

“Twelve Words at the River Jordan”

by
Andrew Kooman

- What** In this skit, Thomas and Philip recount the moment they witnessed Jesus’ baptism by John at the Jordan, and how love from heaven spilled onto the earth.
- Themes:** Baptism, Discipleship, Obedience, Faith, Witness, Hearing God’s Voice
- Who** Philip
Thomas
- When** The day Christ is baptized
- Wear (Props)** Philip and Thomas both wear a simple garment with a cloak.
- Why** Matthew 3:13-17
- How** Author’s Note: The reference to 12 words in the title and dialogue for this skit are to the English translation from the original Greek: “This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight.” Please note that the original Greek consists of fewer words.
- Keep the dialogue energetic. Philip and Thomas are amazed and excited about what they saw, and deeply want to pass that on to everyone else.
- Time** Approximately 3 minutes

Lights up. Philip and Thomas are onstage and address the audience.

Philip: We were standing there, at the Jordan river. Thomas here was ankle deep in the water with the others, and I was standing on the shore.

Thomas: I was shivering. My clothes were wet, but I think my body was shaking mostly because I'd just gone up to the prophet and confessed my sins before he lowered me into the water.

Philip: He called it a baptism.

Thomas: When I came up from the water, my whole body tingled, and then I started to shake.

Philip: Not everybody watching went to the water. There were a lot of people whose clothes were dry except for sweat from the heat of the day.

Thomas: All around us you could smell the dust on the crowd, mixed with body and foot odor.

Philip: I turned around when Thomas grabbed my garment.

Thomas grabs Philip's cloak to reenact the moment of Christ's baptism. They relay their lines as though they are watching the moment all over again.

NOTE: The actors move in and out of the moment, re-living the baptism and explaining their experience to the audience.

Thomas: Hey Philip, look! There goes another person to the prophet.

Philip: Something about him was different. All eyes were on this guy.

Thomas: A man. Young, maybe thirty.

Philip: Smiling. Handsome.

Thomas: When he was waist deep in the river, that's when he started talking to the prophet.

Philip: Hmm. That's strange.

Thomas: What?

Philip: Look at John the Baptist. He's unusually quiet...he almost looks afraid.

Thomas: John, afraid? Yeah right.

Philip: Then suddenly the air got electric. You know the feeling, right? The moment after the lightning strikes and you await the booming sound of

thunder. It's only the prophet and the man in the water, with hundreds of curious eyes watching them.

Thomas: He doesn't want to do it! John isn't gonna baptize the man. I wonder what he did.

Philip: Must've been something bad. Oh wait. Wait! There he goes.

Thomas falls backwards into Philip's arms. Philip puts his hands on Thomas' head and back and lowers him as though baptizing him, reenacting John's baptism of Jesus.

Philip then launches Thomas forward, as though bursting from the water. Thomas stands and mimics Christ's response after being baptized, arms outstretched to heaven.

Thomas: When he reappears from below the water's surface the man turns his face toward heaven, arms outstretched, palms out.

Philip: And that's when the thunder boomed. It wasn't just a sound. It was a force that entered our bodies and echoed inside of us. All of us.

Thomas: But not thunder. A voice.

Philip: And not just any voice. *God's voice.* Not just God's voice given through a prophet, not God's voice through a filter, God's *actual* voice.

Thomas: We both heard it, and so did hundreds of others! After 400 years of silence that voice cut through hundreds of years of waiting...

Philip: ...of frustration...

Thomas: ...of hope.

Philip: Four hundred years of doubt and sorrow and moral failure.

Thomas: Four hundred years of spiritual agony and darkness.

Philip: Four hundred years of confusion and faith and longing.

Thomas: Can you blame me for shaking?

Philip: You want to know what it sounded like? Imagine all the creative power in the universe being carried in the intonation of that voice. Imagine all of the power of God's holiness filling a single sentence. God's accent that informs all of creation said, "This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight."

Thomas: Twelve words. That changed everything for us.

Philip: That's when I knew I'd forever follow him.

Thomas: Some of the people on the shore, the ones whose clothes weren't wet, who wouldn't enter the water, they said it was just a strange phenomenon. Thunder with no rain.

Philip: But I know it was God's voice, breaking into time to express his love for his own Son.

Thomas: The whole world seemed to shake with the truth of it.

Philip: And the love God has for his Son, spilled over into us.

Lights out.

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