

THE CHOSEN

Episode #203

"Matthew 4:24"

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TEASER

300 FADE IN ON: 300

301 EXT. SYRIAN COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON 301

A line of people. Some scattered families. It has the feel of a town picnic with a bunch of people in line for food.

But there's no food, and this group is clearly different. Almost every other person is sick or handicapped.

Matthew and Philip walk next to the line, and throughout their conversation they occasionally guide people in place, even firmly, and reassuring others who are impatient, etc. as they are obviously helping with crowd control and customer service.

Matthew has TWO TABLETS in his hands, and he alternates which one he's writing in based on what's happening.

MATTHEW

But where would be a good place to start?

PHILIP

For you?

MATTHEW

Yes, for me. The Law of Moses? The prophecies of Isaiah? The wisdom of Solomon?

PHILIP

Mm mmm. No, for you, I think the psalms of David. A good start.

MATTHEW

I'm ready.

Philip laughs, non-judgmental.

PHILIP

For example, to the choirmaster, as psalm of David -- If I ascend to heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Beat.

MATTHEW

And....?

PHILIP

Just that.

(to someone in line)

Just a few minutes more, thank you  
for your patience.

MATTHEW

But I'm not planning on ascending  
to heaven or making my bed in the  
depths.

PHILIP

You asked for a passage.

MATTHEW

Yes, one that would help me know  
more what you and everyone else  
knows.

PHILIP

That's what I know -- and what YOU  
must come to believe before you can  
make any meaningful study of Torah.

MATTHEW

I don't understand.

An EMOTIONAL WOMAN hustles by with her HUSBAND, Matthew stops  
her and switches tablets.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Please tell me what  
happened with Jesus.

EMOTIONAL WOMAN

He healed me! I feel it, I can't  
believe it!

MATTHEW

Healed you of what, please?

EMOTIONAL WOMAN

Epilepsy!

Matthew writes.

EMOTIONAL WOMAN (CONT'D)

I already feel stronger!

MATTHEW

Yes. And how long have you --

But they're gone, the excitement too much. Matthew pauses, closes the tablet.

PHILIP

Say it back to me.

MATTHEW

If I ascend to heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

PHILIP

There's nowhere you can go, no heights you can climb to in your intellectual mind, or depths you can reach in your soul, that God is not with you. You get it?

MATTHEW

I think so.

PHILIP

No amount of learning can get you closer to God or you make you more or less precious to him. He's always right here, right now, with you, and for you.

MATTHEW

But I don't feel it.

They notice a GROUP OF LEPERS off to the side, away from everyone. Matthew immediately stops looking and turns away slightly, uncomfortable. Philip doesn't notice.

PHILIP

The feeling doesn't always come first. Sometimes you have to believe it first.

MATTHEW

Believing a thing does not make it true.

PHILIP

That's wisdom. But these aren't just any words. They're David's in the Scripture.

MATTHEW

But how do you know whether David was only talking about himself, and not about everyone else?

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

He did say, "If **I** ascend" not "If **people** ascend."

PHILIP

You almost sound like you don't WANT the passage to be true.

An EXCITED MAN hustles nearby.

MATTHEW

Excuse me, what happened to you with Jesus?

EXCITED MAN

I could barely walk for years, my back was so painful, but look at me now! He is all they say!

He jumps, does a little dance.

MATTHEW

Yes, and what would you call your disease?

EXCITED MAN

I call it destroyed! Are you with him?

PHILIP

Yes, we are his students.

EXCITED MAN

Oh, thank you! Thank you for coming here!

Matthew is writing and doesn't see it coming. The excited man aggressively hugs him, knocking Matthew's tablet out of his hands in the process. Matthew reacts as we'd expect. The man hugs Philip, who handles it fine, and then the man runs off.

Matthew scoops up his book and dusts it off, clearly taken aback.

PHILIP

Ha...you all right?

MATTHEW

I'm fine. So with the passage from David...I'm just trying to understand.

PHILIP

The trying's the thing. Meditate on it for a few days and come back to me. You're writing all the time, write that down several times. Something about writing it down that goes a long way.

MATTHEW

That's what I say, too.

Philip laughs.

