

ME FIRST

Jesus is standing centre-stage, with the disciples grouped around Him. Three or four are seated or standing, warming themselves by a fire; the others chatting on the other side of Jesus. Two unnamed men are in the audience and Peter is somewhere off-stage.

Simon (the Zealot) approaches Jesus.

Jesus:-

Ah, Simon

Simon:-

Hey Jesus, you gotta minute? I want a word about Matthew. I think it's disgusting. Him collecting taxes for the Roman oppressors. He's a real traitor to the Israeli National Party, and an embarrassment to all my friends!

Jesus:-

Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and what is God's unto God. (Simon goes back to the fire. Matthew comes from the other side of Jesus). Hello Matthew.

Matthew:-

I saw you talking to Simon just now, and I wanted a word about him.

Jesus:-

Yes?

Matthew:-

Well, he keeps looking at me!.....Well, it's the way he keeps looking at me. Last night, over the campfire, he was staring at me!.....Don't you see? He's plotting something! I mean, just because I'm a tax-collector doesn't mean I'm a bad person - it's just a job, innit?

Jesus:-

Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew goes back to group, sulking. Up comes James and John). Hello guys.

James:-

Jesus, just thought I'd let you know.....we were talking to Mum last night, and she thinks that me and John should sit on your right and left in Heaven. She's such a good Mum, not thinking about herself at all - just making sure that me and John are all right.

Jesus:- If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.

Man 1 :- (enters from audience)

Jesus, I want to follow you, but first let me go and bury my father!

Jesus:-

Follow me and let the dead bury their dead! (the disciples look at each other in consternation, murmuring). Anyone who loves his father or mother, or son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (More murmuring. The disciple turns and leaves. Another man approaches Jesus from the audience).

Man 2:-

Jesus! What must I do to gain eternal life?

Jesus:-

Sell all you have, and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in Heaven, then follow me. (The man turns away, sorrowful, walks slowly away. Judas approaches Jesus)

Hello Judas, what is it?

Judas:-

Talking about cash, You'll need some for the trip to Jerusalem. We have a bit of a cash-flow problem at the moment - I don't know where it all goes! Do you remember that time when you told Peter to go out and throw out his line.....

Jesus:-

Yes?

Judas:-

.....then the first fish he caught had a coin in its mouth?

Jesus:-

Yes?

Judas:-

Could you see your way to doing that again? Today?

Jesus:-

You cannot serve both God and money, Judas. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also! (In bursts Peter, and the rest of the disciples gather round, including Man 1 and Man 2)

Peter:-

Lord, I want to follow you always.

Jesus:-

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

Peter:-

Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!

Jesus:-

Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.

Peter:-

No! Never! I couldn't! Could I? (turns away)

Philip:-

Show us the Father and that will be enough.

Thomas:-

I doubt that!

(Now follows a scene of utter chaos, everyone clamouring for attention, saying their lines all at the same time repeatedly ie:-)

Shall we call down fire from Heaven on the Samaritans?

Who is the greatest?

Let me go and bury my father.

When will you restore the kingdom to Israel?

I doubt that.

I think it's disgusting!

I want the right-hand side.

Me, me, me!

Listen to me!

Just one more fish?

Me first!

I want to follow you.

About Simon.

You gotta minute?

Me first! Me first!

(After a couple of minutes of noisy attention-seeking, it dies down and Jesus is left looking at his disciples sadly)

Jesus:-

A new command I give you - love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By THIS shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

(Exeunt, one by one, thoughtfully. Jesus is last to leave)