

THE LIVING LAST SUPPER

At Brookwood Baptist Church, we have been performing this production since 1986. The actors are deacons and if you do not have enough deacons willing to perform, you can include other men and call it the “Deacon Led” Living Last Supper. There are three basic versions. The first version starts immediately with the narration after a prayer during which the disciples come out and freeze at the table. The sight of the disciples at the table when the audience looks up from a prayer is very effective.

The second version begins with a short dramatic phase that allows some of the actors to set the stage for the evening. This version was written to allow the inclusion of two songs, one at the beginning and one at the end.

The third version is the newest version featuring the “Homecoming Feast” and takes place in heaven. If you have never done these productions, I suggest the first version for the first year and then move on to the Homecoming Feast once your church has become “used to” the Living Last Supper. Traditionally, we have performed this production on Palm Sunday evening worship service. In the last few years, we have performed it on Maundy Thursday, the traditional night on which Christ was betrayed.

May God bless you in your endeavors,
Next Year in Jerusalem

Bruce Hennigan

**THE DEACON LED
LIVING LAST SUPPER**

Version 1

**Revised for BBC
March, 1997**

**BY
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**PRODUCTION NOTES:
SEE PRODUCTION NOTES FOR
THE LIVING LAST SUPPER: THE HOMECOMING FEAST**

ALTERNATE BEGINNING:

THIS PRODUCTION HAS NO PROLOG SKETCH AND GOES STRAIGHT INTO THE NARRATION AND THE DISCIPLES.

The production begins with the stage set with the table centerstage. This setting resembles the painting of the Last Supper by Da Vinci. Find this painting and use it as a template for the table setting, disciple placement, and costumes. The table can be set with bowls of fruit and bread to hide microphone placement. Each disciple should have his own silver cup. During the prayer preceding the production, the disciples come out to table, assume the position of the painting and freeze. Jesus is not yet on stage. They stay frozen until the end of narration.

As the production begins, the narration can be read:

Leonard Da Vinci captured the power and emotions of the Last Supper in his famous painting. The painting was not intended as a faithful reproduction of the original scene. Although the setting and appearance of the table are from the sixteenth century, his painting still captures the moment. In a dark upper room in first century Palestine, Jesus has just told his disciples that one of them will betray him. In the surprise of the moment, Peter draws his knife and asks John to entreat the Master for the identity of the betrayer. A salt shaker is overturned. While the disciple's minds whirled with unanswered questions, the Master remained the calm center of their universe.

JESUS: When I sent you to prepare for this passover feast, I told you, "My time is at hand." I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat the Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I will not eat it again until what it represents has occurred in the Kingdom of God. I tell you the truth: one of you is going to betray me.

(All freeze in pose of the painting. Spotlight will come up on each disciple as they speak. A short, musical interlude may be used between disciples.)

NATHANIEL: Nathaniel is my real name although I am also known as Bartholomew. I was born in Cana of Galilee and like most of us, I was a fisherman. Philip and I are close companions and it was he who first brought me to Jesus. I will never forget the question I put to Philip that day: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" for it was such a small, insignificant place. But, after seeing Jesus he said to me, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile." "How do you know me?" I asked. He answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." After hearing this, I had no doubt he was the Messiah. Since then I have served him, walking the villages of Gallilee, watching him turn water into wine, going down the streets of the Decapolis, and finally, the holy city, Jerusalem. And now, when he is instituting a ceremony to take the place of the Passover, He tells us that one of us is to betray Him. Who can it be? Could it be Nathaniel? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes to opposite end of the table.)

SIMON: I was given the name Simon, the Zealot. I was associated with a group of blood thirsty, hot headed rebels called the Zealots. We feared and hated the Romans and would settle for nothing less than the violent expulsion of Rome from our beloved land. I lived by the sword. And, if not for Jesus, I would have died by the sword. One day, I heard Jesus say, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." and "You shall love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After meeting Jesus, I have unconditionally surrendered to His will and I now follow Him wherever He leads. Through Jesus, we will one day bring our blessed land back to the glory God intended it to have. As I watched Jesus conquer evil with unconditional love, I realized how powerful a sword that love can be. With love in my heart, I can overcome any adversity I have to face. And, now, He says there is a spiritual Roman among us; one who would attempt by force what can only be conquered by love. Who can he be? Matthew, the publican? Peter, the big fisherman? Or does He suspect me since I am a former Zealot? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight back to James, the lesser.)

JAMES, THE LESSER: My name is James, but since I am smaller than most of my companions, I am called James, the lesser. Thaddeus and I are brothers and together, we first saw the Master on the day John, the Baptist was baptizing Jesus. I was curious to see what was happening so I turned aside for a closer look. I saw Jesus, asking John to baptize Him. After Jesus was baptized by John, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. A mighty voice spoke “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” Later, Jesus called me to be one of His disciples and I have followed Him without hesitation. I have tried to learn as much about Him and His heavenly Father as I can. And now, one of us is to betray Him? Surely it is madness to think one of us could do this! Surely the betrayer is out of his mind! And, I keep asking myself, Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight back to Thaddeus.)

THADDEUS: My real name is Judas Labbaeus. But, to lessen the confusion between I and Judas Iscariot, I am called Thaddeus. I well remember the day Jesus called me. After a night of prayer, he commissioned us to go forth and preach that “the Kingdom of God is at hand.” He told us to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves, since He was sending us forth as sheep among wolves. Just a few days ago, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem and I was sure His hour had come when he would ascend to the throne of David. But, He has just spoken troublesome words. I suddenly see Him astride his donkey, entering Jerusalem not as a king but as a lamb among the wolves. We have had this Passover feast in such secrecy that we are told to look for a man carrying a pitcher to know the place. I am afraid for our safety. And, now, He has said that someone here is to betray him. Is there a wolf among us? Who can it be? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Andrew.)

ANDREW: I am Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. I am not a gifted man, just a simple fisherman. I've tried to do what I could to serve the Master. The others call me Andrew, the Bringer, because it seems my talent is to bring others to Jesus. I brought my brother Peter to Jesus, and I have watched with satisfaction the glorious transformation of his life. I found the little lad with the five loaves and two fish that day when Jesus miraculously fed the five thousand. Such miracles! Such love and compassion the Master has for everyone. I have been very close to the Master, certainly not one of the inner circle. But, I do not wish to be. I only wish to serve Him, to bring others to Him so they can see he is truly the Lamb of God. What greater gift can life afford a simple fisherman than to be the companion and friend of our Lord? Now, one of His "friends" is to betray Him. It is unthinkable. Who can it be? Can Andrew, the Bringer be the one to bring down His Lord? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Matthew.)

