

He is Lord!

By

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Scene 1

(House lights are out except for those shining on the Stations of the Cross. Congregation softly sings the first verse of “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” Quietly, a group of men and women carry a man’s body towards the altar.)

NARRATOR “It was the saddest day of their lives. Jesus of Nazareth, their Lord and Master, who had touched their lives more profoundly than anyone else, and who they had *hoped* would lead them to freedom and peace, was dead. He had died the cruel, painful death of crucifixion at the hands of the Roman Empire.” (The group reaches the altar platform and gently puts the body on the carpet and wraps it in a sheet. Then they slide it, head first, under the altar.) “Only the bravest of Jesus’ followers have the courage to show up to help bury Jesus. Most of his followers – even Peter, James and John – are in hiding, afraid that the Romans might grab them next and execute them as well.” (Spotlight shining on the altar goes on. The men and women stand up.)

Joseph of Arimathea “Well, it’s the least I could do, giving him my tomb. I had hoped I would need it long before he would.”

Mary, the mother of James and Joseph “You’re a good man, Joseph. My sons didn’t even have the guts to show up today, when Jesus really needed to see who cared for him.”

Nicodemus “I brought some spices, but there isn’t any time to anoint his body properly before burial, the way we Jews usually do. It’s almost sundown, and the Sabbath will start.”

Mary Magdalene “Don’t worry, Nicodemus. We’ll be back after the Sabbath, first thing Sunday morning, and do the right thing. At least I will.” (The women only say “Me too.”)

Salome “John, you really have an important job. Jesus asked you to take care of his mother.” (John stands silently with his arm protectively around Mary, Jesus’ mother; they both nod.)

Another Woman from Galilee “Let’s roll this big stone across the opening to his tomb. With all Jesus has had to go through already, the last thing we would want is to have some of the people who hate him come and steal his body and do *more* things to it.”

All “Amen!”

(They all roll the stone, shaped like a giant manhole cover, across the opening of the tomb, say a silent prayer, and walk sadly offstage. The spotlight shining on the altar goes out. The lights on the Stations of the Cross dim and then go out.)

Scene 2

NARRATOR “On the Sabbath, they all rested according to the Commandment. After the Sabbath was over, at sundown on Saturday, it was too dark to come to the garden where the tomb was. But very early on Sunday morning...” (THUNDERCLAP (special effect playable on the organ). Two angels appear to roll away the stone to reveal – the empty tomb. The house lights are still all out.) “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses and Salome, walk slowly towards the tomb. One of them carries a jar of spices for embalming.”

Mary the mother of James and Joses “Who will roll away the stone for us? There were lots more of us here on Friday and it was heavy enough then.”

Salome “Oops. Didn’t think of that. I feel so stupid.”
(Spotlight on the altar goes on.)

Mary Magdalene “Look! The stone is rolled away!” (They all run toward the tomb. Ignoring the angels, they stick their heads in and come back out, more upset than ever.) “This gets worse and worse! Somebody stole his body.”

Angel “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen from the dead, and he is Lord! Tell his other followers that he will meet them in Galilee, just as he said he would.”

Salome “I am totally creeped out.”

Mary the mother of James and Joses “Let’s get out of here. I can’t handle this.”
(They both run away. Angels exit. Mary Magdalene stays at the tomb, crying buckets of tears. Jesus, who has been behind the altar, stands and walks toward her.)

Jesus “Ma’am, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?”

Mary Magdalene (Still sobbing, her face in her hands.) “Mr. Gardener, if you’ve moved his body someplace, please show me where, and I’ll come and take care of him.”

Jesus “Mary.”

Mary Magdalene (Stops crying, slowly lifts her head and open her mouth wide, then leaps up joyfully.) “Rabbi! You ARE alive!” (She hugs him.)

Jesus “Now you know it’s true, Mary, and you’ve touched me, so you know I’m not just a vision or a ghost, but real. Now the important thing is for you to go and tell the others!

Mary Magdalene “Right! Got it.” (Jesus disappears behind the altar again. House lights start to come up slowly. Mary Magdalene starts to run, and encounters three men.)

Man #1 (To Mary Magdalene.) “Why are YOU looking so *happy* today? I thought you loved Jesus! *We* all did! This is the worst week of our lives!”

Mary Magdalene “Guys! Guys! He’s alive! Jesus is risen from the dead! He just told me to tell you!”

Man #2 (Looks at Man #3 while pointing at his own head and making circular motions.)

Man #3 “Yeah, she never was too tightly wrapped.”

Man #1 “Cut her some slack, guys! She’s stressed out, just like we are. People sometimes think weird things when they’re stressed out, right?” (He puts his arm condescendingly on Mary Magdalene’s shoulder.) “You’ll be alright, Mary.”

Mary Magdalene (Stamps her foot.) “I AM alright! Better than I’ve ever been, in fact.” (Man #2 and Man #3 snicker.) “It’s true! Go to Galilee and you’ll see him too!”

Man #1 “Now you not only expect us to believe you, but to travel all the way up there on your say-so?”

Man #2 “Women! The stories they tell!” (All three men nod, then exit.)