PHILIP

Matthew, I think we've barely begun to find out all you can do.

301A EXT. SYRIAN CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

301A \*

They walk past a MAKESHIFT TENT, the destination for the line of people. We follow them as they emerge around a tree and enter the CAMPSITE, where we see Thaddeus, Little James, Thomas, Ramah, Mary Magdalene, Big James, and John all scattered near a campfire. Chatting, eating, catching a quick nap, a couple are playing TABULA (board game). There are several tents set up, with Big James and John finishing another one.

PHILIP

Thaddeus, Little James, you're up!

END TEASER

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

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DISSOLVE TO:

302 EXT. SYRIAN CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON

302 \*

We pick up where we left off. Thaddeus jolts awake from his doze and stands up. Little James has been playing Tabula with Thomas.

(NOTE): Throughout the episode there is a consistent "buzz" of activity and a range of reactions coming from the tent.

THADDEUS

How's the line?

PHILIP

Getting longer. I'll come back out and help you soon, I won't take my full break.

BIG JAMES

Where's Nathanael, it's my turn to replace him?

PHILIP

He said he's staying through, he doesn't want to stop his shift.

Little James walks past.

LITTLE JAMES

(indicating the game)

Take my place, see if you can make some headway, he's scary good.

Thaddeus and Little James leave, Philip grabs some bread and quickly takes some bites as he heads to Thomas.

Matthew opens one of his tablets.

MATTHEW

There have been over 60 people already, with over 50 people in line currently, not including lepers and others who aren't in the line.

BIG JAMES

Did you say there's over 50 in line now?

MATTHEW

Yes.

BIG JAMES

How long is this going to last?

MATTHEW

It depends on each encounter, you --

BIG JAMES

Never mind, I get it.

Matthew pauses, then picks up his bag nearby and puts his tablets into it. He approaches Mary and Ramah, who are placing bags and knapsacks accordingly in front of tents.

RAMAH

Did you get some ideas from Philip?

MATTHEW

Yes, from the songs of David, one passage to study before we learn more.

Big James looks at his palm as he and John walk towards the fire from the tent they just completed.

BIG JAMES

Bah, it's still bleeding.

JOHN

What... oh, is that from the firewood from before?

BIG JAMES

Yes, and then when I had to push back the man who was rushing in the line, I cut it more on his bag. Hand me that rag.

John grabs a cloth from the ground and James wraps his hand.

PHILIP

That same man ran into me as he was leaving after Jesus healed his wife. He was one of the people who got here last night, I think.

BIG JAMES

Almost a four hour walk this morning and we didn't even have a moment to get settled.

(MORE)

BIG JAMES (CONT'D)

I mean, it's great what he's doing, obviously, but I wish we'd started tomorrow.

THOMAS

What is happening? What are we part of?

JOHN

Is it wrong to say I have no idea?

THOMAS

No, it makes me feel better.

RAMAH

I feel like I haven't had time to think about it. All I know is that my parents hate it. Other than that, I figured Thomas and I would get our answers from the rest of you.

THOMAS

The word is already spreading so fast... I didn't think about that. Have you thought about the fame from all this?

JOHN

I wouldn't mind being famous.

BIG JAMES

That's not a surprise.

PHILIP

It's not as fun as you think.

JOHN

I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't think about the Messiah at least once a week. My whole life I've prayed he'd come during this time, and I hoped I'd get to see him. But close to him like this? A nobody like me? What's not fun about that?

BIG JAMES

You call today fun?

PHILIP

Maybe not fun, but good. But with this fame comes enemies. It won't be long before you're hated, too.

MATTHEW

I'm used to that.

PHILIP

You were protected. And your enemies weren't powerful.

BIG JAMES

Speaking of enemies...if someone had told you growing up, "you're going to be a student of the Messiah. YOU. You will be close to him, you will be helping with his mission, what would you have said?"

RAMAH

I would have said, "Sorry, I'm a girl, ask my brother."

BIG JAMES

Fair enough. But really...Thomas, what would you have thought?

THOMAS

I would have thought, "I don't have military training." That's still a problem, actually.