MATTHEW: My surname is Levi, but you know me as Matthew. The tax collector. Because of my profession, I have never know friendship. Or, love. And then, one day, a shadow fell across my collecting table and I looked up into the face of the Master. I saw, in those eyes a compassion I had never seen in any man. And, trust me, I have looked into the eyes of many men as they paid their due to the government. "Follow me." was all Jesus said. I left my table, and my life as a tax collector behind and followed Him. It was the best bargain of my life. Since then, I have followed Jesus and I have tried to understand His mission by studying how His life fulfills the word of the prophets who foretold his coming. I have tried to write down the exact words the Master has spoken. I have exchanged my publican wretchedness for the dignity of discipleship. I no longer collect taxes or make change. Instead, I change sinners into saints. Jesus has shown me the way, the truth, and the life. And, even as I try to write down the gospel, the good news of His coming, He tells us bad news. One of his most trusted followers is to betray him? Does he suspect me, because I once was a tax collector? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes to Judas.)

**JUDAS
ISCARIOT:**

I am Judas Iscariot, certainly the most trusted member of the Master's "beloved Society." I guess it was my past experience with the revolutionaries who plotted to overthrow the government that led Jesus to choose me to follow Him. After all, Jesus is the Messiah. He will overthrow the Roman government and establish a new Kingdom of powerful, Messianic leaders. And I, the trusted treasurer of this group will have the most powerful position. I will control the purse strings. True, for now, I dole out our scarce resources to the poor but only because one day, we will need them to follow the Messiah without question. There have been times the others disagreed with my opinion. I still can't get over the waste of that precious perfume Mary poured over the Master's feet. It could have brought many pieces of silver. Yes, the Master has shown signs of shall I say, weakness? I understand he must appeal to the poor and downtrodden. And, quite frankly, I think he may need a little prodding to complete his mission. That is why I have thirty pieces of silver to add to MY coffers. And, now, He speaks of a betrayer in our midst. Well, I can tell you it is not Judas Iscariot. Maybe Peter. Or, those hot headed brothers, James and John. No, I know my place. Quietly manipulating things behind the scenes. One day, He will thank me for forcing His hands, for forcing the Master to save himself at the last minute. No, I am the hero at this table. Not the betrayer. But, I'll go along with everyone else and act surprised. I might even ask myself, Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Philip.)

PHILLIP: My name is Philip and I came from Bethsaida in Galilee. Jesus called me to follow Him one day when I was listening to the preachings of John the Baptist. I was the fourth disciple chosen and I brought Nathaniel to the Master. During the years of close fellowship with Jesus, my faith in God has grown. When He fed the five thousand, I asked, "Where are we to buy bread that all these may eat?" I discovered that our vision and power are so limited until the Master moves through us to reach the world with His love and compassion.

Because I know the Greek language so well, I am also called “the Greek” and I arranged for the Greeks to speak with our Master. Through these encounters, I have grown to understand the Master’s words. In fact, I am convinced that he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. Now, having seen the Father through Him, He shocks us by saying there is a betrayer in our midst. Does the traitor not know that in betraying Jesus, he is also betraying God? Who can it be? Can it be Philip? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Peter.)

PETER: My brother Andrew and I were fishing one day when Jesus walked by and said “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” We immediately left our nets and followed Him. He even gave me my name, Peter, which means the rock. And when I confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, He said, “On this rock will I build my church.” Strange that he would choose me, a hot-headed fisherman with a runaway tongue. Maybe it is my faith. It is strong, even when I saw Jesus walking on the water and tried to go to him. True, I lost confidence and began to sink, but my faith in Him is unshakable. Until now. Tonight when I promised to follow Him anywhere, He warned me that before the cock crew twice, I would have denied Him three times. He prayed for me because he said Satan wanted to sift me like wheat. Will I deny Him tonight before the rooster crows? Will He deny me? Will He close the doors of the Kingdom to me? Am I this betrayer He speaks of? If I knew who the scoundrel was, I’d pierce his heart with this knife to prove my love. But, what if it were my own heart I pierced? Am I the one? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Thomas.)

THOMAS: I have been given the nickname, “Doubting Thomas” by those who know me. Since the days when I was a fisherman with Simon and Andrew, I have been cautious, careful, and certain of my actions. I usually demand proof before I believe. I want to see before committing myself. You see, I am not a man of doubt. Rather, I am a man of daring. When Mary and Martha sent word to the the Lord that their brother, Lazarus was dead, Jesus said “Let us go to him.” Some of the apostles were afraid to go because of the growing opposition to Jesus. I was the one who spoke out and rebuked them all

by saying, "Let us also go with Him that we may die with Him." Why do people overlook my daring and remember the doubting? Remember the questions but overlook the affirmations? Jesus' enemies are determined to destroy Him. Why? Because the God He reveals is a greater God than the petty little manmade deities they have enshrined upon the altars of their hearts. Jesus would bring us all up to God while His enemies would cut God down to their own size. And now, Jesus has brought doubt back into my heart when He says that one of us is to betray Him? Is He blaming me for lack of faith, lack of courage? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to John.)

JOHN: I remember the first time Jesus called to me, John. My brother James and I were mending our nets on our father's boat when Jesus told us to follow Him. We were so excited, we dropped everything and followed Him. Since that time, I have tried to understand Jesus through His love, something very hard for a man of my impetuous, fiery spirit to do. But the love of the Master has changed me and now He calls me "the beloved Disciple." Jesus once said, "I am the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep." Now this is true, sacrificial love. He has given so much for us and like the Good Shepherd He protects us and loves us. Someday, I want to share with the world about our Good Shepherd so that they will believe that He is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they may have eternal life. For he said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." And now, He just said one of us will betray Him. Can a sheep betray his own shepherd? Is there a wolf in the fold? Surely it is not my brother, or Peter, or Andrew! Could it be John, the beloved disciple? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to James.)

JAMES: I am James, the brother of John and we have often been referred to as the "sons of thunder." We were fishermen with our father, Zebedee and we were honored when Jesus wanted us as his disciples. I was present in Peter's home when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law of her fever. Later, I watched as He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. But the most astonishing event occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration when we saw Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. Our mother urged us to petition Jesus to allow us to sit on either side of Him in His kingdom. Jesus replied, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to

drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Jesus reminded us that He who would be first, must be servant of all and He demonstrated His words by washing our feet. I have always tried to represent the highest power and the strongest Christian quality: love. And now, He who taught us the way of love is to be betrayed by one of those whom He loved. Who can it be? Why should one of us do such a thing? Is it I? Is it I?

Spotlight comes to Jesus and the disciples "unfreeze".

JOHN: Master, I am sick at heart. I must know. Is it I?

JESUS: The one who dips his bread with me in the bowl will betray me this night.

(Reaches to bowl and Judas dips his bread with Him. Judas looks around at his fellow disciples.)

JESUS: What you are about to do, do quickly.

(Judas runs down off of stage and down the aisle.)

JESUS: What you are about to do, do quickly.

(Judas runs down off of stage and down the aisle.)

JESUS: You have stayed with me all through my trials, and just as my Father has given me the right to rule, so I will make the same agreement with you. You will eat and drink at my table in the kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer! For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given its full meaning in the kingdom of God. We have many memories to share.

Begins song.

**** During song, deacons pass out the bread and cups, quietly instructing audience to hold them until the time arrives to partake of the Lord's supper.

