

GREAT WOMEN by Cleveland O. McLeish

GREAT WOMEN

Original Stage play

By

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www.christianplaywright.org

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SYNOPSIS

There was a moment in our history that no one will ever forget. One man came into this world and changed everything. Some believed he was trouble...some said he associated himself too closely with sinners...but one thing remained constant. Every who encountered this man changed.

This is a play about four normal women...four different women....four individuals faced with four different challenges...four people whose story will forever be in our hearts because they met Jesus and transitioned from normal women to great women.

SCENE I

Jesus enters walking up the aisle. His disciples surround him and move along with him quoting scriptures.

JOHN: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

LUKE: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

MATTHEW: A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.

MARK: For as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become children of God. Even to those who believe in His name.

JESUS: I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

A member from the audience stands accusingly.

MEMBER: Do you even have any authority to claim to be God's son.

JESUS: All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Audience member rents his garment.

MEMBER: Blasphemy!!!!

Another member stands.

MEMBER 2: If you are the son of God, then show us a sign.

JESUS: Only a wicked and perverse nation asks for a sign.

MEMBER 2: Are you calling me wicked?

JESUS: If the cap fits brother....wear it.

MEMBER 2: You are trouble I tell you. Trouble.

JESUS: Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. You are all my witnesses, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.

Jesus stops. He looks around. The disciples are wondering what is the cause of his sudden wonder. Then Jesus speaks.

JESUS: Who touched me?

The disciples look at each other...some may even chuckle a bit.

JOHN: Master, how can you ask such a question with this crowd pressing against us?

JESUS: Somebody touched me just now. I want to know who it is. Who touched me?

Jesus continues looking from face to face.

JESUS: I felt virtue leave my spirit. Who touched me?

A woman comes kneeling before him. Jesus brings her to her feet. Her name is Jane.

JANE: I am sorry my Lord. I didn't think you would know.

JESUS: What ails you daughter?

JANE: I have been troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years. Twelve years of suffering and pain. I lost my family...all my friends turned their backs on me...treated me like a leper. I was desperate. I spent all that I had on doctors trying to get some relieve and there was none...there was no end to my pain...until now.

JESUS: You have faith woman.

JANE: Its all I had left. I thought if only I could touch your clothes I would be healed and I am. For the first time in twelve years I feel no pain.

JESUS: Daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.

MARK: And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Jane kneels before him again and kisses his hand.

JANE: I will never forget you my Lord.

JESUS: Go and tell no one what happened here today.

Jane meets Jesus' eyes for a long moment before nodding and turning away.

MATTHEW: Who is like unto our Lord. Who is like unto thee, O LORD?

MARK: Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

They continue towards the stage, but just about the time they reach the stage a Pharisee coming in another direction greets them.

PHARISEE: You are Jesus the Christ?

JESUS: I am as you say.

PHARISEE: Humble me enough to have you a guest at my house.

Jesus nods to his disciples and they all follow the Pharisee to the stage area.

The Pharisee invites them all to sit and a meal is brought to them.

PHARISEE: I have heard many stories about your exploits. But what troubles me the most about your 'ministry' is how closely you associate yourself with sinners.

JESUS: If you are healthy would you go see a doctor.

PHARISEE: Of course not. Only sick people go to the physician.

JESUS: Likewise, I came not for the healthy but for the sick.

PHARISEE: What does that have to do with sinners?

JESUS: It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

PHARISEE: Does that not contradict God's law to be separated from the unlawful.

JESUS: If the lawful was to be separated from the unlawful...then who would teach the lawful what is right from what is wrong?

Silence.

PHARISEE: That's a very good point.

A young woman enters and falls at Jesus feet.

MARY: Forgive me Lord. For my sins are many. I have broken almost all of God's law and am worthy only of death....can my Lord forgive a woman such as I.

JESUS: Forgiveness is for women like you. And you don't need silver and gold to obtain it...only a broken and contrite heart.

MARY: And as my heart is broken...so I break this gift for you.

*She breaks her Alabaster Box and pour sweet perfume
On his head.*

The Pharisee waits to see what Jesus' reaction will be.

MARK: What a foolish woman? Why waste such a valuable thing?

MATTHEW: It could have been sold for much and the money given to the poor.

JESUS: Why do you trouble this woman? She has done good. You will always have the poor, but I am here for only a short time. She has poured this item on my body for my burial. Wherever the gospel is preached in the world...this story will be told. Her deed will be remembered for all times.

PHARISEE: You do realize that this woman is an harlot. If you were indeed a prophet you would perceive this.

JESUS: Do you think because your sins go unseen it makes you a better person than this woman?

The Pharisee cannot respond.

