

Jesus Restores God's Image in a Dying Criminal

About 5 minutes, from Luke 23

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Penitent felon

Godless felon

Voice (of Jesus)

Prompter Shout a brief line, and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Penitent felon Well, this is the end! We can't escape now.
We're on our way to a horrible death!

Prompter & Echoes Crucifixion!

Godless felon Look at this sadistic crowd! I'd like to wring their necks!
See them gloat and enjoy this painful parade,
watching us pack these crosses out to that hill called Golgotha;
they want to see us suffer in agony!

Penitent felon Not all of them. Those women are weeping.
They're following that other guy carrying his cross.
Listen to what he's saying to them.

Voice Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me.
Weep for yourselves and for your children.
The days are coming when they will say,
"Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore,
and the breasts that never nursed."

Penitent felon Now he is staggering under His cross.
His back is bleeding, his face, too. No wonder he is so weak!

Godless felon Everyone is watching him. He must be someone important.
He must have tried to assassinate King Herod,
the way they treat him.

Penitent felon Look, another man is now carrying his cross.

Godless felon Those women speak with a Galilean accent.
Listen to them weep and wail over that man!

Penitent felon He doesn't curse his executioners as we do. Strange!

Godless felon Well, we've arrived. Oh, no!
That soldier has huge iron spikes! Please, no!

Prompter & Echoes Crucifixion!

Penitent felon No, not that heavy sledgehammer!

Prompter & Echoes Thud! Thud!

Godless felon No! Oh, the pain! No!

Prompter & Echoes They are hanging on the crosses.

Godless felon How can that man hanging between us keep silent
in all his agony?

Penitent felon He does not look like a criminal.
We do. Years of violence and hate have lined our faces.
We rage with fury and curse, but he says nothing!

Godless felon You there, Jesus,
those priests say you claimed to be the Messiah.
They challenge you to come down from the cross
and save yourself. So do it, and save us, too!

Penitent felon I cannot stand this pain!
How does this man take it without complaining?
Jesus! How can you resist cursing those who torture you?
Who are you?

Voice Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

Prompter & Echoes Forgive them!

Godless felon Hey, are you crazy?
You ask God to forgive these men who torture us!
I heard about you; you deceive folks to think you do miracles.
If so, then, save yourself and us!

Penitent felon He called God His Father. Imagine that!
He begs God to forgive his executioners and accusers.
In his pain, he tells one of his followers to care for his mother.
He absorbs so much abuse, yet he only cares for others!
Somehow — I feel it in my soul — I think he cares for us, too.

Godless felon Nonsense!

Penitent felon I have never known anyone so loving, so godly.

Godless felon You there. They call you King! And Messiah. So free us!
Ha! A fine Messiah you are! You cannot even save yourself!

Penitent felon Hey! How can you speak to this good man that way?
Don't you fear God, since you're under the same condemnation?
You and I are suffering justly, getting what we deserve for our
crimes; but this man has done nothing wrong. Oh, the pain!

Prompter & Echoes Anguish!

Godless felon *(Groan loudly.)*
His followers deserted him, the crowd despises him,
the soldiers mock him, and the rulers hate him!
He must be an extremely bad and dangerous criminal.

Penitent felon Don't say that! Am I the only one who sees that he's is godly?
No, those women weep for him, and a few men are grieving.
Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom!

Voice I assure you; today you shall surely be with me in paradise.

Godless felon The sky's growing completely dark but it is not night!
The earth is shaking! The women are screaming!
What has happened?

Prompter & Echoes He has redeemed us all!!