JESUS: *(Takes bread and breaks it, passing to his disciples.)* This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.

Spotlight goes to Brother Mark as he instructs the audience to eat the bread.

JESUS: *(Waits until they have all eaten. Takes cup.)* This is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the remission of sins. I tell you, I will not drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's kingdom. Drink you all of it. *(The disciples take their cups and drink.)*

Spotlight goes to Brother Mark as he instructs audience to partake of the cup.

JESUS: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me, you will know my Father also. If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. For greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends. All things that I heard from My Father, I have made known to you.

JESUS: As you go into the world as sheep among wolves remember my new commandment: love one another. If you have love for one another, then all will know you are my disciples.

(Service is turned over to Pastor.)

**THE DEACON LED
LIVING LAST SUPPER**

Version 2

**BY
BRUCE HENNIGAN
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**See Production Notes for
The Living Last Supper: The Homecoming Feast
All Songs are Optional**

(PETER, PHILIP, AND JOHN COME OUT ONTO STAGE.)

PHILLIP: I hope the Master approves of the table.

PETER: Don't worry, Philip. He will be very pleased.

JOHN: Yes, I think we have laid out a wonderful feast for tonight's Passover celebration.

PHILLIP: It's just that I am so unsure of whether or not I please the Master. Peter, you and John are in the Master's inner circle. I know He is pleased with you.

JOHN: Sometimes, Philip. But, even we make mistakes.

PETER: We're trying to be good disciples just as you are, Philip. And, I am looking forward to many years of working with the Master to become the kind of disciple He wants us to be.

JOHN: Yes, the future is as bright and hopeful as tonight's celebration. Come, Peter, let's go get the others.

Philip sings his song.

As he finishes, the remainder of the disciples come in. They greet each other warmly and sit at the table as Jesus comes in. Jesus goes center stage and sits in his chair.

JESUS: When I sent you to prepare for this passover feast, I told you, "My time is at hand." I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat the Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I will not eat it again until what it represents has occurred in the Kingdom of God. I tell you the truth: one of you is going to betray me.

(All freeze in pose of the painting. Spotlight will come up on each disciple as they speak. A short, musical interlude may be used between disciples.)

NATHANIEL: Nathaniel is my real name although I am also known as Bartholomew. I was born in Cana of Galilee and like most of us, I was a fisherman. Philip and I are close companions and it was he who first brought me to Jesus. I will never forget the question I put to Philip that day: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" for it was such a small, insignificant place. But, after seeing Jesus he said to me, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile." "How do you know me?" I asked. He answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." After hearing this, I had no doubt he was the Messiah. Since then I have served him, walking the villages of Gallilee, watching him turn water into wine, going down the streets of the Decapolis, and finally, the holy city, Jerusalem. And now, when he is instituting a ceremony to take the place of the Passover, He tells us that one of us is to betray Him. Who can it be? Could it be Nathaniel? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes to opposite end of the table.)

SIMON: I was given the name Simon, the Zealot. I was associated with a group of blood thirsty, hot headed rebels called the Zealots. We feared and hated the Romans and would settle for nothing less than the violent expulsion of Rome from our beloved land. I lived by the sword. And, if not for Jesus, I would have died by the sword. One day, I heard Jesus say, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." and "You shall love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After meeting Jesus, I have unconditionally surrendered to His will and I now follow Him wherever He leads. Through Jesus, we will one day bring our blessed land back to the glory God intended it to have. As I watched Jesus conquer evil with unconditional love, I realized how powerful a sword that love can be. With love in my heart, I can overcome any adversity I have to face. And, now, He says there is a spiritual Roman among us; one who would attempt by force what can only be conquered by love. Who can he be? Matthew, the publican? Peter, the big fisherman? Or does He suspect me since I am a former Zealot? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight back to James, the lesser.)

JAMES, THE LESSER: My name is James, but since I am smaller than most of my companions, I am called James, the lesser. Thaddeus and I are brothers and together, we first saw the Master on the day John, the Baptist was baptizing Jesus. I was curious to see what was happening so I turned aside for a closer look. I saw Jesus, asking John to baptize Him. After Jesus was baptized by John, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. A mighty voice spoke "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Later, Jesus called me to be one of His disciples and I have followed Him without hesitation. I have tried to learn as much about Him and His heavenly Father as I can. And now, one of us is to betray Him? Surely it is madness to think one of us could do this! Surely the betrayer is out of his mind! And, I keep asking myself, Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight back to Thaddeus.)

THADDEUS: My real name is Judas Labbaeus. But, to lessen the confusion between I and Judas Iscariot, I am called Thaddeus. I well remember the day Jesus called me. After a night of prayer, he commissioned us to go forth and preach that "the Kingdom of God is at hand." He told us to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves, since He was sending us forth as sheep among wolves. Just a few days ago, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem and I was sure His hour had come when he would ascend to the throne of David. But, He has just spoken troublesome words. I suddenly see Him astride his donkey, entering Jerusalem not as a king but as a lamb among the wolves. We have had this Passover feast in such secrecy that we are told to look for a man carrying a pitcher to know the place. I am afraid for our safety. And, now, He has said that someone here is to betray him. Is there a wolf among us? Who can it be? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Andrew.)

ANDREW: I am Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. I am not a gifted man, just a simple fisherman. I've tried to do what I could to serve the Master. The others call me Andrew, the Bringer, because it seems my talent is to bring others to Jesus. I brought my brother Peter to Jesus, and I have watched with satisfaction the glorious transformation of his life. I found the little lad with the five loaves and two fish that day when Jesus miraculously fed the five thousand. Such miracles! Such love and compassion the Master has for everyone. I have been very close to the Master, certainly not one of the inner circle. But, I do not wish to be. I only wish to serve Him, to bring others to Him so they can see he is truly the Lamb of God. What greater gift can life afford a simple fisherman than to be the companion and friend of our Lord? Now, one of His "friends" is to betray Him. It is unthinkable. Who can it be? Can Andrew, the Bringer be the one to bring down His Lord? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Matthew.)

MATTHEW: My surname is Levi, but you know me as Matthew. The tax collector. Because of my profession, I have never know friendship. Or, love. And then, one day, a shadow fell across my collecting table and I looked up into the face of the Master. I saw, in those eyes a compassion I had never seen in any man. And, trust me, I have looked into the eyes of many men as they paid their due to the government. "Follow me." was all Jesus said. I left my table, and my life as a tax collector behind and followed Him. It was the best bargain of my life. Since then, I have followed Jesus and I have tried to understand His mission by studying how His life fulfills the word of the prophets who foretold his coming. I have tried to write down the exact words the Master has spoken. I have exchanged my publican wretchedness for the dignity of discipleship. I no longer collect taxes or make change. Instead, I change sinners into saints. Jesus has shown me the way, the truth, and the life. And, even as I try to write down the gospel, the good news of His coming, He tells us bad news. One of his most trusted followers is to betray him? Does he suspect me, because I once was a tax collector? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes to Judas.)

