



THE BEST YOU HAVE

The Rich and the Poor Alike Need Jesus



A Christmas Play written by Holy Spirit

Begins with a short novel to introduce the characters

JULY 1, 1991
DANNY WILLIS

Henry and Ralph

Facing another chilly evening, he knew the alley with the warm grate was ideal for sleeping, but to secure it, he needed to arrive early. However, his hunger drew him towards his favorite eatery's best leftovers around 6:00 p.m., which meant darkness would settle in soon after. He agonized over what mattered more: a warm spot to sleep or a meal. His mind wandered to the injustice of losing his two-decade long job to a recent graduate, a stark reminder of his own youthful ambition. Remorse filled him as he thought of the older employee he had once replaced. With the current pressing choices, these reflections seemed pointless. His thoughts drifted to his family's well-being at the shelter he left them at, his heart aching even more than the day he saw them settle amongst other homeless individuals.

He had a hard time making sense of the situation at the time, so he left, persuading himself they were in a better place without him, without someone who could no longer provide for them. Yet, he often pondered whether it would have been different if love alone could meet their needs for food and shelter. He would then question his love for them because leaving seemed contradictory. Despite endlessly deliberating this since it happened, he never found any comfort. He would wonder if given another chance, would he choose differently. This is when his memory would revisit the births of his three children, recalling the joy and happiness, how radiant Betty looked during pregnancy, and holding their newborn.

Suddenly, Ralph nudged him, saying, "Snap out of it, Henry, there's no time to daydream. You're thinking about your family again, aren't you?" "Mind your business, Ralph. What's wrong with a man lost in thought? Anyway, why are we in a rush?" "Our favorite spot is putting out their scrap barrel, we should head there," Ralph responded. Henry glanced up at the sky, noting Ralph's correct assumption as the sun was near setting, bringing a chill to the air.

"Can you secure our spot by the grate, Ralph? I'll fetch food for both of us. Agreed?" "Sure, heading there now." "Me too," said Henry. Arriving at the scrap barrel after others, he pushed forward but found there was no more food. Anticipating a new batch soon, he reminisced about waiting for his daughter's birth, feeling anxious and excluded from the delivery room away from his wife and newborn girl. Shaking himself from nostalgia, he refocused on jostling for a position to get food when brought out in the barrel. Ignoring the judgement of others, hunger prevailed as all yearned for sustenance before night descended with its chill. He hoped Ralph kept their spots and dreaded returning empty-handed.

Henry, who once might have been proud, now found no trace of it in his demeanor. As he chuckled in self-reflection while waiting for leftover food among other homeless individuals, he pondered his presence there.

Relieved by his decision to flee the state, ensuring no one who knew him would witness his current plight, he was struck by the irony of his situation. Never had he imagined this as his reality.

He frequently contemplated suicide but feared surviving with a disability that would prevent him from being independent. As he stood by, men rushed out of the kitchen with leftover food, everyone eagerly eating. Randy, the restaurant owner, caught Henry's eye, signaling a special portion set aside for him and Ralph. Knowing better than to reveal this privilege in front of others, Henry waited. After the crowd dispersed, he went to collect his share. Randy presented a box filled with fresh steak, onions, potatoes, beans, and bread. He thanked Randy and was grateful and eager to share with Ralph.

Henry reflected on the selfish nature of the world, where even the kindest individuals eventually expected something in return. Yet, Randy stood out. He never sought repayment for his kindness.

When he brought his prize to the grate, he saw Ralph had kept their places for the evening, though it hadn't been without struggle. The scratch bleeding on Ralph's face said enough. As Ralph grinned and opened the food box, Henry smiled back. They quietly enjoyed their food and prepared for a cozy night's sleep by the grate.

Ralph, who was the same age as Henry's age, had been homeless longer. He met Henry when he arrived in town. Noticing Henry was new to homelessness and hungry, Ralph took him under his wing. They quickly bonded, sharing with each other their personal stories of how they ended up without a home.

