

# A Jesus We Can Believe In

## *A Palm Sunday Skit*

### **Luke 19**

**Child:** *(Sitting down, with his head in his hands, deep in thought).*

**Peter:** *(Walks up, sits down next to Child)* Mind if I have a seat?

**Child:** Sure, go ahead. Um... do I know you?

**Peter:** No, not really, but your parents have probably told you about me.

**Child:** Oh yeah? What's your name?

**Peter:** Peter.

**Child:** Hmm, Peter... well that doesn't narrow it down... Peter who? Janzen? Friesen? Klassen?

**Peter:** *(Nodding no....)* Mm-mm, mm-mm, nope.

**Child:** Wiebe? Penner? Epp? Enns? Wiens?

**Peter:** Nope. Nope. Uh-uh. Nope. Just, Peter.

**Child:** That's weird. Sorry, my manners – that's curious. *(Pause.)* So, you know my parents?

**Peter:** Kind of. They've known me for years. Your grandparents, they knew me too. They knew me really well.

**Child:** Wow – you'd think I'd recognize you...

**Peter:** Your great-grandparents also knew me.

*(Child looks at Peter funny)*

**Peter:** (*mumbling*) And their parents, and their parents... they and their friends liked to name their kids after me.

(*Child keeps looking at Peter funny*)

**Peter:** So, what's on your mind? You seem kind of deep in thought?

**Child:** Well, it's kind of complicated...

**Peter:** Hmm... you look to be about 12 years old. Does this have something to do with your favorite hockey team?

**Child:** No, not at the moment, it's not.

**Peter:** Really?

**Child:** Really.

**Peter:** School?

**Child:** Once again, great guess, but no.

**Peter:** Oh. (*Sits quietly, pondering*)

**Child:** Can I be honest with you?

**Peter:** Hey, I'm Peter! If you can't be honest and real with me, then who can you be real with?

**Child:** I'm not sure what that means, but OK. But please don't tell my parents, alright?

**Peter:** Deal, Kid.

**Child:** It's weird. I go to church every Sunday, and I love going to junior youth group, and I'm even taking baptism classes, but somehow this whole Christian thing doesn't make any sense to me.

**Peter:** Oh yeah, I know what you mean.

**Child:** No, I don't think so. I mean, if you're like my parents and grand-parents, they've believed in God and church, like forever. I don't think you know what this is like. I mean, it's just different.

**Peter:** OK... It's different being a Christian kid now?

**Child:** Yeah. It just is. I mean, they've always believed, and it's not that I haven't. But it feels like everything is different nowadays.

**Peter:** So it might be easier to believe if things were different? Like they were when your parents or grandparents were younger?

**Child:** Kind of... I don't know... You know what would make it easier to follow Jesus?

**Peter:** What?

**Child:** If I could have seen him for real! If I like could have been there! Then believing him would have been no problem! I mean, how could you not follow Jesus if you saw him for yourself? Aw, but obviously that's not going to happen. So there's no point even thinking about that.

**Peter:** Yeah, but I'm not sure you're right about that.

**Child:** What do you mean?

**Peter:** I'm not sure that if you had been there that it would make it easier to believe.

**Child:** Seriously? How can you say that? I mean, Jesus would be right in front of you! How incredible would that be?

**Peter:** Well, it was pretty incredible, that's for sure.

**Child:** Yeah, I mean, if you could have been there from the very start...

**Peter:** Yup.

**Child:** Seeing the crowds, listening to him speak...

**Peter:** Mm, hmm.

**Child:** And watching his miracles! That would have been incredible!!

**Peter:** Believe me, it was.

**Child:** *(Looks at Peter oddly again)*

**Peter:** Yup. We heard him speak for three years. It was pretty remarkable. Not that we ever really knew what he was talking about. But it sure was amazing.

**Child:** *(Still staring at Peter. Pause.)* So, do they know that you're out? Or do you have a weekend pass?

**Peter:** But the weird thing is, in spite of being there the whole time, even when we did believe that he was the Messiah, most of the time we still didn't get what that really meant.

**Child:** OK. I'm going to play along with this... so you're saying that you were there, and even though you heard him, and talked to him, and saw all his miracles, and heard the beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount and all that, you still weren't sure if you believed? Am I getting that right?

**Peter:** Yup.

**Child:** So... what you're saying is... that you're that Peter.

**Peter:** That's right.

**Child:** O... K....

**Peter:** Look, you were right, being with him for three years was really incredible, but it didn't make it any easier to understand or believe him. And trust me, when he started speaking about his death and resurrection, then things got really weird – I mean, we were going to Jerusalem where he knew that he was going to be killed. Why would you go there when you knew that was going to happen to you?

**Child:** Well, why did he do that? That just doesn't make any sense, does it?

**Mary:** *(Walks up and sits down beside Child on the other side from Peter.)* Trust me son, we didn't understand him either.

**Child:** *(Very startled)* Wow! And who are you??

**Peter:** Oh, that's Mary. She's from Magdala. She's got quite a story, let me tell you!

**Child:** You two know each other? (*Sarcastically*) Well, this isn't really weird. So, I take it that you were with Jesus as well?