**JUDAS
ISCARIOT:**

I am Judas Iscariot, certainly the most trusted member of the Master's "beloved Society." I guess it was my past experience with the revolutionaries who plotted to overthrow the government that led Jesus to choose me to follow Him. After all, Jesus is the Messiah. He will overthrow the Roman government and establish a new Kingdom of powerful, Messianic leaders. And I, the trusted treasurer of this group will have the most powerful position. I will control the purse strings. True, for now, I dole out our scarce resources to the poor but only because one day, we will need them to follow the Messiah without question. There have been times the others disagreed with my opinion. I still can't get over the waste of that precious perfume Mary poured over the Master's feet. It could have brought many pieces of silver. Yes, the Master has shown signs of shall I say, weakness? I understand he must appeal to the poor and downtrodden. And, quite frankly, I think he may need a little prodding to complete his mission. That is why I have thirty pieces of silver to add to MY coffers. And, now, He speaks of a betrayer in our midst. Well, I can tell you it is not Judas Iscariot. Maybe Peter. Or, those hot headed brothers, James and John. No, I know my place. Quietly manipulating things behind the scenes. One day, He will thank me for forcing His hands, for forcing the Master to save himself at the last minute. No, I am the hero at this table. Not the betrayer. But, I'll go along with everyone else and act surprised. I might even ask myself, Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Philip.)

PHILLIP: My name is Philip and I came from Bethsaida in Galilee. Jesus called me to follow Him one day when I was listening to the preachings of John the Baptist. I was the fourth disciple chosen and I brought Nathaniel to the Master. During the years of close fellowship with Jesus, my faith in God has grown. When He fed the five thousand, I asked, "Where are we to buy bread that all these may eat?" I discovered that our vision and power are so limited until the Master moves through us to reach the world with His love and compassion.

Because I know the Greek language so well, I am also called “the Greek” and I arranged for the Greeks to speak with our Master. Through these encounters, I have grown to understand the Master’s words. In fact, I am convinced that he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. Now, having seen the Father through Him, He shocks us by saying there is a betrayer in our midst. Does the traitor not know that in betraying Jesus, he is also betraying God? Who can it be? Can it be Philip? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Peter.)

PETER: My brother Andrew and I were fishing one day when Jesus walked by and said “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” We immediately left our nets and followed Him. He even gave me my name, Peter, which means the rock. And when I confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, He said, “On this rock will I build my church.” Strange that he would choose me, a hot-headed fisherman with a runaway tongue. Maybe it is my faith. It is strong, even when I saw Jesus walking on the water and tried to go to him. True, I lost confidence and began to sink, but my faith in Him is unshakable. Until now. Tonight when I promised to follow Him anywhere, He warned me that before the cock crew twice, I would have denied Him three times. He prayed for me because he said Satan wanted to sift me like wheat. Will I deny Him tonight before the rooster crows? Will He deny me? Will He close the doors of the Kingdom to me? Am I this betrayer He speaks of? If I knew who the scoundrel was, I’d pierce his heart with this knife to prove my love. But, what if it were my own heart I pierced? Am I the one? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to Thomas.)

THOMAS: I have been given the nickname, “Doubting Thomas” by those who know me. Since the days when I was a fisherman with Simon and Andrew, I have been cautious, careful, and certain of my actions. I usually demand proof before I believe. I want to see before committing myself. You see, I am not a man of doubt. Rather, I am a man of daring. When Mary and Martha sent word to the the Lord that their brother, Lazarus was dead, Jesus said “Let us go to him.” Some of the apostles were afraid to go because of the growing opposition to Jesus. I was the one who spoke out and rebuked them all

by saying, "Let us also go with Him that we may die with Him." Why do people overlook my daring and remember the doubting? Remember the questions but overlook the affirmations? Jesus' enemies are determined to destroy Him. Why? Because the God He reveals is a greater God than the petty little manmade deities they have enshrined upon the altars of their hearts. Jesus would bring us all up to God while His enemies would cut God down to their own size. And now, Jesus has brought doubt back into my heart when He says that one of us is to betray Him? Is He blaming me for lack of faith, lack of courage? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to John.)

JOHN: I remember the first time Jesus called to me, John. My brother James and I were mending our nets on our father's boat when Jesus told us to follow Him. We were so excited, we dropped everything and followed Him. Since that time, I have tried to understand Jesus through His love, something very hard for a man of my impetuous, fiery spirit to do. But the love of the Master has changed me and now He calls me "the beloved Disciple." Jesus once said, "I am the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep." Now this is true, sacrificial love. He has given so much for us and like the Good Shepherd He protects us and loves us. Someday, I want to share with the world about our Good Shepherd so that they will believe that He is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they may have eternal life. For he said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." And now, He just said one of us will betray Him. Can a sheep betray his own shepherd? Is there a wolf in the fold? Surely it is not my brother, or Peter, or Andrew! Could it be John, the beloved disciple? Is it I? Is it I?

(Spotlight goes back to James.)

JAMES: I am James, the brother of John and we have often been referred to as the "sons of thunder." We were fishermen with our father, Zebedee and we were honored when Jesus wanted us as his disciples. I was present in Peter's home when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law of her fever. Later, I watched as He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. But the most astonishing event occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration when we saw Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. Our mother urged us to petition Jesus to allow us to sit on either side of Him in His kingdom. Jesus replied, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to

drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Jesus reminded us that He who would be first, must be servant of all and He demonstrated His words by washing our feet. I have always tried to represent the highest power and the strongest Christian quality: love. And now, He who taught us the way of love is to be betrayed by one of those whom He loved. Who can it be? Why should one of us do such a thing? Is it I? Is it I?

Spotlight comes to Jesus and the disciples "unfreeze".

JOHN: Master, I am sick at heart. I must know. Is it I?

JESUS: The one who dips his bread with me in the bowl will betray me this night.

(Reaches to bowl and Judas dips his bread with Him. Judas looks around at his fellow disciples.)

JESUS: What you are about to do, do quickly.

(Judas runs down off of stage and down the aisle.)

JESUS: You have stayed with me all through my trials, and just as my Father has given me the right to rule, so I will make the same agreement with you. You will eat and drink at my table in the kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer! For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given its full meaning in the kingdom of God

JESUS: *(Takes bread and breaks it, passing to his disciples.)* This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.

Spotlight goes to Brother Mark as he instructs the audience to eat the bread.

JESUS: *(Waits until they have all eaten. Takes cup.)* This is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the remission of sins. I tell you, I will not drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's kingdom. Drink you all of it. *(The disciples take their cups and drink.)*

Spotlight goes to Brother Mark as he instructs audience to partake of the cup.

JESUS: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me, you will know my Father also. If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. For greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends. All things that I heard from My Father, I have made known to you.

JESUS: As you go into the world as sheep among wolves remember my new commandment: love one another. If you have love for one another, then all will know you are my disciples.

Goes stage left and sings his song "Help this shepherd be a lamb."

(Service is turned over to Pastor.)

