

I AM VERY PLEASED WITH HIM

Ted Swartz, with Jeff Raught
and Laurelville Worship and Music participants 2005

Characters: Pianist/Singer Bruce, John, Jesus, 8 disciples, Voice of God

Scripture text: Matt 3: 1-17

Props: papers, water container for baptism

Length: 10 minutes

Setting: In a night club / or in an exterior if you don't use the convention of the club

(Scene opens with music from pianist/singer. This sketch could be done without the piano player, but he adds color throughout, as well as a musical bed for the baptism at the end.)

BRUCE: Good evening folks, and welcome to Club Jordan *(With emphasis on the second syllable.)* I'm your host Bruce Reed. This is a nice place, but let me tell you, it's no Garden of Eden. Incidentally, I played a gig there once ... and got kicked out. Little trouble with the dress code. Apparently I was overdressed. But that's another story. I've been playing at the Club Jordan since the first of the year, that's 40 days and 40 nights for those of you who are counting.

Hey, can I have a little mood lighting? Can we dimly burn the wicks? Thank you ... thank you very much. Club Jordan, where the men are strong and the women are vigorous.

(JOHN THE BAPTIST and SIX DISCIPLES enter. They are in discussion — DISCIPLES trying to persuade JOHN to temper his language.)

BRUCE: Welcome, John. John the Baptist everybody. That's right, the man works in water. John, when you're looking for a subtle prophet. John, I've been working on a couple a tunes. Tell me what you think...

(Sings.)
I'm looking for honey and locusts
Locusts and honey for me.
Out in the desert without a McDonald's
Locusts and honey for me.

BRUCE: No? I got another.

JOHN: I'm sure you do.

BRUCE: Honey, oh locust, locust.
You are my grasshopper
And you got me wanting you.

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JOHN: Tell you what —why don't you keep—

BRUCE: Working on it. Will do —Honey, oh locust, locust... *(Fade.)*

DISCIPLE 3: John, all I'm saying is the use of language is important. You just can't rave and holler.

JOHN: I'm just speaking the truth.

DISCIPLE 4: But you need variety, poetry, imaginative thinking. You have to sustain their attention.

JOHN: What?

DISCIPLE 3: Show us what you have for the next speech.

JOHN: *(Shows the page.)* All right.

DISCIPLE 3: *(After reading briefly)* Now, see here ... "Listen up, idiots."

JOHN: They are.

DISCIPLE 4: Okay, but we can do better.

DISCIPLE 6: What we need is a metaphor.

DISCIPLE 7: A metaphor.

DISCIPLE 6: Sure. *(Tries it out.)* these people are like...

JOHN: I'd really rather just tell it straight forward.

DISCIPLE 6: *(Waves him off, looking for help from the others.)* ... are like...

DISCIPLE 8: Hyenas.

JOHN: I beg your pardon?

DISCIPLE 8: Hyenas. "Listen up, Hyenas."

DISCIPLE 4: Let's push that out.

DISCIPLE 3: Way out.

JOHN: Look...

DISCIPLE 7: Snakes!

DISCIPLE 4: Better.

DISCIPLE 5: But what kind of snakes?

DISCIPLE 7: Why does that matter?

DISCIPLE 5: Specific images.

JOHN: It doesn't...

DISCIPLE 6: Asps! ... asps are nasty snakes.

DISCIPLE 3: You just like to say asps.

DISCIPLE 5: Vipers.

ALL DISCIPLES: Yes. Oh yes.

JOHN: So I've got "You vipers?"

DISCIPLE 5: No, not just you—

DISCIPLE 4: A bunch!

JOHN: You bunch of vipers?

DISCIPLE 6: Group.

DISCIPLE 7: Herd.

DISCIPLE 8: A gaggle.

DISCIPLE 5: That's geese.

DISCIPLE 4: Really, I thought it was ducks.

DISCIPLE 7: No.

DISCIPLE 5: It's geese and you can't mix metaphors across special lines.

JOHN: You gaggle of vipers.

DISCIPLE 5: A brood.

