

# PASSION PIECES

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**Running Time:** Ranging from approximately 3-6 minutes each.

**Description:** Eleven scripturally based vignettes dealing with the passion of Christ.

**Scriptural Text:** Biblical accounts of the passion taken from the Gospels

**Setting:** Biblical ... except for the final monologue (which may be Biblical or modern).

**Performance Notes:** These vignettes may be incorporated into musical dramas, passion plays, used as a teaching tool in the classroom, or serve as sermon illustrations. They are arranged in the same order as they appear in the Easter pageant, "*NO GREATER LOVE: The Story of Amazing Grace*," © Bette Dale Moore 2006. Suggestions for musical underscorings are only suggestions. They may be replaced with any appropriate music at the director's discretion.

**Cast:** Varies from 1 (monologues) to 13 (Jesus and Disciples) Biblical attire is suggested.

## PETER: OPENING MONOLOGUE

**Cast:** PETER

PETER: *(with great energy and excitement)* I, Simon Peter of Galilee, son of Jonah, do bear witness of this truth: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory - such glory as an only son receives from his father - full of grace and truth!

Of whom do I speak? Why, Jesus of Nazareth, of course! "He was accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs . . ." Indeed, with my very own eyes, I saw Him bring the dead back to life! And just as He raised others, so also, "God raised Him from the dead," ... giving us all victory over the grave once and for all! (*Acts 2:22*)

*(laughs kindly, directly to Audience)* Ah ... but I see the doubt written in your eyes. You ask, "How is this possible; can mortal man find victory over the grave?"

My friends, listen to me, for I speak the Truth! Though my body perish and go the way of all men . . . yet will my spirit live on, for the resurrected Spirit of Christ now lives within me! Because of God's grace and forgiveness, I am alive as I have never been before!

Of this great Truth, we (*gestures to Choir*) cannot be silent. As long as there is breath within our bodies, we will shout praises to our God, and sing Hosannas to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!!

### MUSIC BEGINS

(*Up tempo praise song of director's choice.*)

CHOIR/ PETER: (*ad libbed praise*) Halleluiah! Amen! Glory be to God! Praise You, Jesus!! *etc. Continue ad lib until singing begins.*

## PETER HEARS OF JESUS

**Cast:** PETER

PETER (*raises arms and quotes dramatically*): “And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And lo, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (*Mt 3: 16,17*)

(*speaks directly to audience – with great energy*) I first heard of this miraculous event from my brother, Andrew. “Simon,” he says to me, “We have found the Messiah!” (*Jn 1:41*) “Come. He wants to meet you.”

(*walks into Aisle*) Now, if anybody else had told me that, I would have thought, surely, somebody had tipped his boat a few too many times . . . if you know what I mean. (*taps a finger to his head and chuckles.*) But Andrew? Andrew’s my brother. And now, suddenly, he tells me he’s found the ‘Messiah?’ What was I supposed to do?

I looked at my empty nets; I looked at the hot sun; I looked at Andrew and took a (*draws out word*) **big** breath. (*grins*) And then I said, “Lead on, Brother. I am coming with you!”

## THOMAS IS CALLED

**Cast:** THOMAS

THOMAS (*in awe – to himself*): The Messiah ... son of David ... King of the Jews!

(*to audience, very energetic*) I'll never forget the day Jesus called me to be His disciple. I'd followed Him for weeks; hoping against all hope that I had actually found the Messiah. I was bursting with questions I wanted to ask; and yet, the multitudes were so

great, I'd only spoken with Him a few times. Then, one morning, I was standing at the back of the crowd, straining to hear His voice, when suddenly, He stops talking, looks right at me and calls out, "Thomas! Leave all you possess and come, follow me." I could hardly believe my ears. Why would He choose me out of all those who thronged about Him?

Oh, how my heart longed to follow Him . . . to believe that He was the Christ. And yet my mind was filled with doubts and fear. What if he was an impostor; or worse yet, a lunatic? *(slowing)* Could it possibly be true . . . that he was the anointed One of God?