THE LIVING LAST SUPPER:

THE HOMECOMING FEAST

BY

BRUCE HENNIGAN
John – Written by Nicky Nix

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This is copyrighted material and I would ask that you refrain from changing too much of the material. You may adapt lines as you see fit to aid in the performance. If you pass this material on for someone else to use, please encourage them to let me know. I like to keep track of this production and find out how it was used and the impact it has had on people's lives. So, please contact me if you perform this play through my email address; bhennigan@mac.com. May God bless you in your endeavors and may He use this production to increase His kingdom.

Next Year in Jerusalem
Bruce Hennigan

PRODUCTION NOTES:

The original script contained more detailed and longer narratives for each of the disciples. I discovered that most deacons have never participated in drama and feel intimidated by long scripts. Therefore, I shortened the narratives of about half of the disciples. The longer, more dramatic narratives should be given to those men who can portray these disciples with more dramatic flair: Andrew, Peter, Simon, Thomas, John, Paul, and, of course, Jesus.

In our production, we dressed the stage with a long table similar to the table portrayed in Da Vinci's "The Last Supper". However, we used a simple backdrop of white curtains and deep, maroon accenting curtains set off by four white columns containing silver candelabras. During the narration, the table is empty and Jesus comes out just before he is referred to in the narrative and delivered the line, "*For I tell you, I will not eat of this feast again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.*" At this point, six women dressed as angels enter the stage area, walking down the aisles carrying silver trays laden with real, fragrant, steaming food. Jesus directs them to set the table for the feast that is to follow. This caught the audience by surprise as they were expecting the traditional setting for the table of fruit, bread, and wine. The fragrance of freshly cooked food made quite an impression.

During this brief period, the narration finished and we played some music. As soon as the table was set, Jesus exited down the aisle to the foyer and the first disciple came out. Below is the list of the disciples in the order in which they appear (also the order in which they died).

James, the brother of John
Philip
Matthew
James, the Lesser
Andrew
Peter
Thaddeus
Simon, the Zealot
Nathaniel
Thomas
John
Paul
Jesus

As each disciple finished their narrative, they would freeze in the position in which we found them in the painting. The empty chair for Judas is conspicuously empty throughout the production. When Paul entered, he stood off to the side and Jesus came down the aisle near the end of the narrative so that they met in the center of the stage area down in front of the table. This was the emotional climax of the production. As Jesus brought Paul up to the table, the disciples moved out of their frozen positions and were greeted by Jesus in

a fashion appropriate for the real reunion in heaven (except it was difficult to have all twelve men fall at his feet on the stage. Use embraces and hand clasps instead.)

When Jesus talks about breaking the bread, the disciples took their plates from the table filled with bread and they served the audience. At the end of this period, they returned to the table and resume their positions. The pastor then took over and led the audience in the taking of the bread.

When Jesus took the cup and blessed it, the disciples left the table, came to the communion table and served the wine to the audience. They then sat on the front row instead of returning to the table. The pastor then led the audience in the taking of the cup.

Jesus then delivered his last lines as an evangelical charge to the audience. At the end, he left the stage area and turned the service over to the pastor to finish as he saw fit. It will be up to you and the pastor whether or not to have an invitation as the ending of the production certainly lends itself to an altar call.

Feel free to weave any type of music into the production you feel is appropriate. We had the men playing Jesus, Andrew, and John come out in modern dress at the very end and sing "I will follow Christ" by Clay Crosse as the closing of the service.

May God bless you in this endeavor. This is a new and risky portrayal but the response was overwhelmingly positive. I could not believe the number of people who were touched and moved by this different portrayal of the Last Supper. I can only give God credit for the idea. The words of the script came almost verbatim from the Word of God. So, in truth, God wrote the script.

Bruce Hennigan
April, 2003

SETTING:

The stage contains the table set for the Passover feast. The disciples come in one by one and take their place at the table. They deliver their lines and then freeze as they would appear in the painting until Jesus comes in at the end and brings Paul to the table. Note that each disciple appears in the order in which they died on earth beginning with James and ending with John. Paul is the last to come to the table.

Narration:

Tonight, we welcome you to a very special presentation. Many of you have seen the painting of the Last Supper. Each disciple was frozen in mid thought as Jesus told them "This night, one of you will betray me." On that night, each disciple felt in his own heart that he had betrayed the Master. And those fears were realized in the coming hours as Jesus Christ, betrayed by his followers, was crucified.

What a dark day that was. The disciples, ordinary men called to an extraordinary purpose, failed their Master. They ran, scurrying like frightened mice to hide from the authorities. And yet, even as they huddled in darkness, Mary Magdalene delivered a powerful message.

"He is alive! He is alive! The Lord is risen!"

What happened in those days after the disciples saw the risen Lord? How could this simple band of fishermen and tax collectors change the world? Tonight, we will witness a gathering at a different table. This table is not in the Upper Room. This table is in heaven.

For Jesus, on the same night of his betrayal told his disciples, "For I tell you, I will not eat of this feast again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Join us now, at a the table prepared for us by Jesus in His kingdom. It is here the disciples will share a homecoming feast with their Master.

James, the son of Zebedee

My name is James, the brother of John. After Jesus was crucified and arose from the dead, he appeared to us in the upper room and told us not to leave Jerusalem for we would receive power from the Father. One day we were all together in one room when suddenly a sound like a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house. Tongues of fire separated and came to rest on each of us and we were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

This was a power I could never have imagined. And it ignited a passion within us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world. We began to preach and perform miracles in the name of our Master. Unfortunately, this attracted the attention of the authorities that still hated us.

I was arrested and sentenced to death by King Herod Agrippa. He knew I was the disciple who sat at the left hand of our Lord and Savior and hoped to use me as an example. Jesus told me at the last supper, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." And so, I was the first disciple to taste the cup of death. Fourteen years after the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I was beheaded with a sword at the command of King Herod.

I regret that my life was so short in the service of my Lord. I come to this feast in heaven feeling so unworthy. Do I deserve to sit at this table? Could I have served my Lord better?

I have to ask myself, do I deserve to sit at this feast? Do I, Lord, do I?

Philip

My name is Philip. I remember telling Nathaniel that we had found the one about whom the prophets wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth. We forgot what the prophets wrote about the Messiah. How he would be a suffering servant, despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering who was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities; and by his wounds we are healed.

After that night when Judas betrayed our Master, we thought we were better than he was. But, when the crowds came and Jesus was arrested, all of us betrayed him and fled into the darkness.

Jesus had warned us we would act this way when he said, "But a time is coming, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

He knew we would abandon Him, and still, while he hung alone on the cross, He beseeched the Father to forgive us. This is the legacy He left us to share with the world. In Christ, there is total, complete forgiveness and unconditional love.

We had found the one of whom the prophets spoke and just as they predicted Christ would suffer and die, so I, too, faced that fate. 24 years after our Lord and Master ascended to the Father, I was crucified at Hieropolis in Phrygia.