Ralph grew up with a violent father and a mother who struggled with drug addiction. He escaped his troubled home life at thirteen, fleeing the mistreatment and disgrace he felt. Ralph managed to get by, taking up dishwashing jobs at various truck stops, traveling as far away from his past as possible. Six years later, upon reaching California, he felt an immediate sense of belonging. There, he started once again as a dishwasher, but quickly advanced to become a chef within a year. He fell in love with Amy, a waitress he worked with, and they soon married. Initially, things were great, and Ralph was overjoyed, but his happiness ended abruptly with news of Amy's death in a freeway collision involving multiple vehicles.

Following the tragedy, Ralph withdrew from social interaction, neglected work, and ignored calls from friends. Eventually, his friends stopped reaching out, and he lost hope in himself.

Following his total loss and subsequent homelessness, he concluded that happiness wasn't for everyone, vowing to keep others at a distance in the way Amy was once close. Two decades after Ralph's wife's passing, Henry arrived, and despite Ralph's intention to avoid new friendships, something about Henry made him want to take the risk.

Ralph became protective of him, and amidst their shared hardships, they discovered the joy of friendship and formed a strong bond.

They frequently discussed reentering society but struggled with where to begin. Staying homeless and tackling each day as it comes seemed simpler, supporting one another through daily challenges. Occasionally, they contemplated God, wondering about God's existence and purpose for them, and how God might reveal that to them. Oh, well another endless thought that never got settled. There was a lot of time for thinking.

These two friends took turns sleeping, with one standing guard while the other rested. They occasionally quarreled over their warm spots during the night but would willingly give up space by the grate for a cold child or woman. Despite the shelter being packed, they made it a point to help women and children find a place.

Henry experienced a sensation of discomfort in his abdomen, signaling that something he ate may have been disagreeable. He informed Ralph of his situation before excusing himself in search of a location to alleviate his digestive distress. Regrettably, such occurrences were not within his control and required immediate attention. His initial destination was a nearby convenience store known for its 24-hour accessibility to a restroom. Upon arrival, Henry discovered the restroom was out of commission, prompting him to resort to an alternative—a dumpster behind the store. As he dealt with his predicament, Henry reflected on the state of his life and how difficult it was. Nevertheless, such contemplations did little to soothe his abdominal pain, compelling him to continue addressing his urgent need.

An hour later, Henry returned to the grate, chilled to the bone and in need of warmth. Unfortunately, Ralph had lost their places to a couple of other men who were stronger than him. With no alternative, they proceeded to the shelter, only to find a full house. However, they were provided with a blanket and a place on the sidewalk. The promise of a warm breakfast served at the shelter gave them a glimmer of hope to cling to.

Henry's condition didn't improve overnight, and he was freezing. His shivers were so intense that he suspected it wasn't just a minor illness. Ralph inquired at the shelter whether a doctor could see Henry. They ended up calling an ambulance, which transported him to the nearby hospital. The medical staff conducted tests, revealing a burst appendix. Henry was rushed into surgery right away.

Recovering from such a serious illness would take time, first in the hospital, followed by a short stay in a nursing facility before he would return to the streets.

Ralph secured a permanent spot at the shelter and stayed informed about Henry's recovery through updates from the cafeteria staff. Henry felt deeply grateful for the excellent treatment he received, which reminded him of his wife Charlotte's loving care.

He resolved to reunite with his family once he was well enough and to ask for their forgiveness. Additionally, he was appreciative of his friend Ralph, who had helped him realize the significance of family.

Nellie and Maggie

She was unaware of the truck's approach until it was too late. Her four-year-old daughter, Maggie, was secured in her child seat in the back, so Nellie hoped she was ok. She called for her but she didn't respond. So she called again louder, still no response. She couldn't turn to look in her direction because of the air bag and the seat belt and the door was wedged into her seat. It was then that Nellie lost consciousness. She didn't know that the windshield glass had cut her arm and that it was bleeding heavily. The accident had also fractured both legs and her neck. She had gone into shock.