BIG JAMES

Exactly. When I was a child I thought about how amazing it would be to see Messiah kill the Romans on my street. And I even wanted to help him do it, I trained for it with a wooden sword.

John holds up his elbow.

JOHN

This scar proves he was pretty good.

RAMAH

I used to imagine that the Romans would break into our home, and I would be hiding under the bed with a knife, and when they came into my room, I'd get one of them, and just as they went to get me, Messiah would rescue me at the last moment.

BIG JAMES

I didn't think we'd be spending our time healing--well, watching HIM heal. And this'll never stop, people will just keep coming the more they hear about it. We'll just be doing this for the next five years and never get around to the fighting part.

PHILIP

Eager to bring out that wooden sword of yours, are you?

BIG JAMES

(annoyed)

Do you honestly not know what I'm talking about?

MARY MAGDALENE

I guess I haven't had expectations, that's probably why it's easier for me. I can remember as a little girl hearing about how someone would save us someday, but I don't remember much about it. Why is it you expect a warrior?

THOMAS

Zechariah. "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle."

Matthew pulls out his tablet, starts trying to write it down.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. And the --

PHILIP

Yes, the mount of Olives will be split in the middle from east to west, half of it will move, all that craziness, but we don't know when that is, if it's even in this lifetime.

JOHN

Here's what I also don't understand. Isn't the Messiah supposed to come at a time when all is holy?

(to James)

That's what you've been telling me, at least.

RAMAH

What is that from?

BIG JAMES

Even a prophetic poem from the rabbis from not long ago. "There will be no unrighteousness among them in his days, for all shall be holy and their king shall be the Lord Messiah."

JOHN

I guess that's why the Pharisees don't think he's the one, Mary, you need to help clean up the Red Quarter first.

They chuckle, but then...

MARY MAGDALENE

I don't think he's waiting for us to be holy. I think he's here because we can't be holy without him.

Bam. They're silent a moment.

PHILIP

Whoa, that's really good. The Baptizer will want to use that.

Little James returns.

LITTLE JAMES

Big James, they asked for your help with crowd control...a few people were bickering, getting physical, and I can't help much in that department.

BIG JAMES

Bickering? Are you serious?

Big James sighs, rubs his face.

BIG JAMES (CONT'D)  
I'm going to use my sword on them  
before I use it on the Romans.

He storms off.

Little James heads over to Philip and Thomas, looks at the board.

LITTLE JAMES  
How are we doing?

PHILIP  
How do I put it? I --

Little James notices the pieces.

LITTLE JAMES  
I'm worse off than I was!

PHILIP  
Yes. Yes, you are.

Philip stands, James moves to take his place.

LITTLE JAMES  
Ugh, I can't get out of this. I  
thought you'd said you were good at  
this.

PHILIP  
Thought I was, sorry.

Philip walks off with a "what's with him" look, and as Thomas and James move pieces...

LITTLE JAMES  
So what was everyone talking about?

THOMAS  
Not much, just prophecy, our  
growing fame, the Messiah healing  
diseases instead of overthrowing  
the Romans, small topics like that.

LITTLE JAMES  
Ha. Well, I'm not sorry I missed  
it, I'm ready for the day to be  
done.

THOMAS  
What about out there? Anything  
happen in your short shift?

LITTLE JAMES

Same as all day. One thing that's annoying me, though...these people are praising him, believing in him, and that's great. But it's because he's healing them. The Samaritans...

THOMAS

Yeah, it was pretty much what he said. That was all they needed.

LITTLE JAMES

I don't know how many of these people would believe in him if he wasn't healing them.

As Thomas goes to roll the dice, he pauses a moment.

THOMAS

So I have to ask...

LITTLE JAMES

(chuckling)  
I think I can guess.

THOMAS

I have two questions. Forgive me, but I speak plainly. What is your malady? Forgive me, I don't mean to offend.

LITTLE JAMES

It's fine. It's a form of paralysis, it's caused problems since birth.

Mary and Ramah stand up from where they were studying with Matthew.

MARY MAGDALENE

It's about time for evening meal, are you hungry?

They all nod or murmur approval, and Ramah and Mary begin pulling food out of bags near the fire and preparing it.

After a pause...

