bike. Either you are or you're not.

DECLAIR

Answer my question.

ANDREWS

Historic record shows that Paul had some definite views about sexuality. Whether he was in the closet or not is open to speculation.

DECLAIR

I'm shocked that you would even think, let alone say something like that.

ANDREWS

Homosexuality is not shocking. It's just the way it is.

DECLAIR

The way it is?!

ANDREWS

Yes.

DECLAIR

Isn't it true that the Statement by the Bishops of the Church states there is in Scripture an evolving convergence on the ideal of lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual union as the setting intended by God for the proper development of men and women as sexual beings?

ANDREWS

If my memory serves me, there was a lot of debate regarding that statement and it was not a unanimous decision.

DECLAIR

That's beside the point. Answer my question.

ANDREWS

I am. And what's more, it's not doctrine. What I do find so confusing about the statement is that it is not consistent with the scripture that God created man in his own image.

DECLAIR

Sexual activity of any kind outside of marriage comes to be seen as sinful, and homosexual practice as especially dishonorable.

LAND

I object.

(to Declair)

Is this according to the gospel...or is this your opinion?

DECLAIR

I based my arguments on the holy scriptures.

LAND

According to your interpretation, right?

DECLAIR

Let me remind the attorney for the accused, that I am not the one on trial.

(to Andrews)

Where do you stand on the holy scriptures?

ANDREWS

These scriptures on which you base your arguments have been written and rewritten and translated and retranslated from Greek to Latin to English to whatever so many times that frankly I'm surprised that any original truth is still there.

DECLAIR

So what you are telling the court is that you don't believe in the holy scriptures?

ANDREWS

I didn't say that. The only gospel that has kept the true message of Christ's teaching is the Gospel according to John.

DECLAIR

Why is that?

ANDREWS

In that Gospel, Christ makes no discrimination between the men or women, gay or straight...everyone has a place at God's table. And he certainly doesn't hide his feelings for John.

DECLAIR

What are you saying? That there is something unnatural between John and Christ?

ANDREWS

Love is not unnatural.

DECLAIR

I object.

ANDREWS

Read the gospel.

DECLAIR

Do you believe in the holy scriptures?

ANDREWS

Yes, but not the way you interpret them.

DECLAIR

Isn't it recognized that God may call some to celibacy for particular service in his cause? Only by living within these boundaries are Christians to achieve that holiness which is pleasing to God.

ANDREWS

So what you're saying is that anyone who is married or living in a committed relationship is not holy enough and should not be call to serve God. Is that right?

DECLAIR

I'm not the one who is being tried for heresy; you are. Did you sign a document that specifically affirms a bishop's right to ordain homosexual persons?

LAND

(To Bishop York)
Your honor, the Accusing Bishops are rewriting
history to serve their purpose.

DECLAIR

I object.

LAND

The arguments that are being presented in this trial
are based on a misunderstanding of the Doctrine of
the Church and the sources of such Doctrine. If I
may, I would like to pose a question to Bishop
Declair.

YORK

I can't see why not. Bishop Declair?

DECLAIR

I'm not the one who is on trial here.

LAND

I didn't say that you were.

YORK

It's only a question.
(to Land)
Proceed.

LAND

(To Declair)
Bishop Declair, is it correct that the only
recognized sources of the Doctrine of the Church are
Holy Scripture, the Apostles' Creed, The Nicene
Creed and the Book of Common Prayer?

DECLAIR

Yes.

LAND

Thank you.

DECLAIR

But...

LAND

But the accusation contends that the Doctrine of
this Church is founded in the resolutions and
teachings by the House of Bishops. Is that not true?

DECLAIR

Yes.

LAND

So the accusation is based upon a false premise?

DECLAIR

(To York)
He's badgering me.

YORK

(To DeClair)
He's what?! Oh please.
(To Land)
Mr. Land...what is your point?

LAND

My point is this. The resolutions of the House of Bishops are not recognized sources of Church's doctrine. Therefore, the claim that non-celibate homosexual persons may not be ordained is not from a recognized source of doctrine from the Church.