After paramedics rescued her using the Jaws of Life, she was taken to Community General Hospital. It took two days for Nellie to regain consciousness and realize her location. Concerned about her daughter, she attempted to inquire but was silenced by the respirator tube. She began to struggle, so morphine was administered to soothe her and promote healing. The medical team, aware they needed to inform her of her daughter's death in the accident, hoped that additional recovery time might make the news easier to bear.

Nellie was thirty-five, she hailed from Germany and could be described as an attractive woman. However, her past relationships with men had been less than favorable. She was raised by an abusive father and her subsequent relationships with three boyfriends mirrored this dynamic; they were often excessively jealous and expected more from her than they were prepared to offer in return. Nellie resided in a single-bedroom apartment that afforded a view of the cityscape. As an immigrant in the United States, she had made commendable progress. She firmly embraced the advice given to many newcomers in America: through diligent work, she too could attain the American dream.

Having held three positions as a maid and encountering employers who were difficult and lacked empathy, she started to question the positive image she had of America. However, this perception shifted after she started working for the Smith family. Their considerate treatment and frequent praise for her work were new to her. They welcomed her like a family member, making her job enjoyable to the point where it didn't even feel like work. She sometimes felt a bit guilty for receiving payment for looking after what she considered her own family.

For the past ten years, Nellie had worked for the Smiths as a maid and babysitter. The Smiths were wealthy and kind-hearted. She was grateful daily for her employment with them and for their respect towards her and her work.

When she had a child out of wedlock, they showed great understanding and kindness, offering for she and her child to live with them and their support in raising Maggie. Nellie, valuing her independence, declined the offer but appreciated the gesture deeply.

They permitted her to bring Maggie to work from the beginning, and she fulfilled all her responsibilities while caring for her child. The Smiths also pitched in with Maggie and grew very fond of her.

While under the influence of morphine, Nellie had vivid dreams of Maggie, clad in a white dress and cradled by Jesus in a beautiful and bright place. Maggie appeared joyful, and Jesus resembled the image Nellie held in her mind. The recurrent dream led Nellie to the sorrowful acceptance that Maggie might have passed away, evoking tears and grief at the thought of their separation. Yet, each time the dream recurred, she found comfort as she heard Maggie echo the words she'd been taught: "Jesus loves me whole bunches." With these dreams, Nellie wept but also felt grateful for the love of Jesus.

A few days later, she was roused from sleep by a crowd around her bed. It was the entire Smith family, gathered and anticipating her first words. Once the breathing tube was removed, she began to speak in a frail, quiet voice. As Nellie met Betty's gaze, she could see Betty fighting back tears. "Maggie has passed on to be with Jesus, hasn't she?" Nellie whispered.

At this, Betty's tears broke free as she wept openly. Nellie extended her hand, which Betty took, and together the whole family wept in a group embrace. Sensing the need for strength, Nellie reassured them, sharing the dream she had experienced.

The Smiths were amazed by Nellie's strength, at least at the moment. They were hesitant to tell her they had already buried Maggie, thinking it would be too much for her. But when informed, Nellie wept loudly, but then recognized the kindness of the Smiths during her recovery. Gratefully acknowledging each member of the family, she tearfully expressed her thanks.

Nellie spent one week in the intensive care unit and another in a private room before the Smiths could bring her home to continue her recovery. Her spirit felt incredibly void, but the dream that she knew was sent by God prevented her from falling into depression. She was eager to visit the place where Maggie rested, though she knew she had more healing to undergo first.

She began to understand the reasons behind some individuals' resentment towards God during such trying times. She questioned His absence in protecting Maggie, and pondered why it was her time to depart. Yet, she could not renounce her deep connection with God and acknowledged that His presence was the assurance of his existence. Her routine involved alternating between weeping, grieving, and engaging in therapy. This cycle occurred multiple times a day for the initial weeks, but as the therapy became less challenging, the grieving process gradually softened, and she began to focus on how Maggie positively influenced her life.

After resuming her duties with the Smiths, she went back to her apartment. She later visited Maggie's grave and found solace there, making frequent visits to reminisce. Taking life day by day, she trusted in God for her future.

