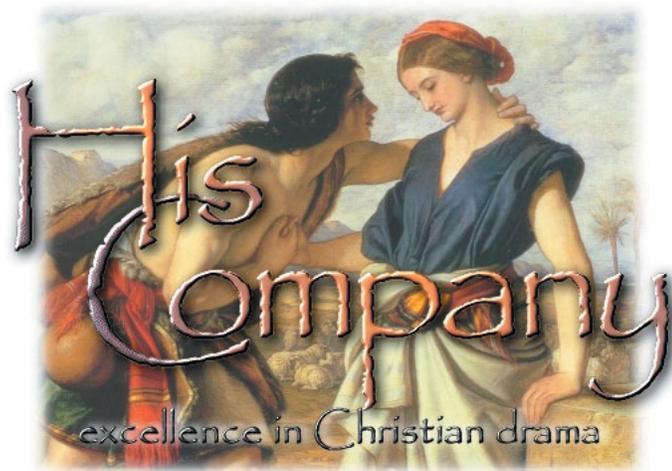


# PROFIT

FROM *THE TWELVE*

by  
David S. Lampel



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**AUTHOR'S NOTE**


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The Matthew of this monologue is a gregarious, back-slapping host who isn't ashamed to admit wrong and confess a new direction for his life to his old friends. It's his way of witnessing.

5 Matthew, the disciple, addresses the audience as if they were guests for a banquet in his home. (The guests are imaginary. The actor should play toward the audience.)

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**SCENE**


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*The Time: AD c.23*

10 *The Place: Home of Matthew, the publican*

*House lights down.*

*Stage lights up.*

15 *Matthew enters, holding the door for his guests, smiling and being the cordial host. He delivers his first line as he reaches the platform.*

**Matthew**

Miriam, more food for our guests!

20 *(to the guests)*

Joseph, was the lamb roasted to your liking? The honey sauce was made specially for you. And Ezrah, I know how you love the dates; my wife has prepared a bag of them for you to take with you.

My friends and guests. You bring honor to this house by your presence.

25 Most of us go back many years. Ephraim, my brother, it was you who brought me into this—well, this lucrative business and I am grateful.

*(to the rest)*

We have shared times of pleasure, opulence—prosperity. We have drunk old wine and squandered new money.

30 *(soberly)*

But now we must part.

*(raising his arms to quiet the protests)*

Please. I know; it's as much a shock to me as it is to you. But you see, this day I have made a new friend. This very morning I met Him and He has

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35 brought me wealth far surpassing what I have already. The riches He brings are difficult to bank—but easy to spend.

No—no, Laban. He is not a new overseer from Rome!

*(laughing)*

40 My friend's treasure is not in a currency recognized by our gracious benefactors. No, Laban, He has bestowed upon me—light, where once there was darkness. He has opened my mind to truth where before was only greed and deceit.

*(serious)*

45 My friends, we are a close fraternity and tonight the gates are shut against our detractors. Tonight let us be honest with each other—just as my new friend has taught me to be honest with myself. We have taken freely from our countrymen!

*(becoming agitated)*

50 Under pretense of tax-increase we have systematically stolen—yes, stolen from our brothers. And it is to our shame that we get away with it. Let me tell you something my new friend told me— What? Oh I haven't? Why,

*(gesturing to someone at his side)*

His name is Jesus.

55 But let me tell you what He said: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store your treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and thieves do not break in and steal.”

*(chuckling)*

60 His words puzzled me. When I found my tongue, I told Him I was a man of reason and logic. I told Him what I understood best were figures on a balance sheet—not poetry. Would He kindly explain the procedure for storing one's treasures in heaven?

There was kindness in His eyes when He answered: “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world—yet forfeits his soul?”

65 It was then I realized—for the first time—how I had sold my soul for these  
worthless baubles! Thieves could clean me out and I would be left with  
nothing. Nothing! But Jesus offered me something far more valuable—  
even priceless: eternal life—with Him. My friends, I chose His riches over  
mine. I have transferred all my precious possessions to His storehouse:  
70 my spirit, my devotion—

*(gazing at Jesus)*

my love.

*(happily)*

75 The rest I leave to you! Now I belong to Jesus. I don't know why, but He  
wants me. He has decided to include me on His balance sheet. But I, my  
friends, will be the one to profit.

*Matthew exits.*

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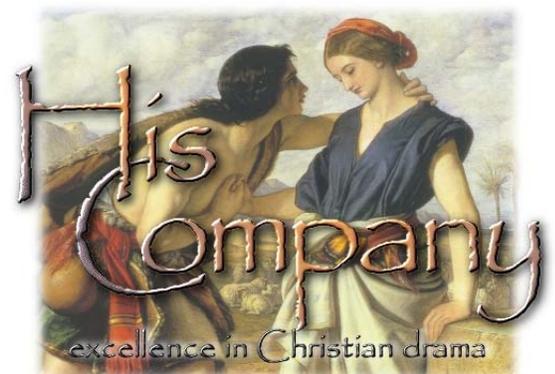
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