

“CRUCIFIXION”

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THEME: The Church of God is a Christian “army” that sometimes chooses to “shoot” its own wounded rather than rescue them. This devastating practice results in unfathomable pain and suffering within Christ’s Body; a tragedy that could be stopped if God’s people would simply love each other ... in the way He told them to.

SCRIPTURAL TEXTS:

- “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you - who are you to judge your neighbor? (*Jas 4:12*)
- “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.” (*Gal 6:1*)
- “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” (*Rom 2:1*)
- “Therefore let us stop passing judgement on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.” (*Ro 14:13*)

(See also Rom 2:1,3; Isa 29:20,21)

SETTING: A room somewhere. Audience is led to believe the scene takes place in biblical times. In reality, it is a modern day Easter pageant.

PERFORMANCE TIME: Approximately 6 minutes

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Great care should be taken in setting up this sketch and “picking it up” in some way at the conclusion. The somber mood in which the scene ends should probably be followed with a strong, hopeful message by a pastor/speaker, or a powerful song of some kind which focuses on the healing power of Christ’s love. The audience should not be left in despair!

CAST:

THOMAS: Middle aged man, dressed in Bible-style robe. Sincere and caring.

JOHN: Middle aged man, dressed in Bible-style robe. Hides his true feelings under a facade of nonchalance for most of sketch. Drops the facade near the end.
(*THOMAS stands C.S. as lights rise. JOHN enters from S.L.*)

THOMAS (*turns towards JOHN, concerned*): Any news?

JOHN (*lightly*): Yep; verdict just came in. Guilty as charged.

THOMAS (*dismayed*): Guilty?! They can't do that!

JOHN: They can and they did; slick as a whistle.

THOMAS (*dazed*): Whoa. (*beat*) Has he been sentenced yet?

JOHN: Oh yeah, they did that too ... first ballot.

THOMAS: And ...?

JOHN (*matter of fact*): They're gonna crucify him.

THOMAS (*horrified*): Crucify him?! Why?

JOHN: I told you, Thomas; the verdict was 'guilty.' Open and shut case. They're going by the book and the "book" says they can do it if they want to.

THOMAS: Well, sure it's an 'option,' but it's not cast in stone. What about all the good he's done? Man, the last three years ...

JOHN (*interrupts, sarcastic*): Oh, yeah; you mean like, they should give him time off for good behavior? I don't think so. He's made too many enemies.

THOMAS: Enemies? Like who?

JOHN: It's not my place to say. But believe me; he's got 'em.

THOMAS (*warily*): How do you know that? Are you saying you're one of them?

JOHN (*surprised*): No. Why would you think that? I don't have anything against him. In fact, I consider him a friend.

THOMAS: For a 'friend,' you don't seem to be too upset about the verdict.

JOHN: Well, I am; (*tritely*) I feel his pain. In fact, if he walked in this room right now, I'd be the first to shake his hand ... tell him how sorry I am the way things turned out.

THOMAS: Would that be ... before or after you pound in the first nail?

JOHN (*angry*): Hey, man; back off. I'm not the one responsible for this. I don't approve of crucifixions, for whatever reason.

THOMAS: But you're not going to try and stop it?

JOHN: Hey, this is political. Somebody at the top is out to get him and there's nothing any of us can do about it. (*sniffs*) Besides, my understanding is he's getting what he deserves.

THOMAS (*explodes*): What he 'deserves?!' John, if we all got what we 'deserve,' everybody'd be hanging on a cross!

JOHN: I think you're over-exaggerating a bit. What he **did** was wrong.

THOMAS (*wearily*): Okay ... we'll just leave that one for now. You tell me, John just exactly what **did** he do that was so wrong?

JOHN: He made a lot of people mad, that's what.

THOMAS: How?

JOHN: I don't know all the details; and I'm not asking. It's none of my business.

THOMAS: Then how do you know what he did was wrong?

JOHN: (*just looks at Thomas*)

THOMAS: Did **you** ask him about the charges?

JOHN: (*no answer*)

THOMAS: Did anybody ask, or did they just talk to each other?

JOHN (*defensively*): He was given a trial.

THOMAS (*exasperated*): He shouldn't even have had to go to trial!

JOHN: Well, **they** said he did. And, I might add, once he was there, he didn't bother to defend himself one bit. He could have helped himself.

THOMAS: You can't talk to people like that ... because they don't listen. Nothing he could have said would have helped ... and he knew it. (*sadly*) Their minds were made up long before the 'trial.'

JOHN (*piously*): An innocent man has nothing to fear from the law. All he has to do is present the facts. They speak for themselves.

THOMAS (*angry*): No, John. “Facts” do **not** speak for themselves. Power-hungry people with pre-arranged agendas like jealousy or ... or hate ... or lust for power can twist and turn so called ‘facts’ to prove almost anything ... and you know it. (*pointedly*) You’ve seen crucifixions before.

(*They stare at each other a moment*)

JOHN (*genuinely concerned*): So ... what are you saying? You think he’s innocent?

THOMAS: I don’t know; I’m not the judge. All I know is that **this** is wrong.

JOHN: How can you be so sure?

THOMAS: We’ve called him ‘brother;’ he’s called us ‘friend.’ That’s supposed to mean that we love each other. Love demands restoration, John ... not execution.

(*Pause; both thinking*)

JOHN (*quietly*): So, what do you think we should do?

THOMAS: I don’t know what **you** should do; but I’ve got to try and stop it.

JOHN: You can’t stop it; it’s too late.

THOMAS: Maybe. But I’ve still got to try. I know it’d mean a lot to **him** ... just to have somebody there who cares enough ... to try.

(*Short pause in silence; mood lightens a bit*)

JOHN: You have any idea what time it is?

THOMAS (*begins searching inside robe*): I’ve got a watch here somewhere. Yeah; here it is. (*pulls out wristwatch from inner pocket, looks at it*) Looks like the Pageant should be over in a few minutes. Guess maybe I better go pick up the kids. (*straps watch on arm*)

JOHN: Yeah; me too. Hate to keep ‘em waiting. (*half laugh*) That kids’ “Hosannah Choir can be murder on the little tykes!! (*takes off robe - wearing tee shirt and cut offs underneath.*)

THOMAS: Yeah; sometimes going to church can be pretty **brutal**. (*looks at John sideways to see if he catches the double meaning. Begins taking off robe*)
(*John misses the double meaning - tries to keep it light*)

JOHN: That’s for sure. (*beat*) Is it my imagination, or does this pageant get longer every year?

THOMAS: No, I don't think it's longer. In fact, we've been running about five minutes less than last year.

JOHN: Really? How's that?

THOMAS: Oh, you know: the Crucifixion doesn't take nearly as long as it used to. After so many times, they've really got it down. "Turn your head, look the other way, and pretty soon it's over." (*pointedly*) Isn't that right, John?

(Eyes lock - mood deepens)

JOHN (*closes eyes, then sighs heavily*): No, Tom; it's never 'over.' You know it, and so do I. The pain just keeps on going. (*looking away, shakes head*) And it's definitely not 'right.'

THOMAS: So ... what are you going to do about it this time?

(They lock eyes again)

JOHN (*takes deep breath*): What time's the Board meeting?

THOMAS: Seven o'clock. Tomorrow night. Will you be there?

JOHN (*struggles within himself*): I don't know. Maybe.

(Lights fade as both turn and exit in opposite directions)

THE END