

The True Followers

A staged reading or play based on Matthew 7: 13--28

Common Lectionary June 1, 2008: Matthew 7: 21--29

By Dorian Scott Cole

Jesus speaks a very practical, yet very authoritative message, to “crowds.” These sayings were probably a summary of his many sayings to crowds of Jews early in his ministry.

The theme of this passage is that good things don't come from rotten things, but only from good things. The true followers of Jesus do good things. Unfortunately some try to mimic the true followers with fine speeches and actions, but they are not following Jesus' ways. They are like the illusions of magic shows that fool people. Jesus' words don't affect their behavior, and he doesn't know them.

Key concepts:

1. The transforming power of Christ's message.
2. Good things come from those who follow Jesus.
3. Hot air and illusions come from those who only mimic Jesus.

As a staged reading this is presented with minimal props, minimal action, and lines may be read aloud. As a short play, minimal props are required.

This play includes a children's sermon.

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Props for *The True Followers*

Red apples.

Cast

Drufus

Cleo

Jerry

Bob (the tree)

Setting

A path in a contemporary setting, with characters of any age.

Time: Present day, timeless.

Blocking

Characters enter from stage right or left to meet with characters on the stage. All action takes place center stage.

Costumes

Today's casual contemporary attire - no other costumes are necessary.

Music

Playing time

Approximately 3 minutes.

Children's Sermon

Props: Top hat, magic wand, crackers wrapped in chocolate wrappers, chocolate pieces.

How many of you like candy?

What kind do you like? Hard candy? Candy bars? Cinnamon candy that is hot? Do you like it really hot? Chocolate? I love chocolate covered cherries. I could eat those all day.

How many of you would like to have your very own candy factory?

I have one. Would you like to see it?

(PULLS OUT A TOP HAT AND MAGIC WAND.)

I'll show you how it works.

(WAVES THE WAND OVER THE HAT WHILE SAYING:)

Abacadabra, alacazam. Make me candy as fast as you can.

Want a piece?

(LETS EACH CHILD PULL A PIECE FROM THE HAT. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE CHOCOLATE IN THEM, BUT EACH ONLY HAS A CRACKER WRAPPED IN IT.)

Go ahead and eat it.

Was that good chocolate?

Why not?

Do you still want my chocolate factory?

(MOST PROBABLY ANSWER NO.)

Why not?

(IT DOESN'T MAKE CHOCOLATE.)

Jesus said that the people who follow him do good things, so we know them by what they do. People who don't follow him, just play nasty tricks on other people. Are those people kind of like a bad candy machine?

How will people know that we follow Jesus? Is it because we do good things for others?

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ACT 1 (of 1)

DRUFUS IS STANDING UNDER A TREE (BOB). BOB'S BRANCHES (ARMS) ARE OUTSTRETCHED AND FRUIT (RED APPLES) IS DROOPING FROM HIS HANDS.

CLEO WALKS TOWARD THEM AS IF TO PASS.

DRUFUS

(Carnival barker like)

Magic seeds for sale. Stop here and get your magic seeds. These seeds grow the most tasty fruit ever grown. You can't resist them. You will try and fail.

CLEO IGNORES HIM.

DRUFUS

This wonderful tree was imported from Paradise Island. This magic fruit is the choice of kings. Step right up and taste it.

CLEO CAUTIOUSLY WALKS OVER TO THE FRUIT, PICKS ONE UP AND TASTES IT.

CLEO

(Makes a face.)

It tastes like an unripe apple.

DRUFUS

Very much like an unripe apple! But it is a very delicious apple when it gets ripe. The longer it ripens, the better it tastes. That's the magic of it.

CLEO

It's ruby red. How would I know if the fruit was ripe or not? Maybe it never tastes any better.

DRUFUS

Would I be selling you fruit that wasn't ripe? Do you know I had to risk my life to get this tree off Paradise Island? Have you ever tried to walk away with a tree? This tree and this fruit is only supposed to be for world leaders. If everyone has one, then just anyone will have one.

CLEO

So?

DRUFUS

The world leaders don't want you to have one. It's special! It's just for world leaders.

CLEO

The seeds grow a tree like this one, huh?

CLEO REACHES UP TO THE TREE TO GRAB AN APPLE FROM IT,
BUT DRUFUS TRIES TO STOP HIM.

DRUFUS

Hey stop! You can't have any of those. They're -

CLEO GRABS THE APPLE AND BITES INTO IT.

DRUFUS

not ripe!

CLEO MAKES A TERRIBLE FACE AS HE EATS.

CLEO

This is awful.

DRUFUS

I told you they weren't ripe.

CLEO

But they look ripe! They're ruby red.

DRUFUS

I told you they were special.

CLEO

I don't want anything that tastes like this.

DRUFUS

Do you know why the world leaders really don't want you to have this? I'm not supposed to tell this. If you tell anyone, then they will know that I'm telling the secret. They will come after me.

CLEO

Oh, brother.

DRUFUS

This is so true. I swear it. Cross my heart. I sneaked into a secret meeting of world leaders on Paradise Island and listened.

CLEO

Uh, huh.

DRUFUS

If you eat one of these every day, it will bring you good health. You will live a long and healthy life. This is the original Tree of Life, from the Garden of Eden. A few survived on Paradise Island.

CLEO ROLLS HIS EYES AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

DRUFUS

All the world leaders know about it, but they don't want everyone living so long. Do you realize what would happen if everyone lived to ... say 200? The economy would fold. They can't let that happen. But I'm giving it to everyone.

CLEO

Giving? You're going to *sell* me the seeds for the Tree of Life?

DRUFUS

How else are you going to get the tree? I can't sell you this tree. This is where I get my seeds.

ANOTHER TRAVELER, **JERRY**, WALKS UP.

JERRY

What are you selling this week, Drufus? Miracle out of season oranges again?

DRUFUS

Hey those really were oranges!

JERRY

This looks like the same tree?

DRUFUS

This tree produces multiple fruit.

(To Cleo)

I wasn't going to tell you about that yet. It's another secret.

JERRY

The grocery store also produces multiple fruit! And they just happened to have out of season oranges imported from Honduras last week. They looked just like yours.

DRUFUS

Hey, listen! This Tree of Life was sent from God! It's a real miracle that we even found it!

JERRY

So how much of this fruit are you giving to the poor?

DRUFUS

I can barely afford to feed myself.

JERRY

I would expect a miracle worker like you, with access to such a wonderful tree, to be doing a lot for the world.

DRUFUS

They can find their own tree.

TREE

(Folds his arms in front of him.)

Drufus, you lost this one. Give it up.

DRUFUS

Look, look! The tree talks. It's a miracle. Buy some seeds.

THE TREE WALKS AWAY IN DISGUST.

CLEO

You know what, you're words are just a deceptive illusions. There is nothing good in you. You just got your just reward - nothing.

JERRY

You're a liar, a cheat, and a thief! You talk about miracles, but you don't know God, and he doesn't know you. Even we can see that.

AS CLEO AND JERRY WALK AWAY, DRUFUS SAYS TO HIMSELF:

DRUFUS

I wonder if I can fool St. Peter at the gates of Heaven?

Scriptures quoted (NIV)

Matthew 7:13-29 (New International Version)

New International Version (NIV)

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The Narrow and Wide Gates

[13] "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. [14] But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

[15] "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. [16] By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [17] Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. [19] Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [20] Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

[21] "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' [23] Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The Wise and Foolish Builders

[24] "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. [26] But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. [27] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

[28] When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, [29] because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Props for True Followers

Red Apples. (Or use yellow ones and let Drufus lie his way out: they aren't ripe yet.)