THOMAS

So then why...I mean, why hasn't he healed you? How do you watch all these healings today? Does it bother you?

LITTLE JAMES

Fair questions. I don't know, I'm still thinking about how I feel about this. I suppose one big thing is that I haven't asked.

THOMAS

Why not?

LITTLE JAMES

I don't know.

THOMAS

If I had your...struggle...and I was watching what's happening today, I'd demand it.

LITTLE JAMES

I don't know if I should. It doesn't feel right. I guess I've just been grateful he called me to follow him in spite of it.

(chuckling)

It's never even come up once. I'm afraid if I bring it up he might change his mind or something.

THOMAS

(laughing)

I'm pretty sure he knows your situation, it's not like if you point it out he'll be surprised.

302A EXT. SYRIAN CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

302A \*

Their laughter is interrupted by some buzz, and they look over and see Mary, Ramah, then John and Philip reacting as MARY MOTHER arrives accompanied by Thaddeus. They stand and approach along with the others. Mary and Ramah hug her, the men nod or smile, all amidst various greetings (AD LIB)...

MARY MAGDALENE

I thought you were arriving tomorrow.

MARY MOTHER

Some friends were able to come with me earlier, so they dropped me off today and are seeing some family in the area.

THADDEUS

You'll be with us a little while,  
yes?

MARY MOTHER

Through the Feast, and then we'll  
see -- oh Philip, shalom, what are  
you doing here?!

PHILIP

I'm with your son now.

MARY MOTHER

Is John all right? I haven't  
spoken to him in awhile.

PHILIP

He's fine, but he said it was time,  
so here I am, trying to make myself  
useful.

THADDEUS

Mary, this is Matthew, he wasn't  
with us at the wedding.

MARY MOTHER

Shalom Matthew, welcome, oh, look,  
that's fine clothing.

MATTHEW

(trying)  
Thank you.

MARY MOTHER

What do you do?

MATTHEW

I don't, I was --

MARY MAGDALENE

He's a new student, Jesus  
called him.

MARY MOTHER

Ah, lovely. Well, I'm sure you're  
someone special. So has today been  
a long day? I saw so many people,  
Simon told me to come back here, do  
we know when Jesus will be  
finished?

RAMAH

We walked here from Philippi this  
morning, and he hasn't stopped  
since then.

MARY MOTHER

He's always been a worker, he gets that from his Father. Both of them, I suppose. Speaking of work, I see the food, you all look exhausted, I'm here to help. We'll have it ready very soon.

She hands her bags to John as she walks quickly towards the fire. Everyone looks at each other with a smile, then Ramah and Mary Magdalene join her.

303

EXT. SYRIAN CAMPSITE - NIGHT

303

\*

SERIES OF SHOTS of eating, cleaning, scrubbing of hands, etc.. More dozing. Thomas returns from his shift and replaces Philip.

EVENTUALLY SIMON, ANDREW, AND BIG JAMES RETURN, SWEATY AND DRAGGING. MARY MOTHER HANDS PLATES OF FOOD TO LITTLE JAMES AND THADDEUS, AND THEY TAKE THE PLATES WITH THEM AS THEY LEAVE FOR THEIR SHIFTS.

Simon grabs a container of water and after a few long sips, dumps it on his head and face. Then he, Andrew, and Big James grab food and sit...everyone is sitting, mostly around the campfire, a few other torches and lamps provide light for those sitting further away.

SERIES OF SHOTS ENDS. They are around the campfire, but they're clearly on the verge of sleeping from a long day. Heads resting on hands, some lying on backs or side...Mary Mother and the other two women continue to handle food and cleaning.

SIMON

Andrew, I need a mental break. Do one of your "meaningless question" games.

ANDREW

They're not meaningless, they're interesting. I've got one I've been thinking about lately. What would you do for unlimited money? Or what would you give up in order to have all the money you ever wanted for the rest of your life?

BIG JAMES

Meaning... would I do something painful?

ANDREW

Yes, or crazy. Would you run through the marketplace with no clothes on screaming?

THOMAS

Of course not, I'd be killed by a soldier.

BIG JAMES

Plus, it would be immodest, it would be a sin.