DECLAIR

This is outrageous.
(To York)
The attorney for Bishop Andrews is misconstruing the truth.

LAND

The truth?! I'm just setting the record straight. You and your spin doctors --

DECLAIR

The record stands on its own.

LAND

And the record is warped.

YORK

That's enough.

DECLAIR

Did you hear what he said? Warped--

YORK

Both of you. Let me remind you again that this is the House of Bishops...and not some daytime television court program.

(To Land)
Please. Stick with your arguments.

LAND

But...they have distorted the facts, fanning the flames of fear and destroying the lives of these innocent people in the process --

YORK

We'll be the judge on that. Please...just the facts.

LAND

Alright.

(Collects himself)

The accusation charges Bishop Andrews with two acts which it alleges constitute heresy, "holding and teaching doctrine contrary to that held by this Church" in violation of Canon IV.1.1. Specifically, the Accusation charges that on September 18, 1990, Bishop Andrews dissented and voted against a resolution of the House of Bishops.

(To York)

If I may, I would like to ask Bishop Andrews a question?

YORK

Proceed.

LAND

Were you the only bishop who voted against the September 18, 1990 Resolution?

ANDREWS

No. There were 75 bishops who voted against the resolution...besides myself.

LAND

What was this resolution?

ANDREWS

It was a resolution censuring a fellow Bishop for his ordination of a gay man.

LAND

Was this a doctrine?

ANDREWS

No.

LAND

Your accusers claimed that in 1994, at the General Convention in Indianapolis, you, along with seventy other Bishops, signed a petition, called "A Statement of Diversity" which was counter to an earlier and narrowly passing Statement issued that year regarding the issue of "banning the ordination to Holy Orders of homosexual men and women." Is that correct?

ANDREWS

Correct.

LAND

Does an issue on which there are such widely divergent views constitute the Doctrine of the Church?

ANDREWS

No.

LAND

Your accusers state that in 1990, you ordained to the priesthood the Rev. Larry Schofield, a homosexual man living in a committed relationship of long standing with another, and alleges that such ordination was "in violation of the Bishop's ordination vow to conform to the doctrine of the Church".

ANDREWS

I did ordain Larry but there was no doctrine of the Church on the issue of whether it was permissible to ordain non-celibate homosexual persons.

LAND

Does the Church have a doctrine of sexual morality?

ANDREWS

Yes, I believe it has to do with love, with consent, with caring, with commitment.

LAND

Will you cite the scripture and tradition that support your view?

ANDREWS

I have read the Gospels over and over. I wanted to find out what our Lord had to say about homosexuality. And it isn't there. Jesus never mentioned homosexuality and neither did Jesus hold up heterosexual marriage as the only acceptable human condition. His second great commandment, "Love thy neighbor as yourself," is about love and compassion. He teaches us about loving and caring relationships. And then I look at the relationship between Larry Schofield and his partner, David, and I ask myself "Is there something about their relationship that is inconsistent with the message Jesus brought to us?"

(beat)

And I say, no.

YORK

Do you have any more arguments to present?

LAND

No.

YORK

If there are no more arguments, the Court will adjourn and deliberate on the information it has heard in today's proceedings.

(The lights dim down on the courtroom setting and go up as the soldiers lead Christ to Pilate. The Zealots surround Jesus.)

PILATE

What charge do you bring against this man?

ZEALOT 1

If he hadn't been doing something evil, do you think we'd be here bothering you?

PILATE

So what evil has he done?

ZEALOT 2

Well...I..

PILATE

That's what I thought. You take him. Judge him by your law.

ZEALOT 1

We're not allowed to kill anyone.

PILATE

But you want me to do it, right? You slander him and accuse him of doing "evil things" that you can't substantiate.

ZEALOT 2

He's calling himself the King...and he's not.

PILATE

He calls himself the "King", huh? That's it?

ZEALOT 1

That's blasphemy!

PILATE

(Doubting)

Is it?

(To the Zealots)

Why don't all of you go over there and let me talk with him, okay?

