

“WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

Easter Monologues and Vignettes by

Greg Beastron

LIGHTS UP

A man, DISCIPLE, dressed in New Testament clothing stands before the audience CENTER STAGE. He looks up as if someone has spoken to him.

DISCIPLE

Did I know Jesus of Nazareth? Oh yes. Yes I know Him very well. I was one of His disciples. I remember the day, the hour, the minute when He first spoke to me. I had been following Him for a couple days -- listening, absorbing all He had to say. Suddenly, He looks me straight in the face and says, "Follow Me". If it was anyone else, I'd have laughed. But Jesus had this way of looking deep into you, like He was looking into your soul. Like He knew everything about me. He knew how much I was looking for some kind of meaning in life. I tried to find a reason for living everywhere and with everyone. My family never understood me. I had no friends, no skills, no education. I was on a road to nowhere. Yet none of that mattered to Jesus. When I looked into His face, I found what I was looking for. I found a friend. It was like that with Jesus. He affected so many people.

A young girl, JAIRUS' DAUGHTER, approaches Disciple.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

His face was so kind, so peaceful. I remember I had gotten very sick. In fact, it was all I could do to be able to breathe. I couldn't hardly move. Every time my mother looked upon me it was with tears in her eyes. My poppa became so desperate, he was trying to find anyone or anything who could make me well. He had heard of this rabbi who was in a nearby town whose name was Jesus. This rabbi had healed people and performed miracles. So poppa left to find Him. I don't really know what happened after that. They tell me that when poppa was gone, my fever became worse and I actually died. I don't know, but the next thing I remember, someone said to me, "Arise little girl" and I woke up. The first thing I saw was the face of this Man, Jesus and He was smiling at me. I realized right then that I wasn't sick any longer. I felt wonderful. Before I knew it, momma and poppa ran into the room and were hugging and kissing me. I never got the chance to thank Jesus. They say that Jesus healed thousands of people -- that He raised people from the dead. I guess that's all true. One thing I know for sure. When I looked into His face, my life has never been the same.

THREE CHILDREN enter, rushing past the other cast members laughing and giggling.

CHILD #1

I know Jesus. He was a friend of mine. He was my bestest friend.

CHILD #2

No, He was MY bestest friend.

CHILD #3

He was a friend to all of us. And He loved children so much.

CHILD #1

Like when we were all playing with Him and climbing on His back and stuff, His disciples got so mad at us.

CHILD #2

But Jesus told them to stay back and let us alone. We were all having so much fun. He didn't want His disciples to ruin it.

CHILD #3

I remember Jesus liked to tell jokes. He was so funny.

CHILD #1

And stories. Jesus told stories all the time. Really good ones, too.

CHILD #2

Like the story about the man who saw the perfect pearl in the marketplace. And so he went and sold everything he had just so that he could buy that pearl.

CHILD #3

My daddy says that the pearl is like heaven. Jesus wanted us to know that heaven is worth giving everything for.

CHILD #1

Or the one about the farmer who was sowing seed. And some fell by the road and were plucked up by the birds. Some fell on the rocks and they sprung up, but when the sun was high, they burned up because they didn't have deep roots.

CHILD #2

Oh yeah, and some fell among the thorns and the thorns sprang up and choked them out.

CHILD #3

But some fell on good soil and sprang up and became fruitful. My daddy says that that's what we need to be like. When we hear Jesus speak, we should have good soil so that we listen and others will know how good Jesus is.

CHILD #1

I remember the story of the king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. And he sent his servants into the land to call those who were invited. But those who were invited laughed at his servants and made fun of them and spit at them.

CHILD #2

Yeah and some of the servants they beat up and even killed.

CHILD #3

So the king became angry and he said to his servants, those who were invited are not worthy to come to the wedding feast. So go to the roads and streets and invite anyone who will come. So the servants did so and invited everyone who would come, both bad and good.

CHILD #1

So what did your daddy say about that?