SIMON

Fine, something that wasn't a sin. Would you give up your left hand if you would be rich the rest of your life?

JOHN

Maybe not a full hand, but a couple fingers, sure.

ANDREW

What about love? Would you give up ever getting married?

JOHN

I don't know...Simon, is it worth it?

SIMON

Absolutely, but you'll never be so lucky to get someone like Eden, so take the money.

MARY MOTHER

I have never had much money my whole life, and I've been happy.

THOMAS

I don't expect we'll have much money for as long as we're following him.

MARY MOTHER

And you had some money before, yes? Are you happier now or then?

JOHN

Ask Matthew.

ANDREW

John.

JOHN

Oh, that's a bad question? You brought up money, Matthew's had it, we haven't.

MATTHEW

I feel better now, I don't know if that means happy.

BIG JAMES

It's not polite to talk about personal money.

ANDREW

It was just a question. I think about it sometimes, and then I feel guilty.

RAMAH

For what?

ANDREW

For thinking about things that I shouldn't, for wanting things I shouldn't care so much about.

(a pause)

Sometimes I feel like I'm living someone else's life. Like when I look at myself from the outside, it doesn't always feel like me. It feels like someone who's trying to live up to the heroes of our history, as though I have to do something great, but I know I'm not great. And now I feel it even more being with him.

RAMAH

I understand. I feel like I need to not make any more mistakes.

MARY MOTHER

How do you think I felt?

ANDREW

You must feel it every day, no?

MARY MOTHER

Not anymore. He always reassured me, and God always made me feel as though I shouldn't be burdened.

MARY MAGDALENE

So how did you feel when it happened?

MARY MOTHER

When what happened?

MARY MAGDALENE

His birth. Even before that. How did you know, when did you know who he was?

MARY MOTHER

Oh, I don't know, we're all tired, do you want to hear all that?

They all nod or say "yes" as though in a race to do so. She chuckles, pauses. Then pauses more as the memories come.

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

Well, nothing about it was easy, I can tell you that. It wasn't in my hometown, my mother wasn't there, we had no midwife. I don't know if I'm ready to give all the details, perhaps another time. But I do remember this...

No one is even blinking.

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

When Joseph handed him to me, it was like nothing I expected. It was like everything I'd **heard** about having a baby, but I'd expected this to be completely different.

SIMON

What do you mean?

MARY MOTHER

I had to clean him off. He was covered in...I will be polite, but he needed to be cleaned. And he was cold, and he was crying. He needed my help. MY help, a teenager from Nazareth. It actually made me think for just a moment, "Is this really the son of God?" Joseph, my husband, told me later he briefly thought the same thing. But we knew he was.

(MORE)

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

I don't know what I expected, but he was crying and he needed me...and I wondered how long that would last.

After a pause, she looks up.

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

He doesn't need me anymore... not since we taught him how to walk...and eat. He hasn't needed me for a long time, I suppose. And after Joseph passed, may he rest in peace, he grew up even quicker. And I wish I could say that made me happy...of course, as a Jew I'm excited to see all that he does for our people, and I'm proud of him. But as a Mom, it makes me a little sad sometimes.

She smiles at them.

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

So it's good to be with all of you for a bit, I can find ways to help.

RAMAH

We'll take it.

MARY MOTHER

Simon, when you were just with him, how much longer did it seem it would go?

SIMON

It's tough to tell. The line was dying down but He won't send anyone away anyway, so we'll see.

MARY MOTHER

I'll go check on them.

She slowly stands, with the slight struggle of an older woman who's been sitting too long. She takes a couple plates from those next to her, takes them to a bench, and then walks around the trees towards the tent.

They sit quiet for a moment.

THOMAS

I didn't know he'd lost his Father.  
I lost mine several years ago, I'll  
have to ask him about that. Has  
anyone else lost a parent?

Just Mary Magdalene lifts her hand.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Was it recent?

MARY MAGDALENE

No, it was when I was a little  
girl.

SIMON

Mm, that's painful, I'm sorry.

MARY MAGDALENE

It was, but I didn't fully  
understand it right away.  
Eventually it made me really angry,  
which is why I left when I was  
young.

