

Parables

Originally written as the script to the video "A Heart for Durrington" this is a series of interconnected parables with a call to Christians to have heart of compassion for the people of the place where they live just as Jesus was moved to tears over his beloved Jerusalem. The sketches could be performed separately or as a whole. The complete storyboard of the original is available on request as indeed is the video itself. I have left in the section at the end which brings the stories together but it could equally well be omitted. The original settings of the drama were outside appropriate places in the locality, e.g. the bank, a factory and so on.

Man: We were doing all right. Me and my brother. We'd started the business back in '91. 'Course it was a struggle at first but the bank helped out and gradually things got off the ground. We had plans too. We weren't just going to stop at the one premises. Thought of expanding into (place name) y and maybe even (another bigger place). I'm sure the bank would have given us the extra loan. Only too keen they would have been. When they saw our turnover last year I think even they were surprised about how far we'd got. Yes, everything was looking rosy. And then....then (emotional) he....my brother just upped and died. Sudden it was. He was driving into work one day and felt a pain in the chest. Pulled over outside (local shop) and that was it. here one minute.. gone the next...We'd had loads of plans....we were really going to make it.....and it's all gone.....I mean.....what's it all for? What's it all about?

Person 1:(overjoyed) I can't believe it! I mean....it's incredible! I think...I don't know what to think.....it's bloomin incredible. That's all I can say....I mean there we were half an hour ago shaking in our boots.....and now look!

Person 2: Yeah I know. I suppose it is something in a way...

Person 1: In a way! In a way! Look I don't mind admitting I was desperate. I was £1000 in debt and I've been dreading the letter for weeks. And then when it came and the manager wanted to see me today...I don't mind telling you I wanted to run away or do something worse.....and all the way here my heart was thumping in my chest.....

Person 2: Yeah well don't go all dramatic on me.. It's not that big a deal. I mean he's not hard up for a bob or two or his bank...

Person 1: Well I don't see how you can take that attitude...I mean he let you off your overdraft, too.

Person 2: Yeah, well big deal...£100...that's a fleabite to a bloke like that.

Person 1: Well...just the same. He's let us off. Both of us. And I for one am pretty grateful, I can tell you. I mean he didn't have too. And we'd both be in a worse mess now if he hadn't. Don't forget that.

Riotous party noises from inside-revellers in background

Man: (as if half way through interview) No...no, it didn't start out like this at all. In fact myself and the wife issued invitations ages ago. Had them all delivered by hand actually, all over (place name). We were planning quite a do, as you would expect. I mean it's not every day that your only son gets married is it?

Interviewer: So you weren't expecting these particular guests?

Man: I'll say not...well not at first that is.. But what happened...well it hardly seems credible. As you know I do have a bit of pull around here. I'm not without friends and contacts.....but I got no takers...that's the short and the long of it. I mean it hardly

seems possible...

Interviewer: Nobody turned up?

Man: Nobody replied even. I meanyou know what people here are like. I thought they'd just overlooked the RSVP on the card. I've done the same myself before now. So I sent some of my men out with reminders just to jog a few memories. But apparently I had it all wrong. They just didn't want to come. No apologies. They just downright refused.

Interviewer: And how did you feel about that?

Man: Feel...feel? I tell you how I felt. I felt like giving every one of them a good boot up the backside...that's how I felt....but then I calmed down a bit....I'd got all this spread arranged.....caterers indisco...you know the full works. Well you just can't let it go to waste can you. So I thought -jigger it. If they don't want, I'll find someone who does...so I sent my blokes out again. Down the Salisbury Road, down the car park...everywhere. I got them to invite everybody they could find and who wanted a good feed up. And that's why there here.

Interviewer: (hesitant) And a very jolly bunch they are too....They seem to have attracted the attention of the forces of law a bit...

Man: You know I don't honestly care. At least they want to join in the celebrations. They haven't stood us up. I've found out who my friends are, I tell you that. Do you want to stay?

Interviewer: (cagily) Err thank you....And with the news of the rather noisy goings on here at the (village hall,) (place name), which have caused so much concern I hand you back to the studio

Interviewer: Look, thanks a lot. I will stay for a drink if you don't mind. You've got to toast the happy couple, haven't you?

Man: Be my guest.

Take glass and fills it from wine bottle

(Outside garage showroom)

Person 1: This is it. Great isn't it. I just had to have it.