I have tasted the pain my Lord and Master tasted, and I was found wanting. I am unworthy of His sacrifice. And yet, He has prepared for me a feast of incredible proportions. Do I deserve such an honor? Am I worthy? Do I belong at this table? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Matthew

My name is Matthew. No longer a tax collector, I used my pen to record the deeds of our Master. I wrote an account of what happened shortly after the Holy Spirit descended upon us. Peter stood up and began to preach. Such words that came from this common man! The rest of the disciples were as astounded as the crowd that heard him. He told the crowd:

“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”

To our amazement, three thousand were added to our number that day.

The power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform the crowds was unbelievable! As I continued to document the life of Jesus Christ, I was amazed at how each and every event of His life fulfilled the writings of the prophets concerning the Messiah.

In the past few years I have journeyed far to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ even to Ethiopia and Persia. After the persecutions began and James was killed, we were forced to spread out. By doing so, the Gospel spread also. How wise is our Father. How wonderful is the plan of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when he commanded us to “Therefore go 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 obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.”

The end came for me when I was beheaded in the city of Nadabah in Ethiopia 30 years after our Master’s resurrection. I only wish I could have carried his Gospel to all of the world. Is there more I could have done? Do I deserve to sit at this table? Do I, Lord? Do I?

James, the Lesser

I am James, brother of Matthew. Because of my slight stature, I am also known as James, the Lesser. But, since the day of Pentecost, I have found a power in the Holy Spirit that makes me a powerful tool in the hands of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am amazed how the Holy Spirit has changed us from the frightened, cowardly men who deserted Christ in His hour of need to men capable of boldly preaching the Gospel.

Shortly after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John healed a crippled beggar. We were stunned that God had given us the power to heal in His name. They preached and five thousand who heard the message believed.

The Sadducees had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power did you do this?” Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed then know this: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. For Jesus is the stone your builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

A one on one encounter with Jesus Christ changes a man. I once was called “lesser”. Now, I am a bold witness for Jesus Christ.

36 years after our Master’s resurrection, I was stoned to death in Jerusalem for preaching Christ. And now, I am here at this table. Once again, I am a “lesser” man, unworthy of this feast. Do I deserve to be here at this table with my Master? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Andrew

I am Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. I remember a time when we were leaving the temple, and Jesus said to us: “Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.

“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

It was only as opposition to our preaching grew in the days of the early church that I understood the Master’s words. I recalled something else Jesus said. “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

When Jesus was crucified, I realized what he had meant. Lifted up between sky and earth, between heaven and hell, His death was the ultimate atonement for our sins. That is the message we were to preach. No matter what the opposition, no matter what the cost. Even when Saul of Tarsus began his bitter persecution of us, killing many, including Stephen, we did not relent. Even when others claimed to be the messiah and desired glory for themselves, we did not give in. Even when we were scattered across the known world as leaves before a bitter wind, we did not cease to preach the Gospel.

He who stands firm to the end will be saved. That has been my prayer, to stay firm to the end.

I journeyed far and wide for Christ into Asia and back to Greece. There, Aigetus, the governor of Patros was enraged because his wife and daughter became Christians. He had me crucified. But, I refused to be crucified as my Master. I did not want to be “lifted up” as He was. I am but a weak vessel for His power. I was crucified on an X shaped cross and suffered for three days before I died. And still, my death was not a sacrifice. I do not deserve to be here at this table. Lord, do I belong here? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Peter

I am Peter. No man has betrayed a friend so deeply as I have. No man has turned his back on his Lord more so than I. I am not proud of the denial in the courtyard. But, I will tell you how Jesus Christ restored me. I will tell you how he forgave me.

I was discouraged after the death of our Master. I was certain everything we had worked for was ended. And then, one morning while we were huddled in darkness and fear, Mary Magdalene came to us to say she had seen the Master. He was alive! And she had a special message just for me. She said Jesus told her “But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.’”

I still did not want to accept that Jesus had planned a new life for me. I wanted to go back to my fishing. Fishing I understood. This strange “death and resurrection” I did not understand. We went to the Sea of Tiberias but caught nothing throughout the long night. Early in the morning, I saw someone standing on the shore. A strong voice echoed across the waves. “Friends, have you any fish?”

Have we any fish? Couldn’t he see the boat was empty? “No” I screamed in anger. Then this person had the audacity to command us to try again. He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” John obeyed without question, although I knew it was a futile gesture. But, when we did, we were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish!

That’s when John said. “Peter, it is the Lord!” In that instance I knew my Master awaited me on the shore. I jumped into the water and swam to the shore.

How wonderful it was to see Him! In fact, Jesus had a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. (*Excited!*) Jesus invited me to breakfast!

When we had finished eating, Jesus said to me, “Simon, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” I said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

I was puzzled by his request. Again Jesus said, “Simon, do you truly love me?” I answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to me, “Simon, do you love me?” I was hurt because Jesus asked me the third time. I said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

Three times Jesus asked me to feed His sheep. Once for each denial. How wonderful is the loving forgiveness of our Master. After the Holy Spirit came upon me, God did many wonderful things through me. Over the years, I have done my best to feed His sheep.

What message can I leave this generation after all the good and evil I have done? Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast

all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Thirty seven years after the resurrection of my Master, I was crucified at the hands of the Romans at the direction of their emperor Nero. Even in death, I did not feel worthy of dying as my Master had. I was crucified upside down. As I come here to this table, I cannot but wonder if I have fed all of the sheep my Master entrusted to me. Did I let Him down again? Do I deserve to sit here at this feast? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Thaddeus

I am Thaddeus, one of the original twelve. After Jesus' ascension, we spread out and preached the Gospel. The authorities were more determined to stop us. King Herod Agrippa had James, the brother of John killed and then had Peter arrested.

We gathered together to pray when there was knock at the door. It was Peter! How could such a thing be? Then Peter told us after being arrested, Herod put him in prison. That night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He woke up Peter. "Quick, get up!" and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Peter followed him out of the prison. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself.

As Peter stood before us, he said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod."

If God was for us, who could stand against us! Not long after that, an angel of the Lord struck down Herod and he was consumed with worms and died. I recalled these incidents many times as I journeyed throughout the known world, in Armenia and Syria and Persia where I was executed along with Simon, the Zealot 42 years after Jesus' resurrection.

I come here to this table uncertain of my worthiness of such an honor. I doubted God would deliver Peter from prison but I have tried to be faithful in the years since. But, still, I wonder if I belong here at this table. Do I, Lord? Do I?

Simon, the Zealot

I am Simon, once called the zealot. I used to be a hot headed rebel, fighting against the Romans with sword and shield. Jesus changed my nature. But, after Jesus' resurrection, events challenged my new found nature.

Stephen, a good friend and one of the seven chosen to serve and help the disciples was arrested. Members of the Synagogue stirred up the elders and they seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. Stephen preached to them about how they had treated the prophets.

“You stiff-necked people! You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him.”