Hans, Bill, Charlotte, Melanie and Ethan

Hans arose early, compelled by a sense of compassion to pray for the homeless individuals in his area. It had been seven years since he himself experienced homelessness. Hans suffered from an accident at his job in a manufacturing plant, which resulted in a disability that kept him unemployed for three years. After depleting his disability benefits, followed by unemployment assistance, he eventually faced homelessness. He felt relieved that he didn't have a family to support during that tough time, as it would have increased the burden. Thankfully, he had recuperated from his injuries by the time he lost his housing.

He always remembers Randy, a chef who let him eat for free in the restaurant kitchen he owned. He'd heard Randy relocated to California. After three months homeless, he secured a spot in a local shelter where he kept busy cooking and cleaning, filling his jobless hours with helpful tasks.

Upon gaining a job, he remained dedicated to the homeless cause by regularly praying for them and volunteering at the shelter twice weekly, feeling a deep connection with their struggles.

He was grateful for the opportunity the Smiths, a kind and generous family, had provided him. They extended their friendship during his time at the shelter, offering him employment as their butler/chauffeur. He was content with his role involving driving and household service. He finished his prayers with thanks for his employment and renewed life, as was his daily ritual before starting work.

He lived in the upstairs apartment of the Smith's garage and entered the Smith's home through the back entrance.

He addressed Nellie with his usual warmth, "Good morning, Nellie, how are you feeling today?" "About back to normal I would say, usual aches and pains early but they work out as the day progresses", said Nellie. "How are you this morning Hans?" "Feeling great and ready to start my day", he replied.

Just then, the Smith children, Ethan and Melanie, burst into the kitchen—Ethan clutching Melanie's hairbrush, with Melanie in hot pursuit, needing it for her daily ritual of one hundred brushstrokes to maintain her beauty regimen. Nellie scolded Ethan firmly, "Ethan, no more running, please return Melanie's brush."

He complied with reluctance, only for Melanie to hit him with the brush before dashing upstairs to complete her beauty regimen. Nellie asked, "Do you realize the consequences of your actions now?" Ethan replied, "Seeing her that angry was worth it."

Upon entering, Betty, their mother, asked about the commotion. "Ethan, have you been pestering your sister again?" "Mother, would I do such a thing?" he answered. "Spare me the sarcasm; it's too early for it," she said. "Get ready for school before I inform your father of your antics."

"How are you two this morning?" inquired Betty. "Fine," replied Hans. Nellie remarked, "I am feeling better every day, thank you."

"I'm going to get the car out of the garage while the children prepare for school," Hans declared. Betty responded, saying, "Good, thank you, Hans."

Bill Smith walked into the kitchen and asked about the kids' commotion. Betty explained it was just their usual, Ethan bothering Melanie and her reacting loudly. Addressing Nellie, Bill joked if it was "business as usual," to which she agreed. After inquiring about Nellie's well-being and hearing she was continuing to improve, Bill humorously suggested she'd be doing cartwheels soon. Nellie played along, and everyone shared a laugh at Bill's joke.

"Betty, after Hans drops off the children at school, I'll need him for most of today. Do you require his assistance for anything?" "No, I'll manage. If necessary, I can use Melanie's car. She's grounded for another week anyway." "Right, hopefully, she'll soon understand that our wealth doesn't entitle her to everything she desires, including a fast sports car. Ethan doesn't seem affected by it, does he?"

"Well, he's much younger, and besides, he's a boy." "True, but all we need to do is let him play his video games and he stays happy for hours on end." "Yes, they are quite different from one another."

"My little Maggie was quite different than your two," Nellie remarked. "She was truly special, such a dear child," Betty responded. "Yes, and now she is being loved whole bunches by Jesus, just as she always said."

"Let's shift our conversation to avoid becoming too emotional again," Bill interjected. "We have an important Sunday ahead—the Sunday before Christmas—and the pastor has organized for us to hold services at the Main Street Shelter. His dedication to doing good is contagious, always finding ways to engage us. It's something I cherish; don't you agree?" Betty asked. "Absolutely, I believe we all appreciate it," said Bill.

