

“The Problem with Holiness”

by
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- What** Sin separates us from God, but God loves us so much that He created a way for us to be with Him, thereby solving the problem with holiness.
- Themes: Holiness, Sin, Forgiveness, Sacrifice, Easter, Good Friday, Tabernacle, Redemption, Salvation, Lamb of God
- Who** One- male
Two- female
Three- male
Four- female
- When** Present
- Costumes and Props** None required
If you choose to use this as a reader's theatre, each reader should have a black binder for their script.
- Why** Ephesians 2:4-10, Genesis-Deuteronomy
- How** This script requires a lot of energy. Keep the movement and the dialogue pacing up, being careful to stay on top of your cues—don't let there be much space in between your lines. Its fast-paced, but make sure you don't sacrifice the pronunciation for getting your lines out quickly. Have fun with it!
This can also be a reader's theatre. Simply give each actor a black binder notebook for the script.
- Time** Approximately 5-6 minutes

One, Two, Three and Four enter. One addresses the audience.

One: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He also created man and woman.

Three becomes "Adam" and Two becomes "Eve". They stand side-by-side.

Three: (to audience) Sup.

Two: (to audience) Hey, girl, heeyyy.

Four: But, as we all know, they disobeyed God and brought sin into the world.

Three and Two point at each other, accusingly.

Both: (together) He/She did it. Nuh uh it was you. You did it. This is all your fault! (they start a slap fight)

One steps in between them, separating them, while saying his next line. Four steps up on a stool or chair and points, as if telling Three and Two they're banished from the garden.

One: Because of this sin, we became separated from God.

Three: Aw man! But this is all her fault! Why do I have to go—

Two: Me? You ate the fruit too! You're such a baby.

Three: (to One) So, now what do we do?

One: Well, I guess you're out of luck. The end! (beat) I'm kidding.

Four: (stepping off the stool) God is a holy God, meaning He is set apart. He is the sinless perfect Creator of all things. We lost the ability to be near Him because of sin. But God, who loves us so much, still wanted to make a way to dwell among us.

Two: That sounds tricky.

Four: Well, it is...and it isn't. That's the problem with holiness. God is holy. We are not. Our sin cannot coexist with holiness and so when we sin, it pushes us away from Him.

During One's next line, Three, Two and Four line up side-by-side spacing out between each other.

One: So, God promised He would send a Messiah to bring us back into His holiness. But, in the meantime, in order for His people to be anywhere

near Him, God created a system of steps that man could go through to come back into His holiness.

Three: Like taking off your muddy shoes before you come back inside?

One: Sorta (*One moves to each person as he/she says...*) More like boxes. (*beat, everyOne looks confused*) A box (*Three waves*) within a box (*Two waves*) within a box (*Four waves*). (*Note: You can also have fun with these reactions. For instance, instead of waving, make it your own— i.e. curtsy, salute, finger pistols, etc.*)

Two: In the Old Testament, God gave very specific instructions to His people for building His home...or tabernacle—the place where His people can go and meet with Him.

Three steps up on a step stool or chair. He opens a scroll and begins reading. One, Two and Four gather around him as if they are the people listening to God's mandates.

Three: (*in a bad British accent*) "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil.

One: So God's people built—

Three: And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps.

One: Cool. So God's people built the tabernacle according—

Three: And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle.

Pause. One looks at Three skeptically.

One: You done?

Three: I have three more pages.

One: I think we get the gist. We only have a few minutes.

Three rolls up the scroll. His feelings are hurt.

Four: God's people built the tabernacle according to God's instructions.

Two: But how do we get to be with God?

Three, Two and Four go back to their "box" line up.

One: Well, this is where the sacrifice process comes in. There were sacrifices for everything. Remember the box within the box within the box? *(moves to Three, who is "Box 1")* The people of Israel would bring their sacrifice to the first box—or outer court.

Three: The requirement for a sacrifice was an animal without blemish. Different animals were required for different kinds of sacrifices. Poor Fluffy.

One: Then, there was the holy place.

Two: This was only for the priests to enter. They acted as the representative of the people.

