

Not-so-living Sacrifices and the Simple Art of Infiltration
A Skit for 4 Actors
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JESUS: The One and Only :)

STEVE: An aspiring worship leader and gifted musician

ELLEN: A talented vocalist who is comfortable in the spotlight

PASTOR: A gifted and confident preacher at a growing church

(Three actors sit or stand in separate areas across the stage. They are in a frozen position and come to life as their characters speak. A fourth actor, JESUS, stands on a box at the back of the stage with his back to the audience. His arms are reached out, forming the shape of the cross.)

JESUS: And so dear children, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to the Lord.

STEVE *(holding hands up in the air)*: Lord, I offer you my hands. Take them and use them to bring glory to your Name. *(He picks up a guitar, or any other musical instrument, and begins to play the worship song, "I Surrender All." If possible, this music underscores ELLEN's words which follow.)*

ELLEN: Lord, I offer you my voice. May it sing your praises always. May it bring your light and love to many people. *(She joins in with the music and begins to sing the same worship song above. The music and singing continue softly under the PASTOR'S words.)*

PASTOR: Lord, I offer you my life. Take it and make it yours. Live through me. May my life bring many to the knowledge of you. *(He begins to read/preach from the Bible.)* The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:12: "Live good lives among the people who do not believe. They may talk about you as if you do wrong things. But when they see the good things you do, they will praise God on the day when Christ comes again." Amen.

ELLEN: Amen.

STEVE: Amen.

(On the word 'Amen' each character, except for JESUS, bows as in prayer and goes back to their initial frozen position.)

JESUS *(turning to face audience)*: Amen.

STEVE *(coming back to life; looking up as if praying)*: Lord, thank you for using my hands. Continue to use them for your will. *(He begins to play another worship song as JESUS steps down from box and crosses to STEVE.)*

JESUS: Steve, thank you for your offering.

STEVE: No problem. Anything for you.

JESUS: Steve, I want you to use your hands for me.

STEVE: I know. These hands are all yours. What song do you want me to play? *(He fumbles through a folder of sheet music.)*

JESUS: No, Steve. That's not what I need from you today. Today the janitor at your church/corps is ill. No one has stepped up to clean the toilets and scrub the bathroom floors in his place.

STEVE: You want me to do that? Clean the toilets?! Gross! I mean, have you even seen what the church bathrooms look like?

JESUS: Of course I have. They're nasty.

STEVE: Nasty! Yeah, exactly! Come on, Jesus! Who are you kidding? You gave me these hands to play worship songs, to become a worship leader, not to clean toilets! *(He begins to play loudly, preferably an upbeat, rock-style worship song.)*

JESUS: Steve, I know why I gave you those hands . . . Now take your hands and use them for my glory.

STEVE *(playing loudly to avoid hearing JESUS)*: What was that?

JESUS: You'll never know the joy of serving me until you're willing to get your hands dirty.

STEVE: What did you say? I can't hear you. *(He continues to rock out on guitar.)*

JESUS: I know. Your hands are not mine. They are still yours.

(ELLEN begins to sing the first line of a worship song, perhaps, "All in All" or "Jesus, All for Jesus," as STEVE's music fades out.)

ELLEN: Lord, thank you for giving me a voice to sing praises to your name. My voice and every gift I have belong to you!

JESUS *(crossing to ELLEN)*: Thank you, Ellen. But is your voice truly mine?

ELLEN: Of course it is. You gave it to me, and it's all yours.

JESUS: Good, because I want to ask you to do something special with your voice for me.

ELLEN: Great! What is it? A concert at another church? Making a worship CD? Whatever you ask, I'll do it!

JESUS: Those are all nice things, Ellen. But I want you to tell your friends about me.

ELLEN: My friends?

JESUS: Yes. The girls that sit at your lunch table. The ones on your track team.

ELLEN: But Lord, I couldn't do that. You gave me my voice to *sing* your praises. . .