Hans interrupted to inquire, "Mr. Smith, are the children ready for school?" Mr. Smith replied, "I'm not certain; let me check." He then called out, "Children, come downstairs; it's time to go to school."

Ethan hurried down quickly, while Melanie walked at a slower pace, still upset about her punishment. She struggled to comprehend the reason for being grounded, thinking, "Why can't I have the car I want, and what does it matter what it costs? I am seventeen and soon I'll be off to college—then they will regret not giving me that sports car."

Joining hands to form a circle as they always had since Melanie's birth, Bill called on Hans to say the prayer. Hans prayed, *"Heavenly Father, thank you for today and the strength to fulfill our daily tasks for Your glory. Thank you for chances to serve You through serving others. Please forgive our shortcomings. We yield to Your rule over every moment of this day. In Jesus' name, amen."*

When Hans got back from taking the children to school, he found Bill eager to begin his day at the office.

Bill became the sole heir to his father's construction company and wealth because he was the only child. He promised himself that he would not let the business overshadow what he valued more in life—his wife, children, church community, and employees. His father's early death from a heart attack at forty-five was attributed to excessive stress about finances and not enough leisure and enjoyment. His father had focused too intently on financial provision for his family, often at the expense of their emotional and physical need for affection and his presence.

Bill learned to prioritize life outside work from his father's errors. His family was his motivation, and involvement in their church highlighted life's true value.

Bill and Betty became Christians in college during a Crusade for Christ event, which transformed their lives. They soon engaged with a local homeless shelter, finding great joy in serving.

Married at 25, they now celebrated two decades together and were blessed with their children, Melanie and Ethan. They believed humility was better than indulging in luxury while others had less.

They consistently attempted to assist in ways they believed were guided by their faith and acknowledged that sometimes their children received more than they needed. This caused them feelings of guilt, particularly as their daughter Melanie tended to exhibit entitled behavior and lacked empathy for those less privileged. They frequently hoped she would understand that life's essence isn't in possession but in demonstrating compassion towards others.

Ethan was different, their wealth was not something he was acutely aware of. His desires were modest, and he had a generous spirit, willing to share with others, albeit lacking companions to do so.

His education took place in a private school setting where interaction with peers was limited to birthday celebrations or official school events. He longed for a friend who lived close to his home to spend time with.

Charlotte, Karen, Jimmy and Cindy

Their morning routine was typical. They tidied up their sleeping space at the shelter, accepting the reality of owning very little. What they cherished most was having one another, a constant source of comfort. Memories of Henry filled their thoughts daily. He had been a great father and husband until unemployment struck, leading to the eventual total loss of their possessions. Initially, they clung to hope, believing he would find work, but it never transpired. Throughout their marriage, they had never attended church, feeling self-sufficient and not in need of divine assistance.

Upon becoming homeless, they acknowledged their human struggle. Henry vanished the night they settled in the Main Street Shelter without farewells or clues to his whereabouts. It was as though he had simply vanished. They mourned his absence and alerted the shelter staff, who informed the police. However, after weeks of fruitless searching, they accepted that he had chosen to leave.

Even as they mourned his absence, they discovered purpose through aiding the shelter. Charlotte and her eldest daughter, Karen, helped with the kitchen and laundry duties.

Eleven-year-old Jimmy tidied by sweeping and discarding trash in the dumpster. Five-year-old Cindy, under Charlotte's watchful eye, played with other children in the shelter.

The shelter had a unique environment, and despite the kindness of the staff, some residents were unkind and untrustworthy. Having participated in the shelter's church services since their arrival, Charlotte and Karen soon understood that faith was absent in their lives. Following an invitation at the end of a service, they both embraced Jesus as savior, leading to a sense of peace they had never experienced before.

They started to study the bibles they received right away and quickly understood the significance of the scriptures in their lives. Despite their situation remaining the same, their perspective on it shifted. They recognized the positive aspects of their life and appreciated God's presence within. While they lacked a personal home or even a private room, what they did possess was the company of one another and their newfound faith in a personal God.

