

JOURNEY TO CALVARY

By Phillip Love

Scene I – The Journey Begins

[Interior of an airplane. Several people are sitting in their chairs awaiting takeoff. Jim appears disgruntled as he is talking on his phone. As lights come up the pilot addresses the passengers.]

Pilot's Voice: I would like to welcome you to United Airlines flight 937. We will be flying nonstop from Atlanta to New York. Takeoff is set for 1100 hours, so we should be set to leave in about 15 minutes. Thank you again for choosing United Airlines.

Jim: *[on the phone]* Honey, I know it means a lot to you, but I just can't do it. This account is just too big. If there was any way I could be home for Easter, you know I would. *[Pause]* Oh, your mother is coming *[Sarcastically]* I'm so sorry I won't get to see her *[Pause]* Yes, I know I missed church this Christmas, too, but I promise I'll make it up to you. *[Pause]* I want to be with you, too, but I just can't right now. I'll be back home Monday, and we'll do something special for dinner. Okay? *[Pause]* I love you, too. Tell the kids Daddy will be home soon. Bye.

[Jim looks obviously flustered. Simon, sitting next to him, takes notice]

Simon: Hey, are you alright?

Jim: Yeah, I'm fine. Just a little argument with my wife. She really wants me to be home, but I just can't.

Simon: Yeah, that's tough. Do you have to travel a lot?

Jim: No, not really. It's just bad timing more than anything else. It's Easter...and everyone knows that you *have* to go to church on Easter. It doesn't matter who you are, or what you've been doing the rest of the year, you still have to get all dressed up and go act "religious" around a bunch of people you don't even know. What's the big deal about Easter anyway? I know all the religious think it has something to do with this Jesus guy who lived over 2000 years ago, but what does that have to do with me? I just don't see why everyone makes such a big deal about it.

Simon: You know, several months ago, I was on airplane a lot like this one and met a guy a lot like you. He had a lot of questions about things. I told him that all of the answers were in a book I was reading. I told him all about it, and it changed his life...and I think it could change yours, too.

Jim: Really? What in the world did you tell him?

["End of the Beginning" begins playing]

Simon: *[Music begins. Simon loosens his tie and unbuttons the top button of his shirt.]* I'm so glad you asked. I'll tell you...You see, it started something like this *[Performs and overly enthusiastic rendition of "End of the Beginning."]*

Jim: Wait just a second. Don't start on the religious stuff. I don't believe it, and I won't until I see it for myself, and it doesn't look like that's going to happen anytime soon. Good grief, I can't even take a peaceful trip on an airplane without someone lecturing me. Trust me, I get enough of this from my wife. *[Begins to walk off]* Sheesh, this is the last thing I need. *[Walks to an empty seat puts a pillow behind his head, pulls up a blanket, and goes to sleep.]*

Simon: Lord, help him to believe. *[Lights down. End scene I.]*

Scene II—Lost in a Foreign Land

[When lights come up, Jim is slumped over against a wall sleeping.

The setting is Bethlehem during Passover. The city is busy with people scurrying around carrying baskets, jars and other objects of the period. Jim awakes, confused.

Jim: *[Awaking.]* What? Huh? Where am I? What is going on here? *[He grabs the first person to walk by, which just happens to be Simon.]* Hey, you! *[Frantically]* What's going on here?

Simon: Easy man, it's Passover. It gets crazy about this time every year. You must not be from around here?

Jim: Um, yeah. You might could say that. The truth is, I think I've gone crazy. *[Simon ignores his comments]* You see, I'm supposed to be on an airplane headed to New York on a business trip, but somehow I've ended up here...are you listen to me?

Simon: Hey, I'm not sure who you are or how you got here, but if you need a place to stay while you're here, my wife and I would be glad to have you at our house. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask.

[A commotion is heard coming onto the stage. A child rushes in ahead of the mob (choir) and shouts, "Jesus is coming!" The choir enters as the music for "Miracle Song" begins.]

Jim: Great, more Jesus, I can't even go crazy without people talking about this Jesus guy anyway. Can someone please tell me what's going on here?

["Miracle Song" continues. One by one the characters in the song enter to tell their story. As the song ends the child shouts, "Look! There he is. He's coming!" Music for "It's Jesus" begins and Jesus and the disciples begin to enter from rear. As the song

concludes, the mob begins to form a circle around Jesus. They all kneel or sit as he begins to preach.]

Jesus: The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in the world will keep it for eternal life. The Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. {John 12:23-25, Mark 10:33-34, John 3:16} *[Lights out.]*

Scene III—The Last Supper

[It is night in Bethlehem. Lights come up with Jim walking down the street. The stage is halved. The opposite side of the stage contains Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room.]

Jim: Wow, what a day. First I find out that I have to leave to go out of town at the last possible minute. Then, my wife gets mad because I have to go. Then, I fall asleep and wake up here. I don't know where I am, I don't know what's going on, and, worse than that, I have no idea how to get home. What am I going to do? Wait! What about that Jesus guy? Those people today said he could work miracles. If he can heal the blind and resurrect the dead, then surely he can

help me find my way home. He's my only hope. *[Jim hears a sound coming out of a nearby window. As he approaches it, he realizes that it is Jesus talking to the disciples. He kneels by the window to listen.]*

Jesus: I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Take this cup and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. Take also this bread. This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me *[Jesus sings "Remember Me." Lights go out on scene.]*

Scene IV—The Garden of Gethsemane

[Lights come up on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter, James, and John lie sleeping off to the side of the stage. Jim has followed them. He sits listening, unnoticed by the others in the scene. He reacts appropriately to all of the actions in the scene.]

