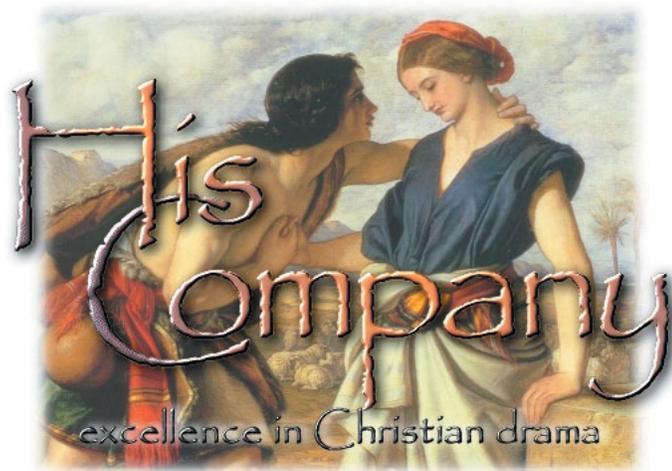


A GREATER LOVE

FROM *THE TWELVE*

by
David S. Lampel



AUTHOR'S NOTE

5 This sketch was originally written and performed with only one scene, but the second scene was added, at a later date, for those churches (read: pastors) that were uncomfortable with its less-than-upbeat ending. For the performance at the church that first requested a different ending, we did Scene One, then, after the sermon, Scene Two. The pastor followed that with an invitation. It actually worked quite well in that setting. It is our position that *A Greater Love* works either way. It just depends on the audience.

Here is another suggestion for working the sketch into a worship service...

SET-UP FOR USE IN WORSHIP SERVICE

10 *Congregational Hymn: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" (recommend the first two verses)*

Read setup for the sketch: (Pastor or Narrator)

Beneath the cross of Jesus there was great confusion in the minds of
 15 some of His disciples. What to do now? How to carry on, now that their
 Master had been killed? So they scattered—each to deal with the moment
 in his own way. The disciple, Thaddaeus, returns to his home greatly
 troubled. What is he to do with the teachings of Jesus, now that the
 teacher has died on the cross? Of no help is his wife, Keren-happuch. She
 20 has hated Jesus and His teachings from the beginning, and now has the
 perfect opportunity to pry her husband loose from what she has seen as a
 most foolish occupation.

Sketch: A Greater Love, Scene One

25 *Congregational Hymn: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (recommend all four verses)*

Sketch: A Greater Love, Scene Two

30 *Scripture Reading:*

And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by
 the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed
 and on the third day be raised to life." Then he said to them all: "If
 anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross
 35 daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but
 whoever loses his life for me will save it." Luke 9:22-24

SCENE ONE

40 *The Time: 2 days after the Crucifixion of Jesus*
 The Place: Home of Thaddaeus

House lights down.
Stage lights up.

45 *Thaddaeus, the apostle, and his wife, Keren-happuch, are at home. Thaddaeus is a quiet, thoughtful man who chooses his words deliberately. He is saddened by the latest turn of events—almost dejected. He is trying to understand what Jesus and His teachings meant in light of His recent death on the cross. What will be his (Thaddaeus’) role now? Keren-happuch is a woman of abrasive opinion and thoroughly opposed to the teachings of*
 50 *Jesus. From the beginning she hated Jesus and the easy way His work seemed to preoccupy her husband. Now with the death of Jesus—and His work seemingly over—Keren sees a perfect opportunity to pry her husband loose from what she has seen as a most foolish occupation.*

55 *Thaddaeus and Keren-happuch enter, briskly, already in conversation.*

THADDAEUS

(patiently, but just beginning to have his patience tested)

You don’t know. You weren’t there.

KEREN-HAPPUCH

60 *(bristling with eagerness; can’t wait to release what has been bottled up for such a long time)*

What’s to know? The Romans finally caught up with your heretic teacher.

I say we’re better off.

THADDAEUS

65 It wasn’t that simple.

KEREN

(almost happily)

Look, it’s over. You had your fun for awhile. Now back to the real world.

THADDAEUS

70 *(wistfully)*

He spoke of love, compassion—of a God who is a forgiving Father.

(more direct; to Keren)

For that He dies?

KEREN

75

(snapping)

He didn't fit in.

THADDAEUS

(with gentle sarcasm that does not hide the fact that he means it)

Neither do you, my dear.

80

KEREN

(patiently, as if explaining to an older child)

Thaddaeus, it's time you came down off your cloud. Time to stop roaming about the countryside with a bunch of unwashed fishermen—trailing after some modern-day prophet.

85

THADDAEUS

(not hearing her; back into his memories)

He told us many things that last night.

(working through it)

Jesus said that He and God were the same. He said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

90

KEREN

(exploding; resting her case)

There's proof! The man was living, breathing blasphemy! Oh, I wish I had been there. I wouldn't have been taken in.

95

THADDAEUS

(finally visibly angry at his wife's attitude and remarks)

Keren! It's you who blasphemes!

KEREN

Everyone in all the Roman Empire knew this Jesus was only a troublemaker. Everyone, that is, but my husband.

100

(with contempt)

You were born stupid and simple.

(gleefully)

Everyone around you knows the truth, yet you persist.

105

THADDAEUS

(firmly)

I loved Him, Keren. You won't change that. His death won't change that.

KEREN

(shaking her head)

110

Stupid and simple.

THADDAEUS

(in his own world again)

He spoke of His death. He knew it would happen.