They started each day by expressing gratitude to God for supplying their needs, and asking God to be with Henry, wherever he was, holding on to the hope of his return someday. This coming Sunday was especially anticipated as it marked the final one before Christmas, with one of the community churches planning to hold their service at the shelter.

Introduction to the play ends here.

The Best You Have

Written by: Holy Spirit

Introduction:

My name is Danny Willis. I was given this play by divine revelation at a time in my life when I was having a mountaintop experience with God. I was home alone in the summer of 1991 when the Lord spoke to me saying; “I want you to write a play.” My response was “I can’t write a play” and His response to me was “I know you can’t, but I can.”

So, I got a pencil and some paper and sat down at my desk and said, “Okay Lord I am ready.” He began, giving it to me so fast that I could barely keep up, and as the play and its characters began to unfold, I realized that only God through the Holy Spirit could have put this together.

The play itself may appear simple on the surface but if we look deeper, we see that God is at work relating to each of us through the different characters in the play. I ask that those who participate in the performance of this play be committed to the leading of God. There have been times in its performance that a great deal of humor has been revealed. I did not see any humor when I was penning it. Praise the Lord for those who are willing to make the most of the characters by personalizing them.

It is my prayer that this play will speak to those who participate and those who witness its performance. May God receive all the glory and honor for He alone is worthy. I thank Him for choosing me to write it down. Praise His Wonderful Name.

Synopsis:

This play is written in very simple language for the purpose of revealing the character of Christian service. A rich family discovers that to best enjoy their Christmas they need someone to help. A poor family finds out that prayer and perseverance lead to blessings. All characters come to realize that it is Christian compassion that unlocks a truly rewarding Christmas experience. The intent of the play is to inspire the audience to seek their highest good (which is God himself) and to express this divine presence in their lives through their acts of kindness toward others as He leads.

Props List

Scene 1 – Church worship setting. Benches or chairs, podium, microphone

Scene 2 – Same as Scene 1

Scene 3 – Very nicely decorated living room. Couch, chair, coffee table, lamps, portraits, etc.

Scene 4 – Long folding table, metal chairs, cot(s), blankets, boxes of clothes, etc.

Scene 5 – Park bench, trash can labeled with Park name, cane fishing poles

Scene 6 – Same as Scene 3

Scene 7 – Same as scene 4, grocery list, clothes for poor girl

Scene 8 – Same as scenes 3 & 6

Scene 9 – Same as scenes 4 & 7, Package with new dress, cherry pie

Scene 10 – Same as scenes 3 & 6 & 8, deed for house, tea service, doll, keys, coats and rack

Cast:

Rich Family

Father – Bill Smith

Mother – Betty Smith

Girl – Melanie Smith

Boy – Ethan Smith

Butler – Hans

Maid – Nellie

Poor Family

Father – Henry Wilson

Mother - Charlotte Wilson

Girl 1 – Karen Wilson

Girl 2 – Cindy Wilson

Boy – Jimmy Wilson

Church Family

Pastor – Rev. Charles

Soloist – John Samples

Extras – Congregation

Scene 1, Sermon “The Best You Have”

Props: Benches or chairs, podium, microphone .

Cast: Rich and poor families, pastor, butler, maid, singer, extras.

Set: Church worship setting.

CURTAIN OPENS

Pastor: (From Podium) John, would you come and bless us with your special song now?

Singer: Thank you, Rev. Charles. This song is called _____.

Pastor: (After song is over) Thank you John. I know you have truly inspired us all.

Pastor: John 3:16 says; For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son and whosoever believes in Him will not perish but will have everlasting life. Friends, Jesus is God’s very best gift to us. We are reminded of this especially at this time of the year. Christmas is a wonderful time for us to remember the best things in life and to share them with those around us. I encourage each of you to look for the best you have and be willing to give it with a cheerful heart this Christmas. Let us remember that Jesus is the best we have. How can you give Him to our world?

