

“Puzzled at Passover”

by
Patricia Souder

- What** In this monologue, Martha reflects on the miracle of Jesus raising her brother, Lazarus, from the dead. Martha’s reflections offer a deeper understanding of how difficult it was—and is—to trust God to work things together for our good and His glory in troubling times.
- Themes: Passover, Last Supper, Palm Sunday, Lazarus’s resurrection, Belief, Trust, Redemption, Monologue
- Who** Martha, sister of Mary and Lazarus
- When** Passover preparation at the same time Jesus and His disciples were preparing to celebrate what would be Jesus’ last Passover meal.
- Wear
(Props)** Simple dress, tunic, or skirt and blouse with apron.
Broom
Small table with a cutting board, knife, and bowl
Apples and walnuts for making *charo-set* for Passover
- Why** John 11-12: 19; Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19: 29-47
- How** Martha is a high-energy person who needs to keep busy. She should talk with her hands or walk around when not sweeping or cutting up apples and walnuts.
- Time** Approximately 5 minutes

Martha sweeps as she enters.

Passover. I usually love it. I'm Martha, you know, and for me... busy is always better. I like having a good reason to sweep, dust, and hunt down every bit of leaven. And to shop and chop to make all the special foods we serve at Passover.

(Leans on broom) But this year... well, I'm puzzled. Real puzzled. I was sure Passover was going to be extra special. After all, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and there's been a buzz about Jesus being the Messiah ever since.

(Leans broom against a wall. Gestures freely) Last Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" It looked like we were headed straight for a coronation.

(Shrugs) But now... *(becomes agitated)* Now there are death threats in the air. I can't figure it out: *Why all this animosity? This hatred? This rage to kill Jesus ...and our brother Lazarus?*

I mean: What sense does it make to kill the person who can raise people from the dead? *(Raises hands in frustration)*

Or the one who was resurrected? *(Raises eyebrows)* Seems kind of stupid to me. *(Shakes head)*

(Looks troubled) And Mary. She puzzles me, too. She's been too quiet. Almost moody ... Like she's troubled and preoccupied. And the night before Jesus rode into Jerusalem, she did something very strange. Even for Mary.

We were in the middle of a special dinner where Jesus was the guest of honor when Mary disrupted everything by pouring a jar of perfume on Jesus' feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. *(Scrunches up her face)*

Judas jumped up and said she should have sold the perfume and given the money to the poor. I figured Jesus would agree. After all, that perfume was worth a whole year's salary!

Instead, Jesus said Mary was preparing him for his burial. And that we'd always be able to help the poor, but he wouldn't be with us very long.

(Gestures) Now, how puzzling is that? Jesus is always asking us to help the poor. Besides, what does he mean about being prepared for burial when he's the one who told me He's the resurrection and the life?

It makes no sense! Why, I feel like I did during those long days when Lazarus was sick and Jesus didn't come.

Oh, I know: That ended happily with Jesus proving he has power over life and death. *(Shakes head)* But then, why is he talking about dying now?

(Sits down and chops apple and walnuts) Well, I still have lots to do for Passover. I have to bake unleavened bread to remind us of the fast flight from Egypt. I have to fix bitter herbs to remind us of the harsh slavery. I have to chop apples and walnuts to make *charo-set* (ha-row-set) to remind us of the bricks they were forced to make.

And this year, I'll have to get the Passover lamb because it's not safe for Lazarus to go to Jerusalem. *(Shakes head)* You can be sure I'm NOT looking forward to that!

(Gestures freely) I don't like getting jostled and overcharged for the lambs we have to buy for sacrifices. And I hate watching the priests slaughter the lambs and throw the blood on the altar. *(Makes a face and groans)* Oh, it's awful!

I wish we could celebrate Passover without all that. But it's the blood the Israelites sprinkled on their doorways that saved them. No blood...no deliverance.

Now why do you suppose God required them to sacrifice a lamb?
(Shakes head) Right when they were getting ready to leave Egypt. That had to be messy and inconvenient. *(Stops cutting. Rolls eyes)*

I wonder if they understood. Or if they were puzzled like I am.

Looks very puzzled. Gets up slowly. Pauses to think. Takes a deep breath.

(Gestures toward herself) Somewhere deep within, I hear Jesus asking the same question he asked me when he raised Lazarus from the dead: "Martha, didn't I tell you that you will see God's glory if you believe?"

Believe? What did He mean?

I'd already told him I believed that if he'd been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died.

I told him I believed that Lazarus would live again on resurrection day.

I told him I'd always believed he was the Messiah, the Son of God.

And yet, I sense he wants a deeper kind of belief.

A kind of belief that goes beyond facts.

A kind of belief that...that trusts Him...even when I don't understand what's going on.

That's hard. Real hard. Especially for me. *(Stands up and shakes head in bewilderment)* I don't like being puzzled and perplexed.

Maybe nobody does.

But maybe we all have to go through that.

And maybe...

(Looks up in wonder) Maybe that's what Passover is really all about: Trusting God to deliver us in the midst of troubling times.

Maybe God has a greater purpose.

Maybe there's a link between Passover and what John the Baptist said when he baptized Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

(Picks up broom to exit) Maybe...

(Speaks just before exiting) Maybe...

But I have to admit: This Passover, I'm still puzzled!

Lights out.