

Jesus Is Here!

THE ORIGINAL STAGEPLAY



Cleveland O. McLeish

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Characters

SCENE 1

Jesus (Male)

Servant (Male or Female)

Mary (Female)

James (Male)

Peter (Male)

John (Male)

Male Voice

Extras (Males and/or Females - Non-Speaking)

SCENE 2

Jesus (Male)

Man (Male)

Male Voice

SCENE 3

Jesus (Male)

Male Voice

Unclean Man (Male)

SCENE 4

Man (Male/Withered Hand)

Scribe (Male)

Pharisee (Male)

Jesus (Male)

Peter (Male)

John (Male)

Male Voice

SCENE 5

Peter (Male)

Jesus (Male)

James (Male)

Peter (Male)

John (Male)

Extras (Males - Non-Speaking)

SCENE 6

Jesus (Male)

Samuel (Male)

Woman (Female)

Man (Male)

Peter (Male)

Extras (Males and/or Females - Non-Speaking)

SCENE 7

Male Voice

Man 1 (Male)

Man 2 (Male)

Man 3 (Male)

Jesus (Male)

Pharisee (Male)

Extras (Males and/or Females - Non-Speaking)

SCENE 8

Jesus (Male)

Peter (Male)

James (Male)

John (Male)

9 Leprous Men (Males)

Samaritan Man (Male)

Setting

Empty stage, with appropriate props and scenic items to represent the different locations for each scene.

The Story

Jesus is Here examines the difference it makes when Jesus shows up on the scene. There are many miracles recorded in Scripture, but this play focuses on eight of the prominent ones, and embedded in each miracle is a lesson for us all. There is a miracle awaiting those in need, but there is a call to participate in that which we seek for God to do on our behalf.

This Easter, remind your congregation that Jesus is still the Healer today, and by our obedience, participation and faith in the finished work of Christ, we can receive our miracle today because Jesus is STILL here.

Play Details

Length: 45 Minutes

Cast: 2 Females | 15 Males | Plus Extras (Males and/or Females)

Audience: Teens & Adults

Genre: Biblical Drama

The Script



SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage, except for six large clay jars lined up Stage Right.

Jesus is sitting by Himself.

There is a wedding ceremony in progress. We can hear the music, chatter, laughter and merry making of those at the banquet. (You can do this with sound effects).

A SERVANT enters with a large mug, and goes to each of the jar, but finds nothing there to draw. He exits, concerned.

A beat.

MARY enters, and goes to sit beside Jesus.

MARY: Why do you separate yourself from the others?

JESUS: I am learning to be in that secret place with the Father, even in a crowded room.

MARY: Aw, but we could use your presence inside. The bride keeps glancing around the room, and I knew she is looking for you.

JESUS: I will be sure to greet them before I leave.

MARY: Okay, son.

Mary looks away, troubled.

JESUS: You are not just here to check on me, are you?

MARY: There's an issue inside. I think you can help.

JESUS: What is the issue? Tell me.

MARY: They have no more wine.

JESUS: Wine? And you come to me?

MARY: I am your mother. I know and have seen the things you do in secret.

JESUS: In private, yes. Woman, why do you want to involve me in this? My hour has not yet come.

MARY: You can do anything.

Mary signals for the Servant, who enters and bows honourably.

MARY: Whatever Jesus tells you to do, do it.

Mary hugs Jesus.

MARY: I know you will do the right thing.

Mary exits.

The Servant waits for instructions from Jesus.

JESUS: Fill those jars with water.

The Servant glances at the big jars, then back at Jesus. He exits.

Several MEN join the Servant in filling the jars with buckets of water.

PETER, JAMES and JOHN enters, and stands with Jesus.

JAMES: Master, did you hear --- the wine has ran out.

JOHN: Shh! The master of the ceremony doesn't know yet.

JAMES: Which is why the celebration is still joyous. When this becomes public knowledge, there will be no joy left to bring this chapter to its grand finale.

JESUS: There will be wine.

JAMES: Even if they send to buy wine, it's a day's journey from here to the nearest wine-maker.

JOHN: This is a disaster. A wedding without wine is quite an embarrassment.

JESUS: There will be wine.

Pater has been watching the men fill the jars.

PETER: Master, what are these men doing?

JESUS: *(to the Servant)* Now fill your mugs and take it to the master of the banquet.

The Servants follow the instructions and fill their mugs. They exit, with deep concern in their eyes that they are about to serve water for wine at wedding.

JAMES: Lord, I don't think water is a good substitute for wine.

JOHN: Someone is going to be very upset when they put that to their heads.

Peter walks over to the jars and fills his cup. He drinks, pleased with the taste.