CHILD #3

Daddy told me to remember all the stories that Jesus told and that someday I would understand what they mean. All I know is that if Jesus invites me to a wedding feast, I'M COMING!

CHILD #2

Me too!

CHILD #1

And me too!

A young boy, POSSESSED BOY, approaches and joins the others on stage.

POSSESSED BOY

Jesus healed me as well. Only I was not physically sick. There was something else wrong with me. Ever since I could remember, I kept hearing these voices. They were loud and tormenting. They kept laughing at me, screaming at me, accusing me of being evil. Telling me to kill myself. The only way they would stop was if I burned myself. I began throwing myself into fires in order to stop the voices. I did this over and over again, burning myself until much of my flesh was charred. I was mentally and spiritually ill. My father, bless his soul, asked the Pharisees for help, but they did nothing. They actually blamed HIM! It wasn't his fault! I began to think the voices were right. I deserved to die. I wanted to relieve the burden I was putting on those I loved so much. I think my father knew this. He heard that Jesus was in town and found some of his followers, begging them for help. His followers tried their best to keep me from harming myself but I fell into a seizure and rolled around on the ground. Just then, Jesus arrived and put His hand on my shoulder. The voices stopped. No more torment. No more accusations. No more threats. It all stopped. Not only that, but where my flesh was burned, it was completely healed. Jesus didn't accuse my father or me. He just healed me.

A young BOY WITH LOAVES AND FISH enters and joins the cast.

BOY WITH LOAVES AND FISH

There was a sea of people and all I had was a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Here

(He shows the audience the bread and fish)

I mean, what can you do with that? Certainly not feed thousands of people AND their families. But it was getting late and Jesus' disciples were worried the crowd might get hungry. Well I just wanted to see a miracle and that's exactly what I

saw. When the disciples told Jesus to send the crowd away so they could get something to eat, Jesus told them, "You feed them". I thought He must be joking, but before I knew it the disciples were coming after ME wanting my bread and fish. At first I was like hey my mom sent that for me. That's MY dinner, but something inside me kept telling me to hand it over, so I did. I guess maybe at least a couple of families could've got a bit of a snack. Then Jesus stepped forward and gave this big smile. I couldn't see what He was so happy about, but He blessed the food and instructed them to feed the crowd. Before I knew it, they kept passing out more and more bread AND more and more fish. EVERYONE was eating! And I mean everyone! They had twenty basketfuls of food leftover! It was a miracle! And the biggest one I had ever seen. Afterwards, Jesus came up to me and said "Thank you" -- to me! I mean, who am I? I'm just a kid! But you know, if I hadn't shown up and given up my dinner, I would never have had the opportunity to be part of Jesus' miracle. I guess even someone as insignificant as me can be part of God's plan.

They are all joined by PROSTITUTE.

PROSTITUTE

No accusations. No judgment. Just love and forgiveness. That is what Jesus means to me. I was a prostitute. My life was in torment, but it was a torment I did to myself. I deserved the pain I was in. One day, I heard Jesus speaking to a crowd of people saying 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' I wanted so much to see God, but my heart was a polluted mess. I wanted to stop. But I knew I needed God's help and I was so far away from Him. It was useless. Then one day, some men in the village broke in to my house and dragged me into the street. They brought me to a part of the town where Jesus was teaching. They pretended to be so religious, yet most of them had used my services for years. Now they wanted to stone me. They knew I wanted out and they were afraid I'd expose their precious secrets. So they threw me against a wall and picked up stones to throw at me saying, "Rabbi, we caught this woman in the act of adultery!" Hypocrits! But I just laid there waiting to die. Just then, Jesus stepped between us. He looked the mob straight in the eye and told them, "He who is without sin cast the first stone". That shut them up immediately. Then He crouched down and wrote in the dirt. It looked like He wrote down each of their names even though He'd never met them! With each name, that person dropped their stone and ran away. They knew that Jesus knew. Their secret was out. Jesus reached down and picked me up. "Woman, Where are your accusers?" They were all gone. Then Jesus looked me straight in the eye and said "Neither do I accuse you. Go and sin no more". That day I realized no matter how bad my life may have been. No matter how ugly my sins. No matter how far away I felt from God. I was forgiven. My life is made new. And if He could do that for me, He could do that for anyone.