JOHN

Left home?

MARY MAGDALENE

Left everything. Everything. I  
tried to stop acting like a Jew, I  
tried to stop being myself. And  
then, as many people in our town,  
including some of you, knew about,  
worse things...happened. Most of  
it's a blur, and I forgot so much  
of everything I'd learned as a  
girl.

BIG JAMES

But now you can catch up.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes. I hope. With Matthew and  
Ramah. You all are so far ahead,  
and you're so good at all this.

They all shake their heads or murmur dissent, chuckling.

BIG JAMES

We're not as good as you think.

JOH

Most of us, but you were the one  
with your nose in the writings.  
Still are.

BIG JAMES

Ah, a little, not like some others.

JOHN

Oh come on, you can recite half of  
Torah if you had to.

303A EXT. SYRIAN CAMPSITE - NIGHT

303A \*

THADDEUS arrives back from his shift, a few nod at him as he  
takes his seat.

THADDEUS

Still going. I couldn't do  
anymore, they said they've got it.

He leans back, exhausted.

MARY MAGDALENE

I really want to be a good student.

ANDREW

I don't think any of us went to bet  
midrash or did much study after  
school, that's what's so surprising  
about all this. Thomas, did you?

THOMAS

No, I was in the family business  
the day after I graduated. 13  
years old, I was preparing and  
serving food at weddings, I wasn't  
a student at all, believe me.

THADDEUS

I wasn't even good at praying until  
recently, I would get bored with  
it, the same thing over and over.  
I learned to love it as I got  
older.

JOHN

I wasn't great at any of it when I  
was a student.

THOMAS

I wasn't either, I didn't like all  
the rules.

RAMAH

I never struggled with it, I do what I'm told.

ANDREW

Yes, I'm the same, I've always been a rule follower.

BIG JAMES

I've always loved the history, the stories, so I've always loved the rules, too.

A pause.

ANDREW

Simon?

They all laugh.

SIMON

I've had my moments.

THOMAS

One time when my parents were asleep, I had meat with cheese, just to see what I was missing. Have you ever done that?

ANDREW

No, I'd feel too guilty.

SIMON

You feel guilty about everything. Right after you were born you said sorry to Eema for causing her pain.

THOMAS

Forget the guilt, I was sick for days. I haven't violated a single food rule since.

THADDEUS

I tried pork once.

RAMAH

How?

THADDEUS

We were traveling and were in a Gentile marketplace, and I just grabbed a piece.

ANDREW

Really.

THADDEUS

It was marvelous.

BIG JAMES

One time on the boats, we were approaching Shabbat sunset and Abba and John finished their tasks...

John gives an "I remember this" nod.

BIG JAMES (CONT'D)

...and I had not finished getting all my fish into the barrels because I had so many.

JOHN

No, because you were going too slow because you're too careful.

BIG JAMES

No, it was because I'd had so many...

John shakes his head to the others.

BIG JAMES (CONT'D)

And you have to get them all in before sunset, of course, or they'll rot the next day, and I can't clean them on Shabbat. So I'm yelling at the others to help me and they're just laughing as they walk home. And I ended up working so hard and fast I ended up spilling several of them back into the water, and when I was done -- just in time -- I was breathing so hard I vomited on the shore.

JOHN

And he had to wait two days to clean it up.

(to the women)

Sorry.

THOMAS

I've grown to love being Jewish, and I've grown to love following the Law, but it can be exhausting.

JOHN  
Following the Law or being Jewish?

ANDREW  
Both.

BIG JAMES  
It always has been. Even long  
before the occupation.

MARY MAGDALENE  
Yes, but aren't we used to it now,  
hasn't it made us stronger?

THOMAS  
I don't get it, if I'm honest. I  
don't know why God has allowed the  
occupation. I'm going to ask  
(indicates towards the  
trees and tent)  
"him" more about that, why this has  
been allowed for so long. It's  
hard to feel like the chosen  
people.

SIMON  
I've been there.

RAMAH  
(to Thomas)  
But it'll all be worth it now, yes?  
The wait is over.

She smiles at him. He nods and smiles.

Simon looks at Matthew, who has been silent this whole time.