PETER: If this is water, it's the best water I have ever had.

The others taste it as well, then look in Jesus' direction.

JAMES: How did you do that?

Jesus smiles.

MALE VOICE: (O.S.) Hey, everyone. I need to say something.

The celebration quiets down.

MALE VOICE: (O.S.) Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.

Everyone starts celebrating again, and more wine is drawn from the jars.

The disciples are dumbfounded.

Jesus smiles, and helps Himself to a cup of the wine.

JESUS: This is really good wine.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage, with a single podium Downstage Center.

Jesus stands Downstage Center, behind a podium, looking out over the audience.

JESUS: Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Jesus pauses, and glances around the room.

JESUS: Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

A MAN enters, crawling towards Jesus.

MAN: Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are --- the Holy One of God.

JESUS: Be quiet! Come out of this man.

The Man screams and convulses violently, then calms down. His demeanour is different, he looks at his hands as if seeing them for the first time. He looks at Jesus.

MAN: Who are You?

MALE VOICE: What manner of a man is this?

Pause. Jesus begins to leave.

MALE VOICE: He teaches with real authority, unlike the teachers of the law. Do you see their faces? The anger, as if they want this man dead. But who is He, that even evil spirits obey His orders?

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage.

Jesus stands at Center Stage, again preaching to the audience.

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

MALE VOICE: What strange teaching is this? No man can see God and live.

JESUS: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

An UNCLEAN MAN approaches Jesus. He is white from having leprosy.

The UNCLEAN MAN kneels before Jesus.

Jesus looks at him with compassion.

MALE VOICE: That's a leper. Let's see if Jesus will defile Himself by touching him.

Jesus goes to the man and kneels beside him. He takes his hand.

MALE VOICE: *(gasping)* He touched him!

UNCLEAN MAN: Lord, if You are willing, You can heal me and make me clean.

JESUS: I am willing.

Jesus hugs the Man.

JESUS: Be clean.

The MAN begins to regain his strength.

JESUS: Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed.

MAN: Thank you.

Jesus helps the Man to his feet, and sees him off.

MALE VOICE: This man must be from God.

MALE VOICE: The pharisees and scribes can't do what he does, and they are the church.

MALE VOICE: Then, who is this man? Is he not just a man, yet he does the things we would expect a God to do?

Pause.

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage.

A MAN sits alone, with his hand withered and curled up at the entrance to the temple.

A SCRIBE and a PHARISEE is also there, standing a little distance away, deep in conversation.

Jesus approaches the temple with Peter and John close behind him.

Jesus sees the man with the withered hand. The Scribe and Pharisee notices, and walks over to Jesus.

PHARISEE: Tell us, Teacher, what are your views on the Sabbath?

JESUS: Why do you ask a question knowing you don't want to hear the answer?

PHARISEE: But we do.

JESUS: The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Jesus is fixated on the man with the withered hand. The Scribe takes note.

SCRIBE: You have healed many; Your fame is widespread.

JESUS: So you say.

SCRIBE: No doubt, you also wish to heal this man?

JESUS: He will be healed, if he desires it.

PHARISEE: Does the law permit a person to work by healing on the Sabbath?

Pause.

JESUS: If you had a sheep that fell into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn't you work to pull it out?

SCRIBE: Uhm,

JESUS: Of course you would.

PHARISEE: It would be inhumane to just leave the sheep there to suffer.

JESUS: Exactly. So how much more valuable is a person than a sheep?

Pause.

JESUS: Yes, the law permits a person to do good on the Sabbath.

Jesus kneels beside the man with the withered hand.

JESUS: Hold out your hand.

The man begins to extend his good hand.

JESUS: No, your other hand.

MAN: But –

JESUS: Have faith.

With great effort and determination, the man begins to extend his withered hand. As he does so by faith, it becomes whole.

Jesus immediately leaves the area with his disciples and the healed man following close behind.

PHARISEE: How long will we allow this to continue?

SCRIBE: He is winning the hearts of the people, pulling them away from our religious practices.

PHARISEE: We have already seen a decline in attendance to our Sabbath meetings, yet the people show up when they know He is coming to teach.

SCRIBE: They only want to come to church when Jesus is here.

PHARISEE: We must put a stop to this.

SCRIBE: We must find a way to get rid of this Jesus.

They exit.

MALE VOICE: Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally, he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world.

Pause.

MALE VOICE: He brought so much good in the world, yet all the religious authority of His day could think about was getting rid of him. Why would those who prioritize the law seek so solemnly to break a law in order to preserve their own pride and religious practices?

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 5

SETTING: Empty stage.

PETER'S VOICE: Lord, there's a large crowd coming our way.

JESUS' VOICE: I see them. Let's cross to the other side.