Mary Magdalene “ARGH!! Oh, wait – there’s Peter and John – maybe *they’ll* believe me. I’ll start slower. Take a deep breath, Mary, get a grip. Peter, John! Come quick! The tomb is empty! (Peter and John look up from a distance and come running. It’s empty because” (they run past her) “because, um, because he is risen from the dead.” (Mary sits down, discouraged, while the men ignore her.)

Peter “Well, it’s true, the tomb is empty.”

John “I wonder what it means.”

Peter “Beats me. And who could possibly tell us?” (They walk right by Mary Magdalene.)

Mary Magdalene “I can! I can! Jesus is alive!” (Peter and John exit, scratching their heads. Mary Magdalene, very frustrated, exits also.)

Scene 3

NARRATOR “That same afternoon, two of Jesus’ followers, Cleopas and another man, were walking slowly and sadly from Jerusalem to Emmaus.”

(Cleopas and his companion walk slowly on stage. Jesus slips in next to them.)

Jesus “What’s up, guys? Why the long faces?”

Companion “Where have *you* been for the last three days?”

Cleopas “Yeah, are you the *only* visitor to Jerusalem who doesn’t have a clue?”

Jesus “A clue about what?”

Cleopas “About Jesus, the great prophet from Nazareth. Our fellow Jews, the high priest and most of the Council, convinced Pontius Pilate that he was a political revolutionary, so the Romans put him to death. We had thought he would be The One to deliver Israel from them!”

Companion “That’s the sad part; now comes the really strange and confusing part. Some of the women who were really devoted followers of Jesus say they went to his tomb early this morning and couldn’t find his body, and they also said they saw a couple of angels there who told them he was alive.”

Cleopas “Peter and John went to check it out. They found the empty tomb alright, but that’s all they found.”

Jesus “What is there about this you don’t get? It says in the Scriptures that the messiah would suffer on behalf of the people. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions.’ You remember that part?” (They nod.) “And Jesus himself said he would die and rise again. Let me spell it all out for you.” (The three walk together.)

NARRATOR “So, beginning at the beginning, Jesus explained all the things in the Hebrew Scriptures which had to do with him.”

Jesus “Well, here’s the inn you said you were going to stay at tonight. Good to talk with you. I got to keep going.”

Companion “It’s almost dark. Won’t you at least have dinner with us?” (Jesus hesitates, and then nods. They all sit down on chairs around the altar, Jesus behind it. Then he stands up, picks up a piece of pita bread, raises his eyes to heaven and his hand in blessing, breaks the bread and gives them each a piece. The men receive the bread and then gasp.)

Cleopas and his Companion “JESUS!” (Jesus disappears. They look at each other in surprise and with great joy.)

Cleopas “Didn’t we feel like our hearts were on fire when he was explaining the Bible to us?”

Companion “I was getting goose bumps the whole time.”

Cleopas “We have to run and tell the others!”

Companion “Amen to that! I don’t care if it is dark and it’s uphill all the way back to Jerusalem!” (They both exit, running.)

Scene 4

(All of Jesus’ male followers except for Cleopas and his companion are gathered together.)

Peter (Stands.) “I have seen the Lord.”

Another male apostle “Well, if *you* say so, I’ll believe it.”

Peter “Let everyone always remember that the women were the first to see, and the first to believe. I didn’t have the guts to show my face at the foot of the cross – I was afraid the Romans would string me up next. Besides, I felt so ashamed after I denied that I even knew him. But Jesus – Jesus forgave me for everything! He says that everyone who believes in him gets a fresh start.” (All nod appreciatively.)

Cleopas and his Companion (They run in.) “It’s true! It’s true! We’ve seen him! We’ve broken bread with him! The women were right! He is risen from the dead, and he is Lord!” (All the women enter and are greeted joyfully and respectfully by the men. All except Thomas, who stands apart looking skeptical, start singing ‘He is Lord.’)”

Thomas “Sorry, I won’t believe until I see him and get close enough to touch him myself with my own hands.”

Jesus (He appears suddenly.) “Shalom. Peace to you.” (They ooh and ah, and are a little afraid of him and tentative.) “Don’t be scared. I’m not a ghost, or a vision. I’m real. Look at my hands and my feet – you can still see the marks of the nails, but nothing hurts any more. Violence and hatred have no power over me. Even death has no power over me.” (He looks at Thomas.) “Thomas, come on over. Check out my wounds. I’m the same guy who died on Friday.” (Thomas walks to him, touches his hand, and then falls on his knees.)

Thomas “My Lord and my God.”

Jesus (He looks at Thomas.) “Do you believe because you have seen me?” (He looks at the whole congregation.) “Even more blessed are those who believe without seeing me.” (He addresses all of the disciples, male and female.) “You, all of you are to continue to be my followers, even and especially when you can’t see me the way you can today. By

my power, you can forgive sins and heal people. You do not need to be afraid of anything anymore, because through me, you can have abundant *life*, both *now* on earth and *forever* in heaven. I will be with you, coaching you and giving you strength, *whatever* you have to deal with. So, don't just sit there! Spread this Good News and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to believe all that I have taught you. I will be with you always."

(All of the cast and congregation stand and sing the first verse of "Jesus Christ is risen today.")