Person 2: Yeah, really nice wheels. What did it set you back?

Person 1: Well you can see. (Points to price on windscreen) But I just had to have it.

Person 2: I didn't know you had that kind of cash.

Person 1: Well I didn't. But was soon as I saw it, I fell in love with it. I just had to have it. Do you know what I mean?

Person 2: Yes, I suppose so. But I tell you what, I couldn't put my hand on that kind of dosh just like that.

Person 1: Nor me. But when you've got to have something, you've got to have it. You have to make sacrifices.

Person 2: Like what?

Person 1: Like evenings out, like good meals, like holidays....

Person 2: Oh, I see

Person 1: Like new clothes...like going down the pub..

Person 2: You really have been serious, haven't you?

Person 1: Like taking the wife out...like birthdays and Christmas presents. You name it, I've gone without for ages.

Person 2: Has it really been worth it?

Person 1: Are you kidding. To get this, I would have given up a whole lot more, wouldn't you?

Watchman: I tell you what. It's a pretty boring job this. Night watchman that's me. Nothing much happens, I can tell you. Mind you I don't know if that's so much a bad thing. I'm not desperate for action. No, a quiet life, if you know what I mean. No, the job's all right, I suppose. I've just got to keep an eye on the premises. Walk around a bit. Check things out. That's what the boss says. He told me: Keep alert. Just like the boy scouts- be prepared. So that's what I do. As I say nothing much happens- but I suppose something could...you never know....intruders...hooligans...and the boss has got plenty of stuff he wants guarding. And you never know with him. He's the sort to trust me to get on with the job but he's also the sort who'll drop in kind of unexpectedly. You never know. And he won't trumpet his arrival. He'll just turn up and I wouldn't give much for my chances if he were to find me asleep on the job....so I'll do my job....I'll keep at it and I'll keep awake....'cos you never know....he'll be back sometime.....yes....he'll drop in....yes.

(Turns round and bends over brazier)

Man: (Place name)....why didn't you listen....why couldn't you see....it was for you....yes you

Music

Narrator: Jesus wept.....Jesus wept.....he wept for friends and he wept for his beloved city. He wept for the people. He wept because they did not know the way to find peace and he wept because they did not recognise that God had come to them....he wept because he saw how near their destruction was...Jesus wept...would he weep for (place name)? If he were here today, would he? Of course we aren't like the people of Jerusalem 2000 years ago.....are we? Do we know the way to find peace? Do we know God has come to us? Do we know how long we've got left to us?

We spend our time building up a life for ourselves. We really work at it. But like this man's brother we could find it's been for nothing. God could step in at any time and tell us that our life is

required of us. Who knows?

And would we really like to get to the end knowing we are not in a credit situation with God? We don't have to. Just like the bank manager was able to waive the overdraft so a loving God will forgive us for the things which have landed us in the red. And the joy it brings, the immense relief to know you have been forgiven of all you have ever done wrong. Those people who have been forgiven of much wrong in their lives can teach gratitude to those who perhaps don't feel they have so much to be forgiven for. And it's precisely that that God is offering-forgiveness

It's a free offer...an invitation sent out to everyone-sent via his son Jesus Christ. He forgave us the debt...and paid for our sin himself by dying a horrifying crucifixion death at Calvary. And now he has invited us to live in His resurrection life. To have a forgiven existence...a new life...for free. And all we have to do is accept the offer. And that's what so many people find difficult. Just saying thank you for the offer, thank you for the invitation...I'll come...I accept. Not everybody will come but be careful the offer isn't there for ever...others will be invited...

But for those who have discovered that everything they have ever done wrong can be forgiven because of what Jesus Christ has done for them for those people the experience of new life is worth everything on earth. They will gladly give everything to invest in this new life, the eternal life which Christ brings. It is worth more than anything else on earth. Worth giving everything to have

And this Jesus who dies for our sin at Calvary, rose again to life and who now continues to live with those who have surrendered their lives to him has promised to come back. We don't know when but we do know He'll return as a King. We know He will return for those who know and love Him. And although it may seem a long time ago that He left us with the promise He would return, return He will. We need to be alert and watching for that return

When He does come, what will He find. What will He find in (place name). Will He find a (village) of people who have turned

to Him for forgiveness, who know the power of His forgiveness in their lives and who have accepted His rule for their futures?

Or will He weep over (name of town) Will He weep over you?