As I struggled within myself, I looked towards my home and thought of all those things that were precious to me . . . and my fear spoke and said, "Thomas, think of all you have to lose if it's a lie." *(shakes head, gestures)* I was this close to walking away, when He called my name a second time: "Thomas; come." Slowly, I . . . I turned my gaze back towards Jesus. And as I did, a great hope surged up in my soul. "No!" I said. "I will not think of what I have to lose. I choose to think of what I have to gain . . . if it's the Truth!" *(maintains energy, exits through Audience)*

## DISCIPLES DISAGREE

**Cast:** PETER, JOHN, JUDAS

*(PETER enters from back of a side aisle, speaks to audience as he makes his way to front.)*

PETER *(incredulous)*: He just told us that we're going to Jerusalem. That He's going to suffer terribly at the hands of the chief priests and scribes; that He'll "be killed, but three days later . . . will rise to life."

*(shakes head, distressed)* I tried to stop Him from talking like that. I said, "God would never let this happen to you, Lord!" And He turned to me and said, "Satan, get away from me! You're in my way because you think like everyone else and not like God." While I'm reeling from that, He says that we've **all** got to take up our cross and follow Him; that if we want to save our life, we've got to destroy it.

*(bewildered)* I don't know what to think anymore. A few days ago, He called me a 'rock' and said He's going to give me the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. And now, He calls me 'Satan,' and says that we've got to destroy ourselves . . . in order to live? It doesn't make any sense.

*(beat)* I truly believe He's the Messiah, and that He knows what He's doing, but, sometimes . . . I . . . I . . . *(struggles for words)* Oh, I don't know. Maybe He's just

exhausted. The rest of us certainly are. (*shakes head again*) I don't know. (*Matthew 16:21-25*)

(*PETER turns to go, but is stopped by JOHN's shout. Spot on JOHN - halfway down center aisle. He shouts at PETER over the heads of audience.*)

JOHN: Peter! I must speak with you.

PETER (*wearily*): What now, John?

JOHN: It's Judas.

PETER: Iscariot?

JOHN: Yes. He's been talking with some Zealots and . . . (he thinks)

(*JUDAS enters down same aisle.*)

JUDAS (*interrupts, excited*): Not just 'some' Zealots, John . . . I've been talking to their leader. The man's name is 'Barabbas.' He's a powerful man, Peter . . . a man with a Vision!

(*JOHN moves away from Judas to front of Aisle.*)

PETER (*warily*): What does he want?

JUDAS: He says he has 1200 fighting men outside the city gates - armed and eager to put Rome to the sword. He wants Jesus . . . and us . . . to join him in battle!

PETER: In 'battle?' Are you demented?

JUDAS: Peter, listen to me! This could be our opportunity . . . the chance to bring about the Kingdom of God!!

PETER (*disgusted*): Judas, how long have you walked with the Master? Do you not know by now that He would never become an instrument of death in the hands of some murderer?

JUDAS: Barabbas is not a murderer! He's a patriot! Just let me talk to Jesus.

PETER: No, Judas. It is late and He is weary.

JUDAS (*explodes*): You think Jesus would rather sleep than free His own people from slavery? What do you think He is - some kind of coward?

PETER: No; I do not think He's a coward.

JUDAS: Then why do you say He will not fight?

PETER (*resigned*): It is not His way.

JUDAS: Well, I think He could be convinced otherwise. Let me talk to Him.

PETER (*angrily*): Don't try and force His hand, Judas. Jesus knows exactly what He's doing. He doesn't need you, or anyone else telling Him what to do.

JUDAS: (*mock surprise*) Oh. Including you? (*beat*) Who gives you the right to speak for Jesus? This revolution was made for the Master. (*points, accusing*) If you really loved Him, you wouldn't stand in His way.

PETER (*explodes*): Begone, you son of Satan!! (*draws sword and gestures with it on 'revolution.'* *Holds it over the head of nearest person in audience.*) The blood of your revolution will not be upon the Master's hands! Begone!!

JUDAS (*mocks*): 'Son of Satan' am I? I thought that's what He called you, Peter? (*beat, gestures to raised sword*) What are you going to do with that sword? Slay me right here? Do you not think that Jesus would notice if one of his disciples was suddenly missing?

