

IN HIS STEPS SCRIPT

SCENE ONE: Palm Sunday

Narrator: "The city of Jerusalem is teeming with visitors as devout Jews from around the world make their annual pilgrimage to the Jewish temple of Jerusalem. The occasion is the Jewish Passover, where Israel remembers how God delivered them from their slavery in Egypt, brought them through the Red Sea, and into the Promised Land. But this Passover is different. Not only is the city festive, but a spirit of expectancy fills the community as news circulates about Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth. Stories of Jesus' healing the sick, setting people free and teaching about God's kingdom have reached Jerusalem. Many people wonder if Jesus could be the one they've been waiting so long for. Could he be the Messiah, the Promised One, the one who would restore Israel, forgive their sins, and bring them freedom from Roman oppression? As Jesus makes his way into the city, followed by his twelve apostles, the crowd is overcome with excitement. A spontaneous cheer breaks out along the road as the people shout. "Hosanna," which means "save us." But instead of riding into town on a war horse, armed for battle, Jesus rides on a donkey, symbolizing the peace he brings to all people through his life, death and resurrection.

(As the tour group walks through the crowd of villagers, the people cry out "Hosanna", "You are king!" "Messiah has come to save us!" etc. Meanwhile, they are waving palm branches and clearing the way for their king.)

SCENE TWO: The Last Supper

Narrator: Part of the Jewish Passover celebration was a special meal that commemorated Israel's final dinner in Egypt before God set them free. Families and friends would gather to share the Passover meal together, as they retold the stories of God's judgment on Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, and God's gift of the 10 commandments to Israel. Jesus gathers to celebrate Passover with his twelve closest friends, his twelve apostles. Together they share the Passover meal together. However, after dinner Jesus does something new.

Jesus: "Take this bread. It represents my body, which is about to be given for you. This cup of wine represents the new covenant instituted in my blood. Take this wine in remembrance of me. I tell you the truth; I won't drink this wine or eat this bread again

until everything I've set out to do is accomplished. But whenever you meet together, remember me with the bread and the wine."

Narrator: This would mark the beginning of the Christian celebration of Communion, instituted by Jesus on the eve of his death.

Jesus: "I have something hard but important to say to you; One of you is going to betray me. one who at this moment is eating with me."

Peter; "It isn't me, is it, Lord? Even if everyone else betrays you, I never will."

Jesus: "The one who betrays me is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table."

Judas: "It isn't me, is it. Rabbi?"

Jesus: "Don't play games with me, Judas." (Pause) "Tonight all of you will desert me. Just as scriptures say, God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

Peter: "Even if everyone else deserts you, I NEVER will!"

Jesus: "Peter, the truth is, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

Peter; "NO! Not even if I have to die with you! I will NEVER deny you!"

SCENE THREE: The Garden of Gethsemane

Narrator; After Judas left to betray Jesus and the Last Supper ended. Jesus and his remaining 11 apostles walked to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knows that his arrest is imminent, so he finds strength in prayer, seeking his Father's will. However, Jesus' 11 friends seem dense, unable to understand the significance of what's about to happen. Jesus asks them to stay awake and pray with him, but they keep falling asleep. (Narrator moves to the back of the crowd)

Jesus: "Father, I realize that this is what I was born to do. But if there is any other way to accomplish your plan, let me know now. I'm afraid. I know what they're planning to do. Nevertheless, Father, not my will, but your will be done.

Narrator: While the word of Jesus were still echoing in the garden, Judas shows up with a gang of thugs sent by the high priests. Judas had given them a prearranged

signal:

You will know which one to arrest when I go over and give him the kiss of greeting. So Judas came straight to Jesus saying "Greetings, Teacher!" and gave him the kiss. As Jesus is arrested, his remaining 11 friends all run for their lives in fear.

SCENE FOUR: Peter's denial

Narrator: "The people who had arrested Jesus led him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the religious law and other leaders had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter was following far behind and eventually came to the courtyard of the high priest's house. He went in, sat with the guards, and waited to see what was going to happen to Jesus. A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him.

Servant girl: "I recognize this man. This man was one of the Jesus' followers."

Peter: "Woman, I don't even know the man."

Man 1: "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. You must be one of them!"

Peter. "No, man, I'm not."

Man 2: "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?"

Peter; "I swear by God, I don't know the man."

Narrator; "After this third denial the rooster immediately crowed. Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind; Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. And he went away crying bitterly."

SCENE FIVE: Jesus' trial before Pilate

Narrator: "The thugs sent by the high priests turned Jesus over to the Roman governor Pilate. Since Israel is occupied by the Roman Empire, the Jewish people can't convict people without Roman permission. Pilate interrogates Jesus, asking him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus admits that he is, but that his kingdom is not a political one. Pilate is amazed at Jesus' confidence and composure.

Pilate; "As you know, it's my custom during the Passover Feast to release one prisoner from jail. Which prisoner do you want me to pardon? That scoundrel Barabbas or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"

Crowd: "We want Barabbas released!" **Pilate:**

"What should I do with Jesus?"

Crowd: "Crucify him. Nail him to a cross. He must die because he claimed to be God's Son."

Pilate; "Shall I crucify your king?" **Crowd:** "We have no king but Caesar! Crucify

Him."