When the council members heard this, they were furious. I would have reacted by pulling my sword. But, Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” When they heard this, they rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. The false witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

(Emotionally) While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And then, he died.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and we were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Later, Saul had a conversion experience on the road to Damascus. God transformed a murderer into a mighty servant. Just as he had done with me. I remembered those words He spoke in His prayer on the night we last feasted with Him.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. For, the world will know you are my disciples if you love one another.” How powerful is the love of Jesus Christ that it could transform one like Saul and one like me.

I left Jerusalem shortly after Stephen's death and together with Thaddeus, witnessed throughout the known world to Egypt and Northern Africa. I was sawn asunder with the very instrument by which I had once lived, a sword. I only hope I have pleased my Master. As I come to this table, I wonder if my devotion was enough? Did my anger betray my new nature? Have I damaged the Kingdom of God? Do I deserve to sit at this table? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Nathaniel

My name is Nathaniel. When Philip came to me and told me we had found the one of whom the prophets spoke, I had no idea of the journey that lay ahead of me. I watched in amazement as we were transformed by the Holy Spirit into a cohesive, struggling force to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Once, that struggle almost ceased.

A group of men from Judea arrived in Jerusalem and began to teach that we had to keep the ancient Jewish traditions in order to be saved. This split our early church into two groups.

Peter arose to speak. Everyone was certain Peter would agree to turn his back on the Gentiles. Peter said, “God has shown me a vision that everything and everyone God has made is good. Brothers, God, who knows the heart, showed the Gentiles he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them.”

Paul agreed when he wrote, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Now united in one spirit, the church grew in spite of persecution. I preached the Gospel in India, and parts of Persia. Unfortunately, a Roman proconsul had been healed and had become a Christian. His wife became angry and ordered Philip and I to be crucified. I managed to escape to Armenia. There, I was skinned alive and beheaded at the hands of the very Gentiles Jesus died to save. Now, I am here at this table feeling unworthy of partaking in this feast. There is so much more I could have done for my Savior. Do I deserve to sit at this table? Do I, Lord? Do I?

Thomas

I am Thomas, the one called the Doubter. Why am I called the doubter? Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to the disciples but I was not there. When they told me, I doubted their account. I wanted to see Jesus with my own eyes.

A week later we were in the house again. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among us and said, "Thomas, put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Can you imagine how I must have felt? My Lord and Savior, crucified for my sins, standing before me with his wounds for all to see asking me to touch them. I reached out and I touched the holes in his hands, those wonderful, delicate hands that had healed the sick. I ran my finger along the wound in his side. And, I placed my hand upon his chest where His mighty heart beat with the power of the Creator, a heart that was broken on the cross for me. I was so moved, I said, "My Lord and my God!"

After He ascended, I committed myself fervently to reach those who had never seen Him. My missionary journeys carried me to India, where we started a great church for Jesus Christ. Perhaps doubt has a usefulness, for only in our doubts can God so fully reassure us that we never doubt again. I only hope the churches we have set up in India reach millions for Christ.

I have lived a life dedicated to the one I doubted. And while I may have doubted him, he never doubted me. He believed in me and empowered me to spread His word. The opposition was fierce in India and I was killed by a spear thrust into my heart. It was not broken as Jesus' heart was, but I hope I have given all of its energy and strength to the cause of Jesus Christ. Now, I am here at this table and I wonder if Jesus still sees me as the doubter. Will he hold that one failing against me? Do I deserve to be here at this table? Do I, Lord? Do I?

John

My name is John, brother of James. An apostle of Jesus, the Christ; sometimes called the Beloved Disciple. In many ways my life has been like the others. Like them, I was with the Master during His time on earth. I gave up everything I had to follow Him. I heard Him teach and watched as he performed miracles and many wonderful things. I even saw Him raise the dead to life. And, I watched Him die. I thought my life was over when he was crucified; either at the hands of the Roman Soldiers or because I thought my heart would break when He died. But only three short days later, there He was—with us. He had risen from the grave. We talked with Him and laughed together again. He taught us and gave us instructions.

I was with Him on the day he was ascended into Heaven to be with the Father. From that day, the only thing I wanted to do was to tell others about Him. I went on missionary journeys. I worked with Peter and Paul and was one of the leaders of the church at Jerusalem. I was persecuted for my faith; but unlike the others, I was not killed for my beliefs. God allowed me to live a long, full life; although I was exiled from family and friends to the island of Patmos.

During my life of following the Savior, God revealed many things to me about His work and His Son. He showed me that in the very beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God—and that the Word was God. And that in the Word—in Jesus—was life. And that life was the light of men. Given to us so that we would never again have to walk in darkness.

God also revealed to me His great love. A love that caused Him to send His Son to the world so that whoever would believe in Him would not perish, but have eternal life. I also saw that same love in Jesus. He told us that He was the Good Shepherd and that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. It was his great love that caused him to lay down his life for us.

He showed that love every day, and he commanded that we love one another in the same way. He told us that others would know we were his followers if we loved one another as he had loved us.

Before Jesus left us, he told us that he was going to prepare a place for us and that if he went to prepare that place, he would come again and take us with him. When I was an old man living on the island of Patmos, God showed me that place that Jesus went to prepare. It was more wonderful, more beautiful, more joyful than anything you can possibly imagine. Although I did my best to describe it, but there was simply no way that words could be used to tell how beautiful and wonderful it was.

And now, here I am in the place that He has prepared for me. I think again about the words of the Master when he said “to whom much is given, much will be required.” My life on earth was full and long. I was blessed beyond what any person could imagine. I lived with the Savior, I learned from Him, God revealed to me the fullness of Jesus as

God, with all his power and glory, and showed me heaven and all its splendor. No one could have been given more than I was given. So I must ask, Have I done what you expected of me, Lord? Have I done what you required? Do I deserve to be here? Do I?

Paul

I am Paul, an apostle of Christ. I do not know why I am here at this table. I did not walk with these disciples when Jesus was present with them. In fact, for many years I was their bitter enemy until I met my Savior face to face on the road to Damascus. For I had been persecuting Christians and had overseen the stoning of Stephen. I did not deserve the mercy God afforded me that day. There is no one who does good, not even one. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

In spite of my sinful nature, I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

In the past few years, I have had great joys and miraculous escapes. There have been difficulties both from without our group in the form of persecution, as well as within in the form of disagreements. For His sake we faced death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

But, in all these things we were more than conquerors through him who loved us. And though the days be dark, I never lost faith in my Jesus. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To keep me from boasting, He has kept me humble with an affliction which daily reminded me of my own weaknesses. I only hope the letters I have written to the various churches can keep the fragile flame of the Gospel ignited so the world will be consumed by His grace.

For because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace we have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us here with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.

Now, I stand here at this table. There is one seat empty. I do not belong there. I only hope my Savior can see I have done the best I could. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that

Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.

For I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Jesus comes down the aisle and Paul runs, throwing himself at Jesus' feet.

Jesus: Paul, did I not say you were the chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel?

Paul: Yes, Master. You also said you would show me how much I must suffer for your name.

Jesus: The time of suffering is at an end. Come, and sit with me.

(He comes up onto the stage and greets all of the disciples. Then, He takes His place at the center of the table and speaks.)