Jesus: My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will. If it is not possible for this cup to be taken from away unless I drink it, may your will be done. *[He arises and sees the disciples sleeping. He rushes to them.]* Can you not keep watch with me for one hour? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer. *[Enter Judas and armed guards.]* Who is it that you want?

Malchus: Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus: I am he. *[Judas steps forwards and kisses Jesus on the cheek.]*
Judas, you betray the Son of Man with a kiss.

[Judas rushes off and the guards step forward to arrest Jesus. Peter jumps at Malchus.]

Peter: No!!! You won't take him! *[He cuts off Malchus' ear.]*

Jesus: Put it down Peter! He who lives by the sword will die by the sword. *[He kneels down and heals Malchus' ear. He stands back up and everyone watches awkwardly in disbelief. After a moderate pause, the soldiers grab Jesus and arrest him. Lights down.]*

Scene V—Jesus before Pilate

[Lights remain down as the music for "Crucify" begins. The narrator tells the story of Jesus going before Caiaphas, the high priest,

lights come back when Pilate begins his address. Actors will follow with the lyrics of the song, no additional dialogue will take place.]

Scene VI—The Beating of Christ the King

[Jesus being scourged. All action takes place to "Surely He Hath Borne our Grievs." We will either show a pre-taped video, or the action will be backlit, and a double will stand in for Jesus. Jim should be in a prominent position watching.]

Scene VII—The Road to Golgotha

[Jesus enters from rear of sanctuary as "This is my Son" begins. He makes his way to the stage throughout the song. Jim appears in the crowd watching the proceedings. When Jesus walks by Jim, he collapses under the weight of the cross. As Jesus struggles to pick the cross back up, a soldier orders Jim to help carry it. The song ends with Jesus being raised on the cross. A crowd is gathered around Golgotha. Mary, and John are at the foot of the cross.]

Soldier 1: *[Sarcastically]* Hail Jesus! The King is upon his throne!

Soldier 2: *[Laughing hysterically, almost giggling.]* Hehehe...the king upon his throne.

Jesus: Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. *[There is a long pause of dead space. Then Jesus looks as if he is in intense pain. He screams out]* My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me? *[Another pause. There is a loud rumble (Do we have any subs?) and the lights dim.]* Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

[Jesus dies. The rumble gets louder, and the actors onstage react as if there ground is shaking. Everyone but the two soldiers begin to leave the stage.]

Soldier 1: Is he dead?

Soldier 2: Yeah, he's not breathing at all.

Soldier 1: You better make sure. If this punk lives, it'll be our heads!

[Soldier 2 picks up a spear lying on the ground and thrusts it into Jesus' side. When the mixture of blood and water flows from him, the rumble worsens one last time, and the soldiers run off terrified. When the rumbling subsides, Jim makes his way the foot of the cross. As the music for "Precious Blood" begins, Jim voices his thoughts.]

[Insert Jim's monologue here]

[Towards the middle of the song, Jim crawls off. Nicodemus and others take Jesus off the cross, dress his body, and carry him to the tomb.]

Scene VII—The Resurrection of the Christ

[The tomb is shown. Singing Angels appear. "He is Risen" begins to play. Jesus comes forth with light and sound effects.]

Scene VII—Jesus Appears to Jim

[Jim is kneeling at mid-stage weeping, voicing his thoughts aloud.]

Jim: Now what do I do? Jesus is dead. They beat him, and crucified him...but why? What did he do? He helped people. He healed them and taught them. Why would they

kill someone so good?...and how in the world will I ever find my way home?

[Jesus enters behind him, unseen]

Jesus: *[Places his hand on Jim's shoulder]* My son, my son, you have so much to learn.

[Jim turns and gazes up at Jesus, amazed.]

Jim: What? It's You? But...you're...they...killed you. I saw them do it! They crucified you. I...

Jesus: Yes I was dead, but now I've defeated death.

Jim: I don't understand. *[Slight pause]* But why? Why did they kill you? You didn't do anything wrong, and they treated you worse than a murderer.

Jesus: They didn't kill me, Jim. I gave up my life. I gave it up as a payment for the sin of all mankind, past, present and future. That includes your sin. I know you're on a journey to find your way home, and your journey has taken you to many places you didn't expect. You're journey has brought you to Calvary, Jim. I can take you home, but I can do so much more than that. I can forgive your sins, I can wipe out all of the wrong things you've done, and restore you to a right relationship with God. I can give you life, Jim. I can give you abundant life in me, a life of joy that is more fulfilling that you can ever imagine...But you have to trust me. Look at my hands, Jim. My hands were pierced for you, my flesh was torn and my blood was spilled for you. I love you that much. Will you trust me?

[Jim embraces Jesus' legs, weeping]

Jim: Yes, Jesus, I trust you.

[Jesus kneels down and embraces Jim. Lights down. Chorus to "Only Trust Him" plays softly]

Scene VIII – The Journey Concludes

[Lights come up on the airplane. Jim appears to be sleeping restlessly. He mumbles, "I trust you. I trust you." He awakes.]

[Insert final dialogue here]