A ROMAN SOLDIER enters with a young BOY, a servant, carrying a cloth and bucket and joins the rest of the cast.

SOLDIER

The towel!

The boy sets down the bucket and fumbles with the towel a moment.

SOLDIER

Boy! The towel!

The servant gives him the towel quickly.

BOY

Did you see Him, sir?

SOLDIER

(wiping his forehead)

Who?

BOY

The Nazarene. Did you see Him?

SOLDIER

Yes. I saw Him.

The boy looks at him worried. The soldier finally glances up and sees his look.

SOLDIER

It wasn't pretty. They worked him over thoroughly.

BOY

(slowly)

Will they execute Him?

The soldier wipes his face again and gives the towel back to the boy.

SOLDIER

I think so. Yes.

BOY

But He didn't do anything!

The boy catches himself as the soldier glares back at him. The soldier eyes the boy.

SOLDIER

Were you one of His followers?

The boy gets nervous. He takes a step back.

BOY

W-well. M-maybe.

SOLDIER

Relax boy. I'm not your enemy. I don't care for this dirty business either. There is no honor in the execution of the innocent. besides, I knew this Man too.

BOY

You?

SOLDIER

One time my servant, a man who has been in service to my family since before I was born became ill. In fact, he was near death. This man taught me the art of command and leadership, but more than that, he taught me what it means to have honor. When a soldier gives his word, it is as if he has given his blood! When I took this command, I was glad he was with me. The Judean province is a dangerous one and it weighed heavily upon me. But now my servant, this man who taught me all I knew, was on the verge of death. And I felt as if I would die with him.

BOY

Did your servant die, sir?

SOLDIER

I heard of this rabbi. Not the usual political hack among the Jewish high priests, but someone who was more than that. I had heard the rumors of this man. That He was a healer. I've been in countries where seers and astrologers were commonplace, but I needed something more for my servant, my friend. This Jesus was what I needed. I found Him in the street, walking with His disciples. I stopped Him and explained that I knew He was One under authority. He spoke of God as His Father, like I would of Caesar, though Caesar could never heal my servant. Not wanting to inconvenience Jesus, I told Him if He said the Word, I knew my servant would be healed. I half expected Him to spit at me like many of the rest of His countrymen would, however He did no such thing. In fact, He was in awe of me saying never had He seen such faith. He said Go, for your servant is healed. I thanked Him and went my way.

BOY

And was your servant healed?

SOLDIER

As I returned home, I was met at the door by -- by my servant healed! This man. This Jesus. He is a man of honor. And yet, He is more than a man.

BOY

Is that why they want to execute Him?

SOLDIER

They say for the sake of the nation, one man should die.

BOY

And what do you say?

SOLDIER

I say how can the blood of an innocent Man atone for such injustice?
NICODEMUS and his WIFE join the cast.

WIFE

What happened? Will they let Him go?

Nicodemus glances unhappily at his wife.

WIFE

No. No! Did you say something? Didn't anyone come to His defense?

NICODEMUS

My dear, they had already made their decision. I said everything I could say but it fell on deaf ears.

WIFE

But He's an innocent Man! Didn't the words of Nicodemus carry any weight with them?

NICODEMUS

I'm an old man. My words do not carry the weight they once did. Besides, there was much more going on there than a trial. something – something I can't explain.

WIFE

What do you mean?

NICODEMUS

The council was enraged. They were like wild men. Their words were filled with such hatred. The only way to describe it is, utter darkness.

WIFE

What will happen to Jesus now?

NICODEMUS

He was sent to Pilate for sentencing, but Pilate wanted nothing to do with Him. Pilate sent Him to Herod, who wanted nothing to do with Him either and sent Him back to Pilate.

WIFE

Surely Pilate will release Him. Caiaphas has no authority over Rome.