You ask if you deserve a place at this table. Remember the parable of the talents. A master gave talents to three of his servants and left town. Two of his servants used their talents and increased them. The third hid his talent. When the master returned, he rejoiced at the efforts of the two servants who used their talents to increase the master's kingdom. But, he condemned the servant who hid his talent. He told his servants to 'Take the talent from him and throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

But to the faithful servants he said what I now say to you. 'Well done, good and faithful servant! Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I have come here to prepare a place for you. And if I came and prepared a place for you, I would want you to be with me that you also may be where I am.'

And so, my friends, your reward will be to attend the wedding feast of the Lamb. Remember the parable of the wedding feast.

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

So, he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

You served well and faithfully and you accepted my invitation to this feast. For, I told you I would not eat of this feast again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Remember the night of the Passover feast when I commanded you to partake of this supper in remembrance of me? I took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

(Disciples go and pass bread to audience. Pastor takes over leading the audience in the taking of the bread. Once he is done, Jesus resumes. See Production Notes for details.)

In the same way, after the supper I took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

(Cups are passed to audience by disciples. They do not return to the table and it is empty. The Pastor leads the audience in the taking of the cup and then Jesus resumes.)

(Jesus is left alone at the table and speaks to the audience.)

Would that all who hear my voice be faithful with their talents and their lives so that they might find a place reserved for them at this feast. As you can see, there are empty chairs waiting to be filled. Is there a place for you at this table?

Listen to me! Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone of you hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you with me. I have prepared a place for you at this table. Will you choose to accept it?

Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come to the feast!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Do not wait. I am coming soon.

This is an example of the letter sent to the participants.

In order of appearance:

James, the brother of John – Mike Hazel
Philip – Don Wilson
Matthew – Greg Johnson
James, the Lesser – Fred Kinder or Dwayne Green
Andrew – Robbin Cassity
Peter – Bruce Hennigan
Thaddeus – Mitch Bailey
Simon, the Zealot – Rodney Milliken
Nathaniel – Bob Eason
Thomas – Alan Young
John – Nicky Nix
Paul – Larry Robison
Jesus – Jeff German

Thank you for agreeing to be in this year's Deacon Led Living Last Supper. The script this year is different from any script we've ever done. It revolves around the disciples as they appear one by one in heaven. Each disciple will appear in the order in which they died. For those of you new to drama, I've tried to make your part as short as possible and as you will see much of what you will say is scripture. So, if you can memorize scripture, you can memorize your script! If you recognize a scriptural passage and you would prefer to deliver it in a different Bible translation, feel free to do so as long as you avoid the "thee" and "thou" of the King James Version.

We will have four different sessions to go over the script and a dress rehearsal the night before the performance. Right now, we will perform on Thursday, April 17th. I will get with Terry about the service, times, etc. I've sent a copy of the script to Mark and he may want to make some changes but so far, I don't think we will change anything unless it is the final words from Jesus.

At each session we will spend much of the time in devotion and prayer. Each session will be led by Larry Robison, Bruce Hennigan, Nicky Nix, and Jeff German. If your wives can help in decorating the table for that night and helping with making a backdrop, please let me know.

I am incredibly excited about this production. I believe it will ignite a passion for soul winning in those who witness it. This production emphasizes the birth of the Gospel and the spread of it through the world by the disciples. And, this production ends with the Lord's Supper but has a heavy emphasis by the character of Jesus on making a profession of faith. So, be in prayer for each person in the list above, particularly Jeff for Satan will begin to bombard us with all his fiery darts to stop this production. Trust me. He's done it

in the past and he'll do it again! But, we have a power within us that is far greater than Satan's darts. So, put on the whole armor of God and prepare. (over)

As you prepare for your part I would like for you to begin to research the disciple you are portraying. Try and find out as much about his travels and journeys prior to his death as you can. At each session, I will ask those who have learned about their disciples to share with the others what you have learned. In particular, I would like for you to try and discover what your disciple's greatest weakness and greatest strength was.

I will see you at the table.

This year in Jerusalem

Bruce

PREPARATION

The preparation phase for the Living Last Supper has always been at the heart of this production. We schedule four rehearsals, including the dress rehearsal. Each rehearsal focuses on the spiritual preparation of the participants over the learning of lines. We have found that the lines come easily, the more we relied on the Holy Spirit.

At each of the sessions, we would begin with housekeeping issues and read through the script at least once at the earliest session. This would be followed by a devotion led by one of the four spiritually strongest of the disciples. The devotion would be followed by a time of sharing and prayer. We have found this bonding time strengthens our deacons more so than any other program we participate in.

Here are some examples of devotion topics. I always give the participants something physical to remind them to pray for each other as they prepare for the time at the table. This preparation phase last six to eight weeks.

The Leather Bracelet: Take a two foot length of leather string for each disciple and one extra for Jesus. Pass the string around the circle of disciples and have each tie one knot in the string. By the end, there should be 12 knots, one for each of the other participants. The disciples then pair off and tie the string around each other's ankle. Jesus is saved for last. Each disciple cuts off the extra length of string and Jesus' bracelet is passed around. Each disciple ties their extra piece of string on Jesus' bracelet. John ties the bracelet on Jesus' ankle after trimming off the extra string. The disciples are encouraged to wear the bracelet until the night of the production. I have found it provides a constant reminder to pray for each of the other twelve men in the production.

The Nail: Each disciple is given a large, rough nail to remind them of the price Jesus paid on the cross.

The Stone: At the beginning of the preparation time, each disciple is given a small, rough sharp stone. They are urged to put this in their pocket each day and its presence will remind them to pray for each other. Two weeks before the production, a smooth, polished stone is exchanged for the rough stone and we talk about how God has smoothed away our rough edges with the trials and adversities of life. Most of the men had the stone mounted on their key rings.

The Cards: Each disciple is given a red card and a white card. The red card symbolizes the daily sin in our lives. When we see it on a daily basis we remind ourselves to try and avoid the sin that Jesus had to shed his blood to cover. The white card then reminds us that we are forgiven, but at a great price.

The Cup: Early on, each disciple is given a silver cup to sit in a conspicuous place to remind them of the cup that Jesus drank from. They are told to polish this cup often and to not forget to bring it to the table at dress rehearsal.

The Foot Washing: At the last devotion, Jesus comes in during the prayer time and washes the disciples' feet. The impact, to say the least, is stunning!

We use many of Max Lucado's writings as devotion material as well as Oswald Chambers. As an option, you might invite the church staff members to deliver the devotion.

Emphasize the spiritual preparation, not the memorizing of lines. It is amazing to see these men who are convinced they can never be on the stage, be transformed by the Holy Spirit. That in itself is one of the greatest blessings. I ask each disciple to learn as much as they can about their character and share this information during the preparation meetings.

On night of performance, the angels, the disciples, and all of their families are invited to their own private "feast" to eat the food prepared to have a time to share together. This is very special and meaningful and allows the families to catch a glimpse of the special blessings the men have received during their preparation time.

Bruce Hennigan