One: Then, there was the holy of holies.

Three: Do NOT go in there!

The others give him a look.

Three: Like...don't do it. It will not go well for you. Like...there's really scary stuff. Like Indiana Jones kinda stuff.

Pause. One gives Three a look...

One: Anyway. The holy of holies was where the ark of covenant was kept. And it was also where God's presence was.

Four: So once a year, one priest was allowed to go in and make atonement for the people's sin.

Two: But there's a ton of sin.

One: Right. But, because God is a good Father, He doesn't make it hard for us to know how to obey Him. So He gave them a list of things that they could and couldn't do.

Three steps up on the stool or chair again. Unrolls the scroll. Two, One and Four turn towards Three as if they're Hebrews listening to God's mandates. Every time Two says "There's a sacrifice for that" she turns her head to say it to the audience.

Three: Don't steal your neighbor's cow.

Two: There's a sacrifice for that.

Three: Don't swear an oath you have no intention of keeping.

Two: There's a sacrifice for that.

Three: Don't hurt anyone breaking into your house unLESS it's at night.

Two: There's a— what?

Three and Two are taken off guard and they look in the scroll to make sure that's what it says.

Three: Yeah, that's what it says.

One: Okay, that's probably enough. There are a lot of laws—

Two: *(ignoring, still fascinated by the One law)* That's weird, why would it just be at night?

Three: I don't know...

One: You have to remember that this was a very different time and a very different culture. We might not understand everything about the laws, but we do know that God created them so that everyone would be treated fairly and there would be order. He loved His people so much.

Four: And He also gave them standards to live by to illustrate His holiness.

Three continues reading from the scroll. Two stands by him as if she is his assistant. Every time she says "Unclean!" she raises her hand as if making a proclamation. She enjoys it a little too much.

Three: When you have any sort of boil or sore, you should get it checked out by a priest.

Two: Unclean!

Three: If you have leprosy, you should also get that checked out by the priest and then you'll be sent to leprosy camp away from everyone else.

Two: Unclean!

Three: Don't eat pigs.

Two: Unclean!

Three: Don't eat camels.

Two: Unclean!

Three: Don't eat bats.

Two: Unclean!

Three: When you touch a dead body, you have to go to unclean camp and wash it off.

Two: Unclean!

Four: These rules were made by God to protect His people.

One: Its also an everyday reminder of how holy God is and how unholy we are.

Three: Unclean!

One: Right, so—

Three: (*points to One*) You! Unclean!

One pinches the bridge of his nose and deep sighs.

Three: (*smiling*) This is fun.

Two: (*smiling*) Right?

Four: (*moving on*) The whole system of the tabernacle and the sacrifices was to keep God's people in community with Him and with each other.

This next section should happen fluidly, almost like choreography. Keep the dialogue moving and the pacing up.

One: So hundreds and hundreds of years later, when God did send His Son, Jesus, as a baby,

Two kneels down and becomes Mary. Three stands next to her and becomes Joseph. Four stands on the stool and becomes the angel...

Four: (*looking down at "Mary and Joseph" fondly*) God's promise of a Savior was fulfilled.

Two: Jesus grew up, living a perfect sinless life.

Four steps off of stool. One replaces her.

Three: God created the law for His people and Jesus came to fulfill the law.

One stretches out his arms as a cross. Two and Three are facing One, with their backs to the audience. Four faces the audience as she speaks.

Four: Jesus was crucified on a cross. He took on all of our sins—the sins that had been committed and the sins yet to be committed. (*turns to face One*)

Two: (*turns to speak to audience*) This perfect sinless lamb, who knew no sin, became sin for you and for me. And just before He died He declared,

One: It is finished.

Two: No more sacrifices.

Three: *(turns to face audience)* No more separation from God.

Four: *(turns to face audience)* No more death.

One: *(steps off of stool)* The problem with holiness was solved.

Four: Now it's up to you to accept God's free gift of life and to live holy lives pleasing to Him.

Two: But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses,

Three: made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

One: and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Four: so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

One: It...is...finished.

Lights out.