(To Jesus)

Is this true? Are you the "King"?

JESUS

What's it to you?

PILATE

Look...let's get something straight. I'm not a Zealot...okay?

(more)

PILATE (cont'd)

Some of my best friends are...but I'm not.

(Becomes self-conscious)

Why...do I look like Zealotish to you?

(Beat)

Your people and your high priests turned you over to me...and said that you have done evil things. Is this true? What have you done?

JESUS

I've done nothing but spoken the truth.

PILATE

Well that's one strike against you. Tell me something...do you call yourself a king?

JESUS

Yes...but you see my kingdom doesn't consist of what you see around me. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But I'm not that kind of king.

PILATE

Look...you're not answering my question. Are you a king or not?

JESUS

I am what I am. I was born and entered the world so that I could bear witness to the truth. Everyone who cares for truth, who has a feeling for the truth, recognizes my voice.

PILATE

What is the truth?

JESUS

Love one another.

(Pilate walks over to Zealots.)

PILATE

I find nothing wrong with this man.

ZEALOT 1

What?!

ZEALOT 2

But he-

PILATE

He has broken no laws and has hurt no one. I can't charge him with anything...he is innocent.

(more)

PILATE (cont'd)

(beat)

Now I'm going to give you an opportunity to save face. I know it's your custom that I pardon one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to pardon him?

ZEALOT 2

What?! Are you kidding?

ZEALOT 1

Not this one. You know that your reappointment is coming up and I believe you need as many supporters as possible. If word got out about this at the temple, things could go against you.

PILATE

Okay...so whom?

ZEALOT 1

What about Barabbas?

ZEALOT 2

Yeah.

PILATE

Barabbas?! You've got to be kidding! Hell, he has a police record a mile long.

ZEALOT 2

But he's a freedom fighter.

PILATE

Is that what you call him? He sells firearms illegally on the black market.

ZEALOT 1

We want Barabbas.

PILATE

This is disgusting. You are disgusting.

(To the soldiers)

Take him away.

(As John speaks to the Inquisitor,
Jesus is dragged away into the darkness
by the soldiers.)

INQUISITOR

Are you saying that Pilate sentenced him even though he had committed no crime?

JOHN

Yes.

INQUISITOR

And then what happened?

JOHN

The soldiers took Jesus away...and then they whipped and humiliated him.

INQUISITOR

Are you lying to me?

JOHN

No.

INQUISITOR

You're lying. My people would do this injustice.

JOHN

But they did.

(beat)

The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, stripped him and made him wear a purple robe and then they spat and beat him, mocking him. Then Pilate went back again to the Zealots.

PILATE

(Gives up)

Okay. But I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime.

(Jesus is brought back to Pilate.)

PILATE

(continuing)

Here he is; the Man.

ZEALOTS

Crucify him.

PILATE

You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him.

ZEALOT 1

We have a law.

PILATE

What law are you talking about?

ZEALOT 1

Our law, of course.

PILATE

This is not law...this is only your religious doctrine.

ZEALOT 2

He must die because he claimed to be the Son of God.

PILATE

What? Son of God?

(To Jesus)

Where did you come from?

(Jesus says nothing)

You won't talk? Don't you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to crucify you?

JESUS

You haven't a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That's why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault.

PILATE

(To the Zealots)

I cannot do this. This man has done nothing. I cannot convict an innocent man of a crime he hasn't committed.

ZEALOT 1

But he's unnatural.

(beat)

If you pardon this man, you're no friend of Caesar's.

ZEALOT 2

Anyone who calls himself the "king" defies Caesar.

PILATE

I am to crucify your king?

ZEALOT 2

We have no king except Caesar.

PILATE

Fine. Get him out of here.

JOHN

(To Inquisitor)

They took him away. Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill, where they crucified him. It read, "Jesus the Nazorean...The King." Many of the high priests objected.

ZEALOT 1

(To Pilate)

"The King?!" What?!

(Beat)

Pilate!

PILATE
 What is it now?