JOHN: Put the sword away, Peter.

JUDAS (*fiercely*): No, Peter; keep it out. Use it for your nation!

PETER (*lowers sword - regaining control, to JUDAS*): How can you not understand? Jesus has no need of swords wielded by ungodly men. This weapon might be what I'd choose, but it has no place in the Master's plan. (*sheaths sword*)

JUDAS: It's been three long years, Peter, and I have heard of no 'plan.'

PETER (*pointedly*): One does not hear what one does not wish to understand.

JUDAS (*angrily*): I understand more than you think I do, Peter!

(PETER and JUDAS angrily lock eyes in grim testing of the wills.)

PETER (*disgusted*): Ahhh.

(PETER abruptly turns from JUDAS and exits. Spot follows PETER's exit.)

JUDAS (*laughs scornfully and shouts after the departing PETER*): I know who the real coward is! You, Peter; **you** are the coward!!

*(PETER looks angrily over his shoulder; continues exit. JUDAS moves to join JOHN at front of center aisle.)*

JUDAS (to JOHN): And what of you, son of Zebedee? Are you also a coward?

JOHN (*angrily*): I am no coward.

JUDAS: Then will you fight?

JOHN: I will fight for the Truth . . . for the Truth is what will set us free. But I warn you, Judas; if your path is one of darkness, this revolution of yours is doomed before it starts. (*genuine concern*) And you, my friend, along with it. (*begins exit up aisle*)

JUDAS (*watches JOHN go, then shouts after him*): Do you not care for justice? Will you just turn your back on the tyranny of the Romans?

*(JOHN stops a moment; then continues exit - stone-faced, angry)*

All I want is for Jesus to take His throne! Why will you not help? Why?!? (*turns and speaks to audience*)

They do not understand. But the time of revolution **is** at hand and this I know: Jesus **will** fulfill His destiny. They cannot shield Him forever.

The sentence of death - has been passed. You will see; soon, blood will flow as a sacrifice for all, and we will be free! (*exits through audience.*)

## THE LAST SUPPER

**Cast:** JESUS AND 12 DISCIPLES

*(JESUS and the DISCIPLES are gathered at the table for the Last Supper. Optional organ or synthesizer underscores softly.)*

JESUS: "My (brothers), I will be with you only a little longer," for I must soon go to my Father.

PETER: "Lord, where are you going?

JESUS: "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.

THOMAS: "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

JESUS (*gently reproving*): Thomas; “**I** am the way - the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except thru me.”

PETER: But, “Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

JESUS: “Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!” (*Jn 13: 33-38*)

PETER: Master, how can you say this? “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” (*Mk 14:31*)

(JESUS *rests hand on PETER's shoulder - looks into his eyes and slightly shakes His head. Turns to other disciples. PETER is crushed.* )

JESUS: “My command (to you) is this: Love each other as I have loved you. No one has greater love than the one who lays down his life for his friends ...(and) I have called you friends.” (*Jn 15:12,13, 15*)

(*looking up, prays*) “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” (*Jn 17:1*) (*turns and exits.*

(*All PETER except rise to exit. JOHN and THOMAS pause at door.*)

JOHN: Peter? Are you coming?

THOMAS: Peter . . . it's time.

PETER (*rises, anguished*): He said I'd betray Him. I would never do that. (*leans on table and speaks to audience*) I wouldn't. I ... I couldn't!

(*Light fades on PETER, JOHN and THOMAS. They exit.*)

## PETER'S DENIAL

**Cast:** PETER, SERVANT GIRL, TEMPLE GUARD

(GUARD and GIRL are kneeling upstage by small fire. PETER addresses Audience, downstage.)

PETER: They've taken Him to Caiaphas, the High Priest. The guards say that the Great Council - the Sanhedrin - has accused Him of blasphemy. He is being mocked and reviled as they test Him and try to entangle Him.

I have followed Him here to the courtyard of the High Priest. But what can I do against so many? He does not want my sword, and He will not defend Himself. *(desperate)*  
What can I do??

*(Lights up on entire courtyard scene)*

GIRL: Sir! "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus." Were you not?