LIGHTS UP

Disciples are seated on the stage, as if in a boat. (You can be as creative as you can here, maybe by making some make-shift sails, and have a fan blowing in.)

The SOUND of terrible wind and rain can be heard. Disciples should be swaying back and forth as if caught in the wind. They try to speak above the wind.

JESUS is a little way off, sleeping peacefully.

The Disciples momentarily glance in His direction.

JAMES: Does He not care that we are about to die out here?

PETER: How is he able to sleep through all this?

JOHN: Go wake him up.

PETER: Why don't you go wake him up?

JAMES: Yeah, you are his favourite. Go wake him before we all die out here.

John wobbles over to Jesus and shakes him awake.

JOHN: Lord, save us. We're going to drown.

JESUS: Why are you afraid?

JOHN: Look, Lord. The storm is grave and it's about to tear this boat apart.

JESUS: You have so little faith.

Jesus gets up and stands firm while everyone else is wobbly.

JESUS: You are always looking at the immediate reality and not use your eyes of faith to see beyond it.

PETER: What is he saying?

Jesus extends his hand over the audience.

JESUS: Peace, be still.

The sound of the wind and rain ceases, and the Disciples are no longer wobbling. They have a look of amazement on their faces.

PETER: Who is this man?

JAMES: Even the winds and waves obey him.

Jesus goes back to sleep.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 6

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage.

Jesus is crossing the stage, followed by a small crowd.

SAMUEL: *(catching up to Jesus)* Can I ask you a question, master?

JESUS: *(stops for a moment)* Sure.

SAMUEL: How are you able to do the things you do?

JESUS: I am sent as an example to you.

SAMUEL: I don't even see your disciples fasting. Why don't your disciples fast like we do, and the Pharisees do? Isn't that how we get empowered to walk in the supernatural?

JESUS: Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom?

SAMUEL: Of course not.

JESUS: But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

A WOMAN, bent over in pain is slowly pressing her way through the crowd, and towards Jesus.

JESUS: Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

The WOMAN is almost close enough to Jesus to touch him.

JESUS: And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.

A MAN hurries forward and kneels before Jesus.

MAN: Teacher, my daughter has just died, but you can bring her back to life again, if you just come and lay your hand on her.

JESUS: She is not dead, but she is sleeping ----

The woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment.

Jesus is looking around, searching.

JESUS: Who touched me?

Everyone is looking around, confused.

PETER: Lord, there is a large crowd here and everyone is touching you.

JESUS: No, it was not just anyone's touch. Who touched me?

Jesus sees the woman, healed and humbly sitting by herself.

JESUS: Daughter, come here.

She comes over to him and bows.

WOMAN: Lord, I was desperate for a miracle, and thought that if I just touched your robe, I would be healed.

JESUS: Be encouraged, your faith has completely healed you.

The WOMAN embraces Jesus.

WOMAN: Thank you, Lord. For twelve years I had carried this issue and could find no relief.

JESUS: Let this be a lesson to all, you are only a faith away from your miracle. If you believe, all things become possible.

Pause.

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 7

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage.

A few sick people are gathered at centre stage, waiting.

MALE VOICE: Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, there was a pool of Bethesda with five covered porches. There were crowds of sick people – blind, lame or paralyzed, laying on the porches.

A lone man sits away from the others. He is paralyzed.

Another paralyzed man crawls over to him.

MAN 2: Hey, brother. I think I saw you here the last time.

MAN 1: I have been coming here for thirty-eight years.

MAN 2: Really! Man, you have faith.

MAN 1: If I had faith, I would not be here.

MAN 2: Yeah, you should have been healed by now.

MAN 1: I would be --- if I had someone to help me.

MAN 2: I would help you, brother, but as you can see, I need some help myself. Where's your family? Who brought you here? Why don't they just stay to put you in the pool?

MAN 1: Where is your family?

MAN 2: Touche. Well, I am gonna get a little closer to the pool, know what I mean. That way, there is a better chance for me to get in when it is troubled. You coming?

MAN 1: Nah, I am in too much pain to move from this spot.

MAN 2: But if you stay there, you will never get healed.

MAN 1: I can't move without help.

MAN 2: God helps those who help themselves, brother. You ain't never gonna be healed, if you don't give God something to work it.

MAN 1: I'm here, aren't I?

MAN 2: Yeah, but, you seem to think the healing gonna just find you.

MAN 1: I'll be alright. Nothing is hidden from God's sight. I am sure my time will come.

MAN 2: You really got faith if you can say that after 38 years. This my second year, and if I don't get healed today, I ain't coming back.