JESUS: The difference between you and her is that she acknowledges her sins and she ask to be forgiven.

MARY: I know my sins. They are ever before me night and day. I won't deny the awful choices I have made in my life. I seek nothing more than to be forgiven.

PHARISEE: Who in this room can forgive sins?

JESUS: You have already experienced forgiveness my daughter...for what you did here today. I say to you all, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.

*(Jesus then turns to woman and say) Your sins are forgiven
Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.*

Mary exits praising God.

Mark stands to speak.

MARK: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

PHARISEE: This man is nothing more than a heretic. How can you speak so highly of him? And follow him.

JESUS: You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?

PHARISEE: Thank you for sharing my table...but now I think you must leave.

Jesus leaves with his disciples behind him.

*A large crowd enters dragging a woman between them.
They throw her at Jesus' feet.*

ACCUSER: Rabbi...we have heard much about you and seek your worthy counsel.

ANOTHER ACCUSER: This woman was caught in the very act of adultery. You know what the law says. What says you?

Jesus stoops down and starts to scribble something on the ground.

ACCUSER: Do you care not that we are about to stone this sinner to death?

Jesus remains silent and continues scribbling.

ACCUSER: You disciples. Your master's silence has left you with the task to decide what we do with this woman.

MARK: Who accuses her of this sin?

ACCUSER: We have three men here who testify to her act.

MATTHEW: And where is the man who is guilty also of this sin.

ACCUSER: Well, he got away.

ANOTHER ACCUSER: But let us not sidetrack the main task at hand.

One of the accusers puts stones in the disciple's hand.

ACCUSER: We know what the law says. She must be stoned to death., It is her only punishment.

Pause.

Longer pause.

Jesus stands to his feet and takes the stone from his Disciple.

JESUS: What you say is true? She is guilty of the sin you accuse her of and by law she must be stoned to death.

Accusers rejoice at Jesus' word....

JESUS: *(holds out the stone)* So....let he who stands among you who is without sin....come and cast the first stone.

The rejoicing ceases as each man considers these words. They search their hearts.

One by one the stone falls from their hands and they exit until none remain.

Jesus looks at the woman with compassion. He extends his hand to her and she takes it.

JESUS: Where are your accusers?

WOMAN: They have left my Lord.

JESUS: No one stands to condemn you?

WOMAN: No my Lord.

JESUS: Then neither will I condemn you for your mistakes. Go and sin no more.

Woman kisses Jesus hand and leaves rejoicing.

MATTHEW: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

JESUS: My brothers...I need to be alone for a while.

DISCIPLES: Yes Master. We will go ahead to the city to get some food and supplies.

The disciples exit one by one.

A woman by the name of Sarah has enter stage area and begins to pull water from A well (imagery)

Jesus sees her...looks at her as if expecting her....he goes to her.

JESUS; Woman. I am tired and thirsty. Can you draw me a little water to drink.

The woman looks puzzled, but accommodates Jesus none the less.

JESUS: Why do you look at me like that?

SARAH: Aren't you a Jew?

JESUS: I am.

SARAH: Jews don't usually associate themselves with Samaritans. So how is it that you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman for a drink?

JESUS: If you knew the gift of God, and who it was that was talking to you, you would ask him and he would give you living water.

SARAH: How is it that you can do this? Are you greater than our father Jacob who dug this well and drank from it himself?

JESUS: Whoever drinks water from this well will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again!

SARAH: Sir, give me this water so I don't have to keep coming to this well to get water.

JESUS: Go, get your husband and come back.

Pause.

SARAH: I don't have a husband.

JESUS: You're right in saying that you don't have a husband. The fact is that you have had five husbands and the man you are now with is not your husband.

Sarah's mouth falls wide open.

SARAH: Who are you? Do you know me from somewhere? Are you a prophet sent from God?

JESUS: Who do you think I am?

SARAH: You Jews say that you have to worship in Jerusalem at the temple. But, we Samaritans, say that you should worship, not in Jerusalem at the temple, but up on this mountain.

JESUS: I tell you the truth, a time is coming and is now here where true worshipers will neither worship on this mountain nor in Jerusalem at the temple. But true worshipers will worship in spirit and in truth.

SARAH: I know that the Messiah is coming, and when he comes, he will explain everything to us.

JESUS: The messiah has come.

SARAH: Where can I find him?

JESUS: He speaks to you today....at this very moment.

At this moment anything Sarah had in her hands fall to the ground.

She dashes offstage and into the audience...

SARAH: Come; see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ!

She repeats this to a few others who move towards the stage.

The disciples also re-enter one by one.

JESUS: I am the resurrection and the life, I am the light of the world, he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

END OF PLAY

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NOTE FROM WRITER

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