PETER: Me? "I don't know, or understand what you're talking about."

GIRL: But I'm certain I saw you with him. *(to guards)* "This fellow is one of them."

PETER *(moving away)*: I tell you ... I am not!

GUARD: "Surely you are one of them, for you sound like a Galilean. Your accent betrays you! Did I not see you with him in the olive grove?"

PETER *(moving away farther, greatly agitated)*: No! I may be from Galilee, but there is no crime in that! I tell you, "I don't know this man you are talking about." I swear by the God of our forefathers: I have never laid eyes on Him before!!

*(Rooster crows. Begin rooster tape after Peter says "laid." GUARD, GIRL freeze.  
PETER looks up in anguish as he becomes aware of the rooster crow.)*

PETER: Oh ... my ... God. What have I done? *(weeping)* No. *(softer)* No.

*(PETER falls to his knees, covering face with his hands, weeping. Lights out.)*

# JUDAS' BETRAYAL

*(Optional: If a sign language interpreter is available, these narrations are wonderfully enhanced by the visual signing of the story as well.)*

**Cast:** READER ONE, READER TWO, JUDAS

READER ONE: Jesus was tortured and beaten all that night. In the morning, they bound Him and drug Him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor - demanding that He be executed. Pilate was unwilling to condemn Jesus, so he sent Him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem for the season of the Passover."

*(Organ theatre music underscores)*

READER TWO: "When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, for he hoped to see Him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate." *(Lk 23:8-12)*

READER ONE: "Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, O king of the Jews!" And they (spit on him) and struck him in the face." *(Jn 19:1-3)*

READER TWO: "When Judas, who betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse." *(Mat. 27:3)*

*(Spot on JUDAS— enters down center aisle. Music fades as he speaks.)*

JUDAS *(in great anguish)*: No! No!! Do not condemn Him. "I have sinned ... for I have betrayed innocent blood." *(Mat 27:4)* Take back your silver ... I don't want it! Do you hear me? I don't want it!!! *(throws bag of silver to stage)*

*(weeping, pleads heavenward)* Jesus! Why are you silent? Why do you not call down your angels? I am sorry; I didn't understand. *(totally broken)* I am so sorry. *(exits, weeping)*

*Music underscores*

READER ONE: Unable to undo his crime, Judas "went away and hanged himself." *(Mat. 27:5)*

READER TWO: When the "trial" finally came to an end, Pilate asked the people what they wanted him to do with their "king."

*Lights and Music fade*

# PETER'S SORROW

**Cast:** PETER, LAZARAS, MARTHA, MARY

PETER (*head bowed, grief-stricken*): I . . . I denied Him. (*raises head*) I knew who He was, and still, I denied Him. And now, He is dead and I can't even ask Him to forgive me.

(*anguished*) Why did they kill Him? Is this the way it was meant to end?? (*voice breaks*) Oh God; I do not understand. I just do not understand.

(PETER *begins moving down steps. Spot on Lazarus and Martha, upstage.*)

*Mood Music softly underscores*  
(*We have used solo/choral arrangements of "Where Hope Is Still Alive," or "Bow the Knee." May use any appropriate music.*)

LAZARAS (*pleads, reaching towards him*): Peter, don't go.

PETER (*startled, turns to look*) Lazarus? Martha? (*turns away*) What are you doing here?

MARTHA: We've been looking for you. All of us.

(MARY *joins them. MARTHA puts her arm around Mary.*)

LAZARAS: We want you to come back and wait with us.

PETER (*overcome*): Wait? For what? Did you not hear: 'It is **finished.**' There is nothing left to wait for.

LAZARUS : Peter; how can you say that? Am I not living proof that death need not have the final word?

(PETER *turns to go*)

MARTHA (*stepping forward, grieving*): Peter . . . you trusted Him when the way seemed clear. Please . . . do not turn away now that it is dark.