Prayer: Let us pray, thank you Father for giving us the best you have. Help us to give the best we have this Christmas season.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 2, Butler's Gift Received

Props: Same as scene 1.

Cast: Butler and Singer.

Set: Same as scene 1.

CURTAIN OPENS

Butler: I want you to know John that I received the greatest gift from you this morning that I could have hoped for. Thank you for your beautiful song.

Singer: Thank you, Hans! To God be the glory! I am glad you were blessed.

Butler: Rev. Charles certainly inspired me today. I don't know if I have ever truly given my best to anyone.

Singer: I think we can give our best by doing whatever the Lord asks us to do in each moment of each day. I am going to try and listen more closely to the Lord this Christmas season and do what He asks me to do.

Butler: Can we pray about this together and commit ourselves to doing this?

Singer: Let's do it now. (Places hand on shoulder of Butler to say prayer) Father, we thank you for wanting to use us to help others. Please help us to listen to you and to do what you tell us to do. We commit ourselves to you now in Jesus' name. Amen.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 3, Rich Families Home

Props: Very nicely decorated living room.

Cast: All rich family including Butler. Maid not in scene.

Set: All seated including Butler. Discussing Pastor's sermon.

CURTAIN OPENS

Boy: Boy! That was the shortest sermon Rev. Charles ever had!

Girl: Yea! And I'm glad too! Did you see that poor family sitting behind us? I couldn't wait to get out of there!

Mother: Melanie! How could you say such a thing? Did you listen to any of Rev. Charles short sermon?

Father: Yes! Melanie! Maybe you need to start looking for your best right now.

Girl: Well! I do have some old clothes that don't fit anymore and some I just don't like. I could give them to the Clothes Closet for the needy at church.

Mother: Melanie, did you not hear Rev. Charles say; "give the best you have"? You're only thinking of giving what you don't want anymore. Somehow it doesn't seem the same.

Girl: Well! I'm certainly not going to give away my new clothes!

SET: Knock at door, Butler answers to find Rev. Charles. Invites him in and announces him.

Butler: (Opens door after hearing knock) Good day to you Rev. Charles. Powerful sermon today. Do come in. (Announces) Rev. Charles to see Mr. Smith.

Father: Thank you, Hans. Good day to you, Rev. Charles. I've been expecting you. Betty, I have invited Rev. Charles over to discuss helping with church outreach.

Pastor: Good day to you all. It was good to see you all at church this morning. I know you saw the family who was visiting with us. I am planning to visit them today at the family shelter on Main Street. Would you all be thinking about what you might have to give them? I am sure it would be most appreciated.

Father: Would you all please excuse us. This way Rev. Charles. (Both exit stage)

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 4, Poor Family at Shelter

Props: Long folding table, metal chairs, cot, pillows, blankets.

Cast: All poor family, Pastor.

Set: Discussing sermon while doing small chores or playing.

CURTAIN OPENS

Boy: Mom, Rev. Charles said that Jesus was God's best gift to us. What did he mean?

Mother: Do you remember the verse Rev. Charles read?

Boy: Yea, it was John 3:16

Mother: Right! That verse tells us about how much God loves us. He loved us so much that He sent His Son down to earth to save us all from our sin.

Boy: What is sin mom?

Mother: Sin is anything that causes us not to honor God. Most of the time it is our selfishness. We have no power to save ourselves from sin. Only Jesus can save us. That's why He is God's greatest gift to us.

Oldest Girl: Mom, Rev. Charles said that we should give our best this Christmas, but we don't have anything to give.

Mom: Sometimes, nothing can be the greatest gift of all. I mean, we should look into our hearts to see what Jesus says to give, not at our material things.

Set: Rev. Charles has entered the shelter and has overheard Mrs. Wilson's last words.

Pastor: Well said, Mrs. Wilson, I can see you have a heart for Jesus. I wanted to stop by and thank you all for attending church this morning and to see if there was anything I or the church can do for you and your children.

