

Devotional—Tour Week 9

"The Finale"

Jesus:

Oh, God, I'm bleeding!

Oh, God, I'm bleeding!

Ensemble:

Oh, God, you're bleeding.

Jesus:

Oh, God, I'm dying.

Ensemble:

Oh, God, you're dying!

Jesus:

Oh, God, I'm dying.

Oh, God, I'm dead!

Ensemble:

Oh, God, you're dead!

Oh, God, you're dead!

Oh, God, you're dead!

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God.

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Long live God

Prepare Ye

The Way of the Lord,

Prepare Ye

The Way of the Lord,

Prepare Ye

The Way of the Lord,

Prepare Ye

The Way of the Lord,

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord,

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord.

Matthew 27:45-54 (NIV)

The Death of Jesus

45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. **46** About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. **49** The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. **52** The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53** They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:33-39 (NIV)

The Death of Jesus

33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. **34** And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. **39** And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Luke 23:44-49 (NIV)

Jesus' Death

44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, **45** for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" When he had said this, he breathed his last.

47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." **48** When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. **49** But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

John 19:28-30 (NIV)

The Death of Jesus

28 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "**I am thirsty.**" **29** A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. **30** When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Corinthians 15:1-28 (The Message)

Resurrection

1-2 Friends, let me go over the Message with you one final time— this Message that I proclaimed and that you made your own; this Message on which you took your stand and by which your life has been saved. (**I'm assuming, now, that your belief was the real thing and not a passing fancy, that you're in this for good and holding fast.**)

3-9 The first thing I did was place before you what was placed so emphatically before me: that **the Messiah died for our sins**, exactly as Scripture tells it; that he was buried; that he was raised from death on the third day, again exactly as Scripture says; that he presented himself alive to Peter, then to his closest followers, and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time, most of them still around (although a few have since died); that he then spent time with James and the rest of those he commissioned to represent him; and that he finally presented himself alive to me. It was fitting that I bring up the rear. **I don't deserve to be included in that inner circle, as you well know, having spent all those early years trying my best to stamp God's church right out of existence.**

10-11 But because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. **And I'm not about to let his grace go to waste.** Haven't I worked hard trying to do more than any of the others? Even then, my work didn't amount to all that much. It was God giving me the work to do, God giving me the energy to do it. So whether you heard it from me or from those others, it's all the same: We spoke God's truth and you entrusted your lives.

12-15 Now, let me ask you something profound yet troubling. If you became believers because you trusted the proclamation that Christ is alive, risen from the dead, how can you let people say that there is no such thing as a resurrection? If there's no resurrection, there's no living Christ. And face it—**if there's no resurrection for Christ, everything we've told you is smoke and mirrors, and everything you've staked your life on is smoke and mirrors.** Not only that, but we would be guilty of telling a string of barefaced lies about God, all these affidavits we passed on to you verifying that God raised up Christ—sheer fabrications, if there's no resurrection.

16-20 If corpses can't be raised, then Christ wasn't, because he was indeed dead. And **if Christ weren't raised, then all you're doing is wandering about in the dark**, as lost as ever. It's even worse for those who died hoping in Christ and resurrection, because they're already in their graves. If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot. But the truth is that Christ has been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.

21-28 There is a nice symmetry in this: Death initially came by a man, and resurrection from death came by a man. Everybody dies in Adam; everybody comes alive in Christ. But we have to wait our turn: Christ is first, then those with him at his Coming, the grand consummation when, after crushing the opposition, he hands over his kingdom to God the Father. He won't let up until the last enemy is down—and the very last enemy is death! As the psalmist said, "He laid them low, one and all; he walked all over them." When Scripture says that "he walked all over them," it's obvious that he couldn't at the same time be walked on. When everything and everyone is finally under God's rule, the Son will step down, taking his place with everyone else, **showing that God's rule is absolutely comprehensive—a perfect ending!**

Time for personal reflection (Tour Week 9):

In 1 Corinthians 1:1, Paul says, “Let me go over the Message with you one final time...” Apparently, he’s repeated this message before. In *Godspell*, two of the songs are reprised—“Learn Your Lessons Well” and “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord.” What is the significance of repeating either of these songs at the point where they are reprised in the show? Why did Paul feel it was important to repeat his message again?

In 1 Corinthians 13:3-9, Paul states that “The Message” is that Jesus died, Jesus was buried, and that on the third day, Jesus presented himself ALIVE! How does this unfold in our production of *Godspell*? Are our actions presenting this clearly to the audience? Why is this message so important?

As a member of the *Godspell* ensemble, how do I relate to Paul as he is writing this letter? What similarities are there in what he is saying to his audience and what I said to our audiences this summer?

Through the finale and curtain call, what actions have the *Godspell* ensemble taken to be sure that we clearly presented the fact that “God's rule is absolutely comprehensive—a perfect ending!”?

Time for personal reflection...

As we travel through the last week of this tour, what lessons have I learned about God, others, and myself....