



Written by
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“The Compassion of God” Abraham & Jonah: Two Sides of the Same Story

Scripture: Genesis 18: 20-33, Jonah 4

Dramatic Category: Skermion (*The pastor plays a narrative role.*)

Topic: The compassion of God.

Performance time: 15 minutes

Number of Players: 4 (*3 men, plus the pastor*)

Objective:

This “skermion” presents two aspects of God’s compassion: to save the righteous from judgment and to bring salvation to the lost.

Synopsis:

This “skermion” begins with a conversation between Abraham and God in which Abraham pleads with God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah from judgment for the sake of the righteous. God shows His desire to save the righteous in His response to Abraham. The point is made by the Pastor that God demands punishment for the wicked, but He protects the righteous. The Pastor transitions from Abraham and God to Jonah and God. He then sets the stage for the story of Jonah in which God shows his compassion for the lost by exhorting Jonah to preach a message of repentance to the Ninevites. In the case of Abraham, God shows compassion for the righteous; in the case of Jonah, God pleads with man to show compassion.

Cast: Jonah, Abraham, God, the pastor

Costume Notes:

Dress God in a tan shirt, khaki pants, tan shoes and a tweed sport coat. Dress Jonah and Abraham in black slacks and black turtlenecks. (*This gives more of a suggested character effect and it works!*)

LIGHT UP ON LEFT SIDE OF LADDER

Pastor: *(Stepping into the light at stage left where Abraham will step.)*

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached Him and said: *(The pastor steps away, back into the darkness.)*

Abe: *(stepping into the stage left light pool at the base of the rung-side of the ladder. He looks up to God who has now come all the way down the ladder and faces Abraham.)*

Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if here are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing...to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be in from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

God: If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake. *(God begins to ascend the ladder again.)*

LIGHT COMES ON AT THE TOP OF THE LADDER

Abe: *(extending his hand to the Lord; God stops his climb and looks at Abraham.)*

Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?

God: If I find forty-five there, I will not destroy it.
(God begins to climb up the ladder again.)

Abe: What if only forty are found there?

God: *(God stops, turns from his climb and answers.)*
For the sake of forty, I will not do it.
(God resumes his climb up the ladder.)

Abe: May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?

God: *(Again, God stops his climb and faces Abraham.)*
I will not do it if I find thirty there.
(God takes another step up the ladder.)

Abe: Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?

God: *(God stops his climb again.)*
For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it .
(God does not continue his climb. He stares at Abraham.)

Abe: May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more.
What if only ten can be found there?

God: For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.
(God reaches the top of the ladder.)

(God and Abraham Freeze during the Pastor's commentary. The Pastor refers to Abraham and God by pointing at them, putting his hand on Abraham's shoulder, or just walking around Abraham as he remains frozen and does not respond to the pastor.)

Pastor: *Comment on God's compassion that shows us that He is a judge who will spare the righteous.*

LIGHTS OFF ON ABRAHAM AND GOD

LIGHTS UP ON JONAH AND GOD

Pastor: *(The pastor steps into the light pool at stage right, where we see Jonah standing defiantly, with his arms folded, facing the audience with his back to God. The Pastor introduces Jonah and goes on to segue into another look at the compassion of God when He ordered Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance to the people so they might turn from their evil ways and be saved. The Pastor steps aside and into the darkness.*

God: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.

(Jonah looks up at God defiantly; God looks down at Jonah. Both men maintain this frozen pose as the Pastor steps back into the stage right light and talks about them.)

Pastor: *Recap the story of Jonah's decision to flee to Tarshish, the episode with the whale, the eventual obedience to the Lord in preaching to Nineveh, then finish by setting up this conversation in chapter 4 of Jonah. The Pastor steps aside into the darkness.*

Jonah: Oh Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, and a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live. *(Jonah sits down, leaning against the ladder as though it were the shelter he had built.)*

God: Have you any right to be angry?

(God leans down to get a view of Jonah, who is pouting.)

Pastor: *Step back into the light and point to Jonah and God during this transition. They remain frozen as the Pastor speaks. Recap the story of God's sending a vine to comfort Jonah, and Jonah's anger. Step out of the light for the closing.*

Jonah: It would be better for me to die than to live.

God: Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?

Jonah: I do; I am angry enough to die.

God: You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?

Pastor: *Option #1: God & Jonah Freeze as the Pastor ends the sermon.
Option #2: Lights off, cast leaves, Pastor steps into his normal spot on stage for the sermon and continues to expound on the compassion of God.*