NICODEMUS

My sweet wife. You can be so naïve in the ways of politics. Pilate's concern is to pacify Judea so as not to draw the attention of Caesar. If the council wishes a thing that does not concern Rome, it will be done.

WIFE

I am NOT so naïve to know that Jesus has done nothing wrong! Nicodemus, He is your friend! There must be something you can do.

NICODEMUS

(shakes his head)

I've done all I can. His life is in God's hands. The old man pauses and takes a deep breath.

NICODEMUS

I've dedicated my life to the pursuit of truth. Something as elusive as a jack rabbit. Yet that first time I snuck away and spoke to Jesus man to man, I felt as if finally, someone who is not afraid to confront issues of substance. He is someone who could inspire me to rise above the mundane issues of life and reach for something grand.

WIFE

I recall He frustrated you with His words. That you must be born again.

NICODEMUS

Yes. At first, yes. But I since have understood that to be open to the work of God, one must allow their mind and their spirit to be renewed to become as a little child. He said, what is born of the flesh is flesh, but what is born of the Spirit is spirit. It is a truth that has set me free.

WIFE

My husband, a Man like this should not be put to death.

NICODEMUS

What would you have me do? To confront the Sanhedrin may mean expulsion, possibly even stoning. For me AND for you! I cannot risk that!

(sadly)

NICODEMUS (con't)

Even for a friend.

WIFE

So His blood will be on their hands.

NICODEMUS

It will be on all of us.

The Disciple steps forward again.

DISCIPLE

One time, at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked all of His disciples, a question. Surrounding the city are 14 temples of Baal, the Syrian god of prosperity. As well as a white marble temple built by Herod the Great dedicated to Caesar, a monument to man's ambition. Overlooking the city is a cave where the Greek god Pan, the half-man, half-goat god of nature was said to have lived. Have you heard of pantheism? The belief that god is in everything? Pan is the father of pantheism. In that same cave is a reservoir that is the key source of the Jordan River -- all but sacred to the devout Jew. So there we were, standing in the midst of what epitomized all of man's pride, intellect and achievement. And Jesus asks us the question, 'Who do men say that I am?' Well, we all heard the talk -- Elijah or Jeremiah, maybe the return of John the Baptist. Then He looks at us with those piercing eyes and asks, 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter jumps up and blurts out 'You are the Christ! The Son of the Living God!' I mean it was so 'Peter'. He was much more spontaneous than the rest of us. We just chuckled to ourselves, but Jesus said, 'Blessed are you Peter for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in heaven.' You know, I've always asked myself, of all places -- why there? And of all questions, why that one?

PROSTITUTE

If He was to ask me that question, I would answer the same. I believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

BOY WITH LOAVES AND FISH

Me too! I believe in Jesus!

POSSESSED BOY

I would not be who I am today if it weren't for Jesus. He is the Messiah. I believe!

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

When I saw His face, I knew. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God!

ROMAN SOLDIER

Truly this man was the Son of God!

CHILDREN

We believe in Jesus!

NICODEMUS

There is no question in my mind. He is God. I believe in Jesus.

PROSTITUTE

(to Disciple)

But what do you say? You walked with Him. You were His disciple. Who do you say Jesus is?

The Disciple pauses a moment. Then he pulls a small satchel from his pocket and removes THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER. He fingers the money and looks at it.

DISCIPLE

Jesus is the one who called me 'friend' even after I betrayed Him. I mean what kind of MAN would do that? You ask if I believe if Jesus were the Son of God.

(shakes his head)

How could I not believe?

The Disciple looks at the money again, more disgusted with himself. In a burst of futility, he tosses the money aside, glances at the others, and EXITS quickly.

LIGHTS OUT

THE END

(Writer's Note: These monologues and vignettes are fairly flexible. Some parts can be edited out depending on the amount of actors that are available. Because of the nature of the "twist" ending however, you would need at least a Disciple, Prostitute and probably two additional Characters in order to make it flow right. – gb)

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