ALL: Ah, yes.

JOHN: So, it's you brood of vipers.

DISCIPLE 5: Write that down.

(They start back into the script work.)

(DISCIPLES 1 and 2 enter, down stage—go to piano area.)

DISCIPLE 1: Hey listen to this—Here is my servant, whom I uphold. My chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him: he will bring forth justice to the nations.

DISCIPLE 2: And?

DISCIPLE 1: Don't you see? It's John.

DISCIPLE 2: What are you reading?
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DISCIPLE 1: Isaiah 42.

DISCIPLE 2: And you think it's about John?

DISCIPLE 1: Yea!

DISCIPLE 2: Let me see that ... *(Reads quickly under his breath—until he reaches the end.)*
"He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street. A
bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not
quench" ... oh yea, that's John.

DISCIPLE 1: Well, I didn't read that part. About the "not hollering."

DISCIPLE 2: Obviously ... but listen to this; "He will faithfully bring forth justice. He
will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the
earth; and the coastlines wait for his teachings."

DISCIPLE 1: Now that's John. *(JOHN has been talking to a couple of others at the table.)*
John!

JOHN: Yea?

DISCIPLE 1: Doesn't this sound familiar? "I am the Lord. I have called you in
righteousness. I have taken you by the hand and kept you..."

(JOHN tries to interrupt.)

JOHN: Yes, it sounds familiar, but...

DISCIPLE 1: "I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nation, to
open the eyes that are blind."

(JOHN now joins him.)

JOHN AND DISCIPLE 1: "To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison
those who sit in darkness."

DISCIPLE 1: You know it?

JOHN: Of course.

DISCIPLE 1: This could be you.

JOHN: You haven't been listening, have you?

DISCIPLE 2: Okay if not you. Who?

(JESUS enters.)

JESUS: Hello John.

JOHN: Jesus.

(Does a little involuntary jump.)

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JESUS: Are you still doing that?

JOHN: What?

JESUS: That little jump.

JOHN: What jump?

JESUS: You don't have to keep doing that.

JOHN: I didn't do anything.

JESUS: Okay.

JOHN: How are you?

JESUS: Doing well. Mother says hello. Says you never write.

JOHN: To anyone.

JESUS: You've also missed four straight family reunions.

JOHN: Never anything there I can eat. You still working in wood?

JESUS: I'm in the middle of a career change.

JOHN: You're looking well.

JESUS: Thanks, you're looking ... like you do.

JOHN: Right. *(Turns to DISCIPLES; presents JESUS.)* "He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth."

DISCIPLE 2: Him? This is about him?

DISCIPLE 5: You're kidding.

DISCIPLE 2: Come on.

DISCIPLE 5: That's ridiculous! He's an amateur.

ALL DISCIPLES : *(Need lots of protesting here.)*

JOHN: You idiots!

(Pause.)

DISCIPLE 4: I thought we weren't going to use that.

DISIPLE 1: Hush!

JOHN: So, what brings you to the Jordan?

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BRUCE: It's the ... Jordan. *(A piano flourish, they all look at him.)* I'm here every Thursday, try the pickled herring.

(Piano trails off.)

JOHN: So?

JESUS: I'm here for the baptism.

JOHN: There's no one here yet. *(JESUS waits a beat and then holds out his arms.)*
You?

JESUS: Me.

JOHN: No.

JESUS: Yes.

JOHN: No, I won't do it.

JESUS: Yes, you will.

JOHN: You should be the one baptizing me.

JESUS: John.

(Pause.)

GOD: "I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nation, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon." *(JOHN joins the voice.)* "From the prison those who sit in darkness."

JESUS: *(Gently.)* John. It's time.

(JESUS moves to be baptized, the sprinkle first/cup/and bucket.)

GOD: This is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

(They stand, embrace. Move off. The others wait a beat and then go in a rush.)

BRUCE: See the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. I will tell you of them—I will tell you of them...

(Finish out with a musical piece.)

THE END

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***** SCRIPT PREVIEW *****

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SCRIPT
PREVIEW

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