MAN 2 crawls away to join the others at centre stage. He begins whispering to the others and pointing in the direction of Man 1 in a scornful manner.

Jesus enters, sees the man and goes over to sit beside him.

JESUS: How would you like to get well?

MAN 1: I can't, sir.

JESUS: Why?

MAN 1: I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.

JESUS: Yet, here you are for the thirty-eight time. Maybe you already have what you need to be healed.

MAN 1: I don't understand, sir.

JESUS: I asked if you wanted to get well, and you gave me an excuse, instead of an affirmation. Let's try it again. Do you want to get well?

MAN 1: Yes, sir.

Jesus stands to his feet and extends his hand to the man.

JESUS: Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk.

The MAN's face reflects relief from the pain...he begins to stir, realizing that there is no more pain. He takes Jesus' hand and gets to his feet.

He picks up his sleeping mat, rolls it up and begins walking to the astonishment of MAN 2 and the others who were laughing at him.

PHARISEE'S VOICE: Hey you.

Jesus exits as a Pharisee enters.

PHARISEE: You can't work on the Sabbath. The law doesn't permit you to carry that sleeping mat.

MAN 1: The man who healed me told me, "Pick up your mat and walk."

PHARISEE: Who said such a thing as that?

Man 1 looks around for Jesus but doesn't see him.

MAN 1: He was here a moment ago.

PHARISEE: Right! Maybe he was raptured.

MAN 1: No, he was just here.

PHARISEE: Anyway, you know the law. Cease from your labour or don't come around here anymore.

Pharisee leaves.

Jesus comes back, startles the man.

MAN 1: I was looking for you.

JESUS: Now you are well, stop sinning or something even worse may happen to you.

MAN 1: Who are you, sir?

Jesus smiles, and exits.

MAN 2: I know him. That is Jesus of Nazareth. He is the miracle worker everyone is talking about.

MAN 3: If he is such a miracle worker, why would he only heal that man and not us?

Pause.

MAN 2: Because we don't have the faith this man has.

MAN 3: Or maybe it is God's will for us not to be healed.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 8

LIGHTS UP

SETTING: Empty stage.

Jesus sits with Peter, James and John.

JESUS: There will always be temptations to sin, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting. It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a milestone hung around your neck, than to cause one of these little ones to fall into sin. So watch yourselves.

PETER: What about those who deliberately do something to hurt us?

JESUS: If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there is repentance, forgive. Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day, and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.

JOHN: Lord, show us how to increase our faith.

JESUS: If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “May you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,” and it would obey you.

JAMES: We have faith, Lord, and we still can’t do the things you do.

JESUS: Yet, a time is coming when you will do greater things than me.

JAMES: But, how?

JESUS: When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, “Come in and eat with me?” No, he says, “Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.” And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not. In the same way, when

you obey me, you should say, “We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.”

JAMES: I don’t understand, Lord.

JESUS: Take the time to learn my ways, then you can go and do what I do.

Jesus gets up to leave, and his disciples follow.

TEN MEN, white from leprosy, approaches Jesus, and kneels before him.

MEN: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Jesus looked at them, then at his disciples, then back at the men.

JESUS: What do you want?

MEN: We want to be healed.

JESUS: Go and show yourselves to the priests.

The MEN bow and walk away with expectation in their eyes and a pep in their step.

JOHN: Lord, whose faith produces the miracle? Theirs or yours?

JESUS: *(smiles)* It is their faith in the instruction that I give, and their willingness to participate in their own miracle by obeying the instructions, that opens up the possibility of something coming from the supernatural realm into this one.

JOHN: So, we don’t need to have faith for the person we pray for to be healed?

JESUS: If you don’t have faith, you will not give the instruction.

ONE OF THE LEPROUS MEN returns and bows before Jesus. His skin is clean.

SAMARITAN MAN: *(in tears)* Praise God! Sir, thank you for healing me.

JESUS: You are a Samaritan?

SAMARITAN MAN: Yes, my Lord.

JESUS: I healed ten men. Where are the other nine? Has no Jew returned to give glory to God, except for this foreigner?

SAMARITAN MAN: They were so excited to go see their families, that they all ran off, but how could I leave and not show my gratitude? I can go back to living a normal life now, because of you.

JESUS: Stand up and go. Your faith has made you whole.

The Samaritan Man kisses the hand of Jesus, and leaves, still rejoicing.

JAMES: Will the others maintain their healing?

JESUS: There is no maintaining what you have received from God without gratitude.

A beat.

JOHN: Master, we have been asked on several occasions, “When will the kingdom of God come?”

JESUS: The kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs. You won’t be able to say, “Here it is!” or “It’s over there!” For the kingdom of God is already among you, and in you.

Pause.

BLACKOUT