ZEALOT 2
 That sign.

PILATE
 What about it?

ZEALOT 2
 He's not the King! The sign should be rewritten.

ZEALOT 1
 It should read, "This man said, I am the King."

PILATE
 What I've written, I've written.

ZEALOT 2
 But --

PILATE
 There are no buts. That's the way it is.

JOHN
 While he was dying on the cross, his mother came.

MARY
 Where did I go wrong?

JESUS
 Mother, it's not about you so quit blaming yourself.
 (beat)
 You've been a good mother. It's not your fault.

MARY
 But if I had done things differently. Maybe if I had pushed you into sports instead debate and the drama club...maybe this wouldn't have happened to you?

JESUS
 No matter what you did...this would still have to happen.

MARY
 What will happen to me?

JESUS
 (Referring to John)
 Mother...this is your son.

MARY
 What are you talking about? But according to Jewish law, that means he's your...

JESUS

(To John)
John...here is your mother. Take care of her.

JOHN

I will.

JESUS

It's done...complete.

(The lights dim out as he dies.)

JOHN

(Extends his hand toward her.)
Please, take my hand.

(The lights dim as Mary reluctantly
takes John's hand.)

YORK

Please take your seats, so that we can proceed with
the findings in this Court.

(Beat)

First, the Court has found that there is no article
of faith stating that it is impermissible to ordain
a non-celibate homosexual person which must be
accepted by all members of the Church. The Accusers
claim that "doctrine" is the teaching of the Church
as determined by the formularies of the Church,
including declarations by the House of Bishops.
Based upon that mischaracterization of the
"formularies of the Church" and its sources, the
Accusers reach the false conclusion that "The
Teaching or doctrine of The Church, is that it is
not permissible to ordain a practicing homosexual."

(Beat)

It is the finding of this court that there is no
basis for bringing Bishop Andrews to trial on a
charge of holding and teaching Doctrine contrary to
that of the Church Canon or violating any of his
ordination vows. This attempt to use the Church's
judicial process to resolve an issue on which there
is no agreement must fail. The accusations of heresy
against Bishop Andrews are dismissed.

(The lights change. Andrews watches
Schofield as he delivers the Eucharist.
Schofield lifts up the wine and bread.)

LARRY

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Christ
took bread. And when he given thanks, he broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat.
This is my body which is given for you.

(more)

LARRY (cont'd)

Do this for the remembrance of me."

(beat)

After supper, he took the cup of wine and when he had given thanks, he give it to them and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is the blood for the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

(beat)

The gifts of God for the people of God. Take this in the remembrance of Christ.

(Suddenly, a man jumps up in the audience and runs down the aisle toward Schofield.)

MAN

Shut up! Shut up! God doesn't want you here. Jesus doesn't want you here. You got no right. Not in my church. You shit!

(He pulls out a gun, aims at Schofield and Andrews, firing several shots at them. Both are hit. As the assailant runs out of the theatre, Andrews catches Schofield as he falls to the floor. There is mass confusion and hysteria...screaming and crying. The lights dim as a body is lifted up and carried to the sacramental table. As his body is covered and prepared for burial, the assembly solemnly sit down on benches. York resumes the liturgy over the dead body.)

YORK

O Father of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother. We thank you for giving him to us, his family, and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created me, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

(more)

YORK (cont'd)

(beat)

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing but life everlasting.

(beat)

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant, Larry. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace and into glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

(beat)

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

(As the body of Larry is carried from the church, Andrews comes out of the shadows. David stand alone. Susan stands back and watches.)

DAVID

Why has God forsaken me?

ANDREWS

He hasn't.

DAVID

(Turns to Andrews)

Then why did He do this?

ANDREWS

God didn't. Man did.

DAVID

His last words were to ask me to take care of our children and that he would go and make a place for us.

(beat)

Why did they do this to him? He harmed no one.

ANDREWS

I don't know...I don't know.

(Susan walks over and puts her arm around David to console him. Together, they leave the church. Andrews stands alone as the lights dim out.)

THE END