Pilate: "Do you see this basin of water? *I'm* washing my hands of all responsibility for this man's death. From now on, it's in your hands. You're the judge and jury, not me."

Narrator: "That's how Jesus was condemned to die, by a crowd that rejected Jesus' claim to be God's Son and a Roman governor who didn't have the courage to do the right thing. Here's a basin of water. Wash your hands in the water, and imagine what must have been going in Pilate's mind."

SCENE SIX: The Display of Pain

Narrator: "Before the Romans would crucify someone, they first humiliated them. That humiliation would consist of stripping the condemned person of their clothing and dividing up the clothes. Then the Romans would scourge the condemned person with a whip embedded with piece of bone and iron. It was a horrible, bloody scene, watched by only the most hardened of soldiers.

It wasn't uncommon for people to bleed to death or to simply lose consciousness during the scourging. Yet Jesus stood strong, as the soldiers beat him mercilessly. He faced them with eyes of love and compassion. He stood tall, knowing that by his suffering, he was bringing God's heart to the human race. After his scourging, he was led away, first back to Pontius Pilate, and then to the cross, the place of the skull, for his final humiliation. Crucifixion."

Mary mother Of JesuS:(Mary weeps softly as she wipes up the blood of Christ from the floor) Adoniah.....Adoniah! Is there no other way? (pause, touches the blood stained whip) His blood..... His precious blood..... please, please God end the pain. (pause)

He is so good.... He loved even those who tormented Him. (pause)
Why? Why does it have to end like this?? (continues to mop up blood, but now resigned)
Thank you....thank you God.....Tha+ I have known Him as no other woman, (pause) I
am your
servant.

SCENE SEVEN: The Way of Suffering

Narrator; "As Jesus carries his own cross to his place of execution, the people pause to watch. Instead of shouting "Hosanna" this time they're shouting, "Crucify him." Several women start crying, as they watch Jesus led away by Roman soldiers. Partway to the place of crucifixion, Jesus stumbles, unable to carry the cross another step. The Roman soldiers force a bystander in the crowd named Simon to carry the cross the rest of the time." (Have someone in the crowd carry the cross the rest of the way)

SCENE EISHT: Calvary

Roman Soldier: "Crucifixion is a terrible way to die. Although the Persians invented crucifixion, we Romans perfected it. Just this year we've crucified about 30,000 criminals. When you've executed as many people as I have you start to get used to it. But nothing prepared me for what I saw today. The soldiers led this man from Galilee, this Jesus, who was accused of making himself king of the Jews. Like with other revolutionaries, we made fun of him. "If you're king, get yourself out of this one," we jeered. But Jesus just stood there quietly. We threw dice to decide who would get to keep his clothes (showing dice, and

giving them to someone in the group). We pounded the spikes into his wrists, so he'd stoy on the cross (Pounds spike into a wooden beam. then hand the hammer to someone in the group). I've heard the sound of pounding ten thousand times, but this time something was different. The jeering and shouting kept getting louder. Even one of the other criminals being crucified said, "Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save usi" Someone offered Jesus vinegar mixed with painkiller, to at least take the edge off the agony (Offers a vinegar filled sponge to the group, passing it in front of their noses). But Jesus refused. Finally he

was dead. That's when I realized it... this was surely *God's son*. Jesus was no criminal or revolutionary. And as I realized that, I thought, what have we done?"

SCENE NINE: Moving the Body of Jesus

Narrator: "Now because o the Jewish Passover Celebration, Jesus' body had to be buried before the Sabbath, which started at sundown that same day. So with haste, the Jewish authorities checked to make sure Jesus was truly dead. Just to make sure, the Roman soldiers thrust a spear in his side. When it was plain to everyone that Jesus was really dead, a wealthy follower of Jesus named Joseph of Arima+hea asked for Jesus' body. Joseph buried Jesus in his own tomb, which was newly cut out of the rock. After the burial, an enormous stone was rolled across the entrance of the tomb. The Jewish authorities posted guards at the tomb to make sure no one stole the body during the Passover celebration.

SCENE TEN: The Tomb

Mary Magdalene: "I still can't believe he's really gone. After everything he said, all the things he promised, only for it to end here. This isn't the start of God's kingdom, but it's the end of all our hopes and dreams. I can still hear him talking about God's kingdom. I can see him healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and setting captives free. He saw this coming though. Just weeks before he came to Jerusalem he started telling us that this might happen. He also said something about rising again on the third day. I wonder what he meant by that. I wonder ..."

CONCLUSION

Narrator; "Good Friday ended with Jesus dead and buried. But the story does not end there. On the third day, as Mary returned to the tomb, an angel of the lord rolled the stone away and appeared to Mary. The angel told Mary that Jesus was alive, that he had risen from the grave. But to Mary it seemed like the angel was speaking nonsense. After all, she'd seen Jesus die. She'd seen the soldiers take his body down from the cross and place it in the tomb. But as she stood at the tomb thinking about the angel's words, Jesus himself appeared to her. He really was alive, but even more than alive. He was resurrected, victorious over death. He didn't just wake up, but he conquered the sin and evil that put him on the cross. This is the Christian message. And Jesus is still alive today. Through his death on the cross Jesus opened the way for us to have a relationship with God. Through his resurrection on the third day, we can know that for certain. If you have any questions or

need someone to pray with you, there are care pastors available. Thank you for joining us for In His Steps.