(MARTHA *moves C.S. and sings to PETER "Bow the Knee," or other song of Director's choice. PETER listens for a while, then sadly exits out center aisle. LAZARUS and MARY, along with a full choir may also be used as song continues and concludes.*)

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# THOMAS BELIEVES

**Cast:** THOMAS, JESUS

THOMAS (*heavily*): They say He is alive; that He appeared to them a week ago. Peter and the other disciples swear that it was Jesus and they are filled with hope. But I am filled with despair, for I did not see Him. I wasn't there. I . . . (*voice breaks*) I wasn't there.

They say it doesn't matter; that I should not need to see Him to believe. But I do! God knows I have tried to believe what they say but the doubt and fear remains. (*in anguish, fists clenched towards heaven*) Why does He not show Himself to me?

(*struggling for control, moving into aisle*) Don't you see; I must be sure. I would rather die in despair than live my life based upon a lie . . . no matter how noble that lie might be. "Unless I . . . I put my finger where the nails were, and (place) my hand into his side, I will not believe it." (*sorrowfully*) I cannot. (*begins walking up aisle*) I cannot.

(JESUS enters and stands upstage of THOMAS as he begins to turn away.)

JESUS (*gently*): Thomas.

(THOMAS freezes, shocked)

JESUS (*calls again*): Thomas.

THOMAS (*whispers*): Jesus? (*turns to JESUS - afraid to believe*) Jesus!

JESUS (*smiling*): How long will you grieve for me? Come, "put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

THOMAS (*falls to his knees, weeping, bows head*): "My Lord and my God." (*Jn 20: 27, 28*)

(JESUS places his hand on THOMAS' shoulder. THOMAS raises head to look in JESUS' face. Organ underscores softly with "Amazing Grace".)

JESUS: Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (*Jn 20:29*)

(JESUS and THOMAS exit together)

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# PETER IS FORGIVEN

**Cast:** PETER

*(Music underscores.)*

PETER *(with great emotion)*: I had gone back to the sea. I knew Jesus was alive . . . that He had triumphed over the grave. But, I also knew that I was not the 'Rock' on which He could build His church. And so, I had returned to the only life I thought I knew - that of a fisherman. But even that seemed destined to failure; I'd fished all night and caught nothing.

And then, suddenly, there He was . . . asking me, "Peter, do you love me? *(beat)* Peter, do you love me? *(two beats, softer)* Peter, do you love me?"

*(dramatic pause, intensely emotional)* From the depths of my brokenness I cried, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I do.' And He said to me, "Then, feed My sheep."

*(moving further into Audience, gaining strength and passion)* That day, standing by the Sea of Galilee, my heart was forever pierced with the burning desire to 'feed His sheep.' *(fervent)* I testify to you: a broken heart can be restored; a crucified will brought back to everlasting life. As long as there is breath within my body, I shall do what He asks. For, to 'feed the Master's sheep' is to love the Master . . . is to love you.

*Music modulates into Introduction of Choral number*

*(We used: "Your Grace Still Amazes Me" by Shawn Craig and Connie Harrington, Arr/David T. Clydesdale. © 2001 Ariose Music/Praise Song Press. May use any appropriate song.)*

"To (God) be the glory ...both now and forever(more)! Amen." Amen! (2 Pet 3:17)

CHOIR: *(sings as PETER exits)*

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# A FORGIVEN SINNER

**Cast:** FORGIVEN – MAN OR WOMAN

*(Struggling to overcome his own unforgiving spirit)*

FORGIVEN: Jesus is alive. And because of His sacrifice - I too, am alive. When He fell under the weight of that Cross, He had every right to turn away and condemn me. Instead, he looked into my eyes with love; and He forgave me. All He asks is that I now do the same for others.

*(looks up a moment and struggles against tears)*

Dear God, I have been so blind! *(to audience)* Why should I think - after having been forgiven by the power of His blood - that I must now struggle so hard to forgive others under my own power? Would not He who called me back to Life, and gave me the grace to believe, not give me the grace to be able to obey Him? *(Gal 3:3)*

*(Music underscores softly: "Amazing Grace," or other suitable music)*

Oh, Jesus ... by your stripes, let my wounds be healed! Free me from these grave clothes of pain and bitterness that I still wear, for I can bear them no longer. *(closes eyes)* Give me the grace, dear Jesus . . . to forgive; to forgive. *(exits)*

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