(the light bulb is beginning to glow)

115

He spoke also of coming back to life—of finding a way out of the grave.

KEREN

(mockingly)

Oh, sure. And did He? Did this—magician raise Himself out of His tomb?

(pause; drilling into Thaddaeus)

120

Well, did He?

THADDAEUS

(innocently)

You know, we all scattered so fast, I really don't know.

KEREN

(sarcastically)

125

What a coincidence! Oh, He was a smoothie, all right.

(contemptuously)

He had you all fooled.

THADDAEUS

(firmly; as much to himself as to Keren)

130

I know He was the Son of God. I know it in my heart.

(the light bulb is glowing brighter)

Even before I admitted the truth to myself, I knew it in my heart.

(pause; turning to go)

135

I have to go back.

KEREN

(stopping him by grabbing his arms; frantically; for the first time Keren sees that she may have lost the argument)

Give it up! It was a strange faith.

140 *(heavily)*

And now it's dead.

THADDAEUS

(tenderly)

The faith will live on.

145 *(sadly)*

It's you who are dead.

(pause)

No one but the Son of God could have given health to the sick, sight to the blind—raised the dead.

150 *(still in the process of convincing himself)*

He did it for others why not for Himself.

KEREN

(pleading, with tears in her eyes; almost a whisper)

No.

155 **THADDAEUS**

(more solid now; he has resolved any lingering questions in his mind)

For three years I stood by Him. I won't let Him down now. What good was my time with Him if I fail to believe now? What good was His teaching if there's no resurrection?

160 **KEREN**

(trying a more conciliatory tack)

All right. He was a good teacher, and you served Him well. But you have a family. You must serve them now.

THADDAEUS

165 *(in his mind he has already left)*

We were only the first. There are many more to become disciples of Jesus. And He's given us the task of reaching them.

(moving toward exit)

The rest will be expecting me.

170

KEREN

(spitting her desperate anger; stopping him with this remark; darkly)

You mean he taught you to abandon your families?

THADDAEUS

(turning back; with quiet confidence in marked contrast to his wife's desperation)

175

He said our love for Him must be greater than the love we have for our family.

(pause; with just a glimmer of suppressed resentment)

He also said a man's enemies will be those who live in his own house.

KEREN

180

(with final, venomous desperation; darkly)

But He's dead.

THADDAEUS

(smiling)

No, He's alive. I expect to see Him when I get back to Jerusalem. And

185

when I do, Keren, I'll fall on my knees and beg His forgiveness for doubting—doubting even for a moment.

Thaddaeus exits with joyful determination. Keren watches him leave, then dejectedly turns and exits opposite.

190

SCENE TWO

*The Time: Later that same day**The Place: On the road toward Jerusalem*

195

*Thaddaeus enters briskly. He is traveling the road back to Jerusalem. Keren enters with agitation, searching for him. She sees Thaddaeus and calls out to him.***KEREN***(desperately)*

Thaddaeus! Wait!

200

*Thaddaeus turns slowly. His reaction is bland: not angry, but not encouraging, waiting for Keren to make her own decision. He faces her.***KEREN***(rushing up to him; trying to soften her uncharacteristic humility with a little humor)*

205

I didn't think you'd actually leave.

Thaddaeus remains passive, trying to be good-natured without dissuading Keren from any decision she has made or needs to make.

210

KEREN*(more seriously; haltingly)*

The moment you left—

(into his eyes)

I can't take the emptiness.

215

THADDAEUS*(simply, but not dispassionate)*

My leaving didn't cause that.

KEREN*(turning away; confused—and a little ashamed)*

220

It's all so confusing. All this time I've lived off of my hatred for the things of your Jesus. It's consumed me—sustained me when you'd be gone for so long.

(turning back to Thaddaeus)

225 Now it's gone—the hatred is gone—but nothing has come to replace the
void. It's bad enough, but if you leave, I won't be able to live this way.

THADDAEUS

(going to her; wanting her to believe)

Your living—or dying—doesn't depend on me. It depends on you.

Keren looks up at him with increasing respect.

230

THADDAEUS

(continuing; with reasoned compassion)

You're right. You won't be able to live—in fact, you're already dying—
unless you see Jesus as I have.

(making his point firmly)

235

He's not a fraud; He's not a magician. He's not just a good teacher. Jesus
is the Son of God—and without Him you'll not be able to live. You can
die for eternity, or you can live for eternity. It's your choice.

KEREN

(ashamed)

240

The things I said—

THADDAEUS

(reassuringly)

—are in most peoples' hearts.

KEREN

245

He won't be able to forgive me.

THADDAEUS

(smiling)

He already has.

(pause)

250

Come with me, and see for yourself.

They exit together.

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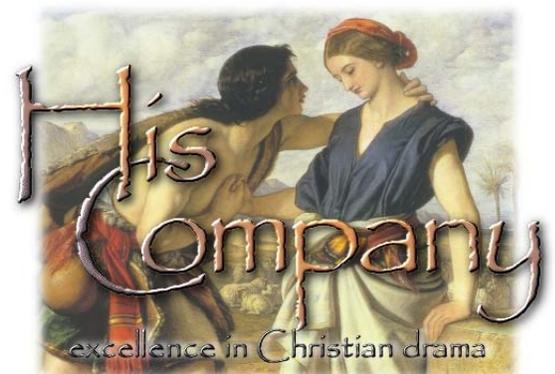
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