**Mary:** Was I?!! You bet I was! I mean, he healed me! Threw seven demons out of me! Oh boy was that an incredible day! And then he let me be one of his disciples after that – I mean can you believe it? Me? A woman? Be a disciple? That had never happened before! And I mean never! I was with him as much as I could be after that.

**Child:** OK, I'll just keep playing along I guess. So what was that like? Being with Jesus and all, I mean.

**Mary:** Unbelievable, really. Indescribable. We just went with him wherever he went. We would stay with him in other people's homes. We saw him heal so many people. But the best part was listening to him speak, especially when he described to us what God was like – it was all so different from what the rabbis and Pharisees said, or what you would hear in the synagogue. But then when he started speaking about his own death... well, that just didn't make any sense to us.

**Thomas:** (*Walking in behind Child*) All the people were just crazy about Jesus. He was kind of what you people might call a rock star.

**Child:** (*Startled*) Whoa!! And there's another one!

**Thomas:** That last trip to Jerusalem was something else. Each time we reached a town and people heard that Jesus was with us, they came out to see him. Some just walked with us for a while, but others joined us for the whole trip. And of course, every time he did another miracle, the word spread and more people came out to meet him.

**Mary:** And then there was the way we entered Jerusalem that just took things to a completely different level. None of us had ever seen anything like that before.

**Peter:** I mean sure, we had heard about it – stories about how King David or Judas Maccabeus had entered Jerusalem like that, but no one, and I mean no one, expected Jesus to pull something like that off. I mean, he was a prophet and the messiah, but he wasn't a king!

**Child:** Uhm, sorry, but you're kind of losing me here.

**Thomas:** Oh, well, we were all worried about how we were going to get Jesus into Jerusalem nice and quietly and Jesus himself decided to turn his arrival into a big parade.

**Child:** You're kidding me.

**Thomas:** Not even a little bit. He told two of us to go and get him a donkey so that he could ride it into the city. Of course, some of us put our cloaks on the donkey, but after that things kind of got out of hand.

**Mary:** People started waving palm branches, others took their cloaks and put them down on the road in front of the donkey. And everyone started singing.

**All (except Child):** Hosanna!! Hosanna!! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!!!

*(Children and Leaders enter in a palm parade.)*

**Child:** I can see how that would attract a little bit of attention.

**Peter:** Yeah, and like I said, not all of it was good, either. The first ones to speak up were the Pharisees. They did not like it at all. They told Jesus to tell the crowds to be quiet.

**Child:** And what did he say?

**Mary:** He told them that if the crowds stopped singing, then the rocks would start!

**Peter:** And then, as if that wasn't all enough attention for one day, he really let them have it over at the temple: turning over tables, whipping the money-changers, calling them all thieves.

**Child:** Crazy...

**Peter:** And that wasn't the weirdest part. After that he started crying. And I mean, just sobbing.

**Child:** Really? Why was that?

**Mary:** Well, at the time we didn't really understand it. He just kept crying out for Jerusalem. Eventually we figured out that he was prophesying its destruction. And he kept saying, "If only you knew what would bring you peace?"

**Child:** “If only you knew what would bring you peace???” What’s that supposed to mean?

**Thomas:** Yeah, at the time we weren’t so sure either, but afterwards, after he came to see us again, it all came together.

**Mary:** So often when Jesus healed people, he would also forgive them. And there were times that he would tell us that he had come to call sinners to repentance.

**Peter:** The very last thing he told us before he was lifted up to heaven was to preach “the repentance and forgiveness of sins.”

**Child:** So... Jesus was telling Jerusalem that the way to have peace was to... repent? Doesn’t repent mean to say that you are sorry? What did Jerusalem have to say sorry for?

**Mary:** Well yes, you’re right, it does mean to say “you’re sorry”, but more importantly it means to turn towards Jesus, and away from ourselves.

**Child:** So Jerusalem would have had peace if they had turned towards Jesus and followed him? I don’t remember anyone else ever talking about peace in that way.

**Peter:** Yes, well, Jesus was always coming at things in unexpected but truthful ways. Forty years after he was crucified his prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction came true.

**Thomas:** They tried to make peace by taking it, and that didn’t work out at all.

**Child:** And so Jesus cried for them because he knew what was coming? That they were going to rain down destruction on themselves instead of choosing his peace?

**Thomas:** Yes. Jesus cried for them, and he cried for us. He cries for all of us who want peace but falsely take it from others so that we might have it for ourselves.

**Mary:** Jesus cries for all of us who want peace but choose to live with resentment, anger, bitterness, conflict and rivalry.

**Thomas:** Jesus tells us that repentance and forgiveness are the road to peace.

**Peter:** Peace is built together with the spirit of kindness, generosity and mercy.

**Child:** Wow, I like that. You know, it is hard to understand, but I gotta say that I think I could believe in a Jesus like that.

Herb Sawatzky (Canada), 2016. Bethany Mennonite Church  
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