SIMON  
What about you?

MATTHEW  
What do you mean?

SIMON  
Has it been difficult for you? All  
this time? The occupation,  
following Jewish law?

MATTHEW  
My life has not been easy.

Mary winces.

SIMON

Oh, it hasn't? What was more painful for you: escaping Roman persecution by working for them, or escaping your guilt with all the money?

Matthew furrows his brow. Simon points towards the scrolls and journals next to Matthew.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And now you're catching up on Torah and wanting to follow the law? Why now, all of a sudden? Why not all the other times you've had the chance?

JOHN

Simon.

SIMON

No John, I want to know...Mary had horrible trauma, she didn't choose all that happened to her, what's your excuse?

MATTHEW

What do you want me to say? I don't know what you want from me.

ANDREW

An apology.

MATTHEW

What?

Mary Mother and Little James emerge from the trees and stop, watching.

ANDREW

Simon's not wrong. He could be more delicate about it, but you did choose to work for them, and you made my life even harder than it already was, and you haven't apologized.

Matthew opens his mouth to speak.

SIMON

No, don't say it, I don't want you to apologize, it doesn't matter.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

What will hearing him say he's sorry do, I won't forgive it anyway.

JOHN

What keeps putting you in authority? Who are you to forgive or not forgive?

SIMON

What, you're on his side?

JOHN

Of course not, but you've got your own problems! And what about apologizing for what you almost did with the Romans to us?

SIMON

I didn't go through with it! I was trying to save my family's life, and I love you John, but that's not something you have to worry about when Zeb and Salome are looking out for you.

(to Matthew)

But you put me in a desperate position where I did things I would NEVER have done otherwise, and I've repented for them, and John and James, I am sorry, but I didn't go through with it.

THOMAS

(Matthew)

What IS your excuse? I was a successful businessman, and yet I was always behind.

JOHN

He wasn't your tax collector.

THOMAS

Quit defending him, I want an answer!

Big James stands up.

BIG JAMES

Whoa, you're new.

SIMON

(to Matthew)

Do you even know what it's like to be Jewish? To suffer for centuries and centuries because of it but to still commit to it, to protect our heritage even though it never stops being painful, because the ONE COMFORT we have is to know that we're doing it TOGETHER. That we're all suffering together, but if we just wait a little longer, if we hold tight just a little more, we'll have rescue, because we're chosen. All of us. And you betrayed that, and you spit on it, and I can't forgive it. I'll never forgive it.

BIG JAMES

All right, you've said what you need to say, sit down, Simon.

ANDREW

You sit down first!

303B EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

303B

A noise from the trees stops them. They look over...it's JESUS.

He's moving slowly, shoulders slumped, every muscle weakened. There's blood on him, and his wrinkled clothes are drenched in sweat and hanging off him.

He shuffles past them. The only sounds come from the tent being taken down by Nathaniel, Philip, and Little James next to the tree.

JESUS

(whispered)

Good night.

Jesus makes his way towards his tent, and barely able to stand, he removes his sandals. He reaches down for a rag to dip into water, but he struggles, hands shaky.

Mary Mother walks with purpose past the disciples and over to him. She takes the rag, gets it wet, and begins to wipe the blood and dirt off his hands. He smiles wearily. She hands him a cloth from waist and indicates for him to wipe his face, which he does.

She then kneels down, dips the rag in water again, and begins to wipe his feet, removing the blood and dirt.

Some of the disciples are looking at the scene, others have the heads down. Ramah wipes a tear.

When one foot is clean, he steps onto the edge of his tent, then again with the other foot.

He tosses his cloth to the ground, then begins to remove his tunic, wincing from soreness. Mary finishes wiping his feet and stands, helping get his tunic off, which she folds on her arm.

She notices one last smudge on his face, which she wipes off with the cloth.

JESUS (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Good?

MARY MOTHER

Good.

He slowly gets to his knees and then lies down in bed. As Mary arranges his things, we faintly hear the beginning of his bedtime prayer.

JESUS

"Blessed are you, Lord our God,  
King of the Universe, who brings  
sleep to my eyes..."

On the disciples in silence as we...

CUT TO BLACK

END EPISODE