JESUS: And my praises belong outside of the church walls.

ELLEN: Listen. *(She closes her eyes and begins to sing more of the same praise song or another one completely. As she continues singing throughout the dialogue, she sings louder and stronger trying to avoid the truth of what JESUS is saying to her. She may string together a bunch of different praise songs as a hurried montage that communicates how hard she is trying to block him out.)*

JESUS: No, Ellen, you listen. You enjoy being praised for the gift of your voice. . .

ELLEN: Doesn't that sound nice? *(She continues singing.)*

JESUS: And maybe you've forgotten that your gifts aren't meant to earn you praise. They are meant to bring glory to the Father.

ELLEN: Did you like it? *(During the preceding, STEVE has taken an interest in ELLEN's voice and comes over to hear her. He steps in between ELLEN and JESUS to answer her question.)*

STEVE *(in dreamy awe of ELLEN)*: It was great.

ELLEN *(equally dreamy)*: Thanks! *(STEVE and ELLEN begin to chat flirtatiously, ad libbing about how he plays guitar, how they could form a band, etc.; forgetting about Jesus, who steps out of their way, unnoticed, as they return to STEVE's area of the stage and begin looking through his folder as if they are going to collaborate on a song together.)*

JESUS: You do not use your voice for me. If you did, you would use it both when it earns you praise and when it earns you scorn. For all who choose to serve me will suffer persecution. *(ELLEN and STEVE freeze.)*

PASTOR *(coming to life)*: Thank you, Lord, for using my life. My life is in your hands!

JESUS *(crossing to PASTOR)*: Thank you, Bill, for your gift.

PASTOR: No, thank you, Lord. For it is only in losing my life for you that I can truly find my life.

JESUS: I'm glad you feel that way. Because I have an important purpose for your life.

PASTOR: You do?! I knew it! I've been faithful. I've sought you with my whole heart, and it hasn't gone unnoticed.

JESUS: Of course not. That's why I want you to go to Indonesia where many people have never heard my Word.

PASTOR: Indonesia?! But I could be stoned for preaching the gospel there. I could be tortured! I wouldn't have a church building, or a . . .

JESUS: But you would have me. Wouldn't that be enough?

PASTOR: Of course you would, but, see, I don't think now would be the best time to go. I'm in the middle of a sermon series here about trust, and it's really reaching people. Check out this one for next week. *(He takes out some notes and begins to look for the right spot.)*

JESUS: You are preaching to people who already know me, and this is an important work. But I am asking you to go where the people do not know me or my love for them.

PASTOR: *(Reading from his sermon notes as he also tries to drown out JESUS:)* Proverbs 3:5-6 says: Trust in the Lord with all your heart. But what does that mean? Do you know how to trust the Lord when it doesn't make sense, when it's uncomfortable. . . *(Actor ad libs on this theme at half-voice under JESUS' next line. He may say: Let's continue reading. "And lean not on your own understanding." Are you doing that?, In all thy ways, acknowledge him. . .etc)*

JESUS: Your life was mine as long as my plans coincided with yours. As long as it fit your idea of what it means to serve me.

PASTOR: What did you say? You agree that trust is difficult? *(PASTOR takes out a piece of paper and begins to vigorously write notes onto it as if adding to his sermon. HE ignores JESUS' words which follow.)*

JESUS: Your life is not mine. It is still your own. *(PASTOR freezes.)* They say they have offered me their hands, their voices, their lives. But they give me only what they want to give and not what I ask from them. They are too obstinate, afraid and comfortable to become living sacrifices. Are you? *(JESUS extends his arms as if posing the question. Lights begin to fade with soft spotlight on JESUS as he raises his arms slightly so that they form a cross. As this happens, very softly the first verse and chorus of "I Surrender All" is sung accapella by the actors on stage who are still frozen, or if preferred it can be sung by an offstage voice. Lights fade to black on the last word of the song.)*