Mother: Well, how nice. Please, sit down. Rev. Charles, our story is a common one around here. My husband lost his job and then we slowly lost everything. Our home, car, everything we worked so long and hard for. Then my husband disappeared. I think he just couldn't stand to see us homeless with no way to support us. I miss him so, we all do. We found help here at this shelter after he disappeared. Karen and I have both received Christ as our Savior here in this place. Without the Lord and these good people, I don't know what we would do.

Pastor: Yes, the Lord does use these people here in a mighty way. How wonderful that you and Karen are Christians. What is your husbands' name?

Mother: Henry Wilson (pauses). Karen has been looking for a job. Maybe someone at your church could help her.

Pastor: I am sure there is someone in our church who can help her. I will certainly see what I can do. (Gets up hurriedly and leaves as poor family looks in question).

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 5, Meeting at the Park

Props: Park bench and trash can labeled with Park name. Boys may pretend to fish.

Cast: Rich and Poor mothers, Rich and Poor boys.

Set: Rich mother is seated on bench when poor mother arrives. Boys playing.

CURTAIN OPENS

Poor Mother: May I sit down?

Rich Mother: Why, certainly! Please do. Did I see you at church this morning?

Poor Mother: Why, yes! I did see you there.

Rich Mother: I'm so glad you and your children came. Do you have plans for Christmas Dinner?

Poor Mother: No? (as if to question rich mother).

Rich Mother: Would you like to come and join my family for Christmas Dinner?

Poor Mother: I'm sorry....but I.....I mean.....we don't have anything to wear.....we wouldn't want to impose.

Rich Mother: You wouldn't be imposing. We'd love to have you.

Poor Mother: (Pauses) O.K. but only if I can bake a cherry pie.

Rich Mother: Great! Can I pick you all up early Christmas morning?

Poor Mother: Yes, thank you, we are staying at the family shelter on Main Street.

Rich Mother: Just look at those boys having so much fun.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 6, Pastor at Rich Family Home

Props: Rich Family home as in the third scene.

Cast: Rich family, Butler, Maid, Pastor.

Set: All seated except rich boy who is playing on the floor with favorite toy.

CURTAIN OPENS

Pastor: I went to see the Wilson's today. You know the family we talked about this morning?

Father: Yes, would they perhaps be a candidate for what we discussed this morning?

Pastor: They certainly would! They have sad circumstances. They once were ordinary people with normal lives, but Mr. Wilson lost his job and slowly they lost everything.

Mother: How sad. I met Mrs. Wilson and her son at the park today. I invited her to come and share Christmas Dinner with us. She accepted but I know she felt uncomfortable about it. So, we must do everything we can to make them feel at home.

Pastor: That was very kind of you Betty. May I tell you all of some of their needs?

Butler: Please do!

Pastor: Well, first, Mr. Wilson disappeared a while back because he could no longer cope with their situation (Being their caregiver and not being able to support them). I would like to see if we could find him and bring him home for Christmas.

Butler: I'll do it! All I need is his name and I'll get right on it.

Pastor: Thank you, Hans! This is great! His name is Henry Wilson. He must be in his forties. Now, Mrs. Wilson says that her daughter is looking for a job.

Girl: Wait! I can help with that! A lot of my friends work at the mall, and they always need help there.

Pastor: Wonderful! Maybe you could go by and take her for an interview?

Girl: I'd be glad to. I'll get right on it. Mom, may I take some of my old clothes to her as I go?

Mother: Good idea.

Maid: May I ride with you Melanie? There are some things I need to pick up at the mall.

Girl: Yes, just let me get some clothes and we'll be off.

Pastor: (Waits until girl exits before speaking). It blesses me the way you are all helping out. God bless you all.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 7, Rich Girl and Maid at Shelter

Props: Same as Scene 4, clothes for poor girl for interview, grocery list.

Cast: All poor family, maid, rich girl.

Set: Poor family speaking before maid and rich girl enter.

CURTAIN OPENS

Boy: Mom, I'm thankful for the new friend I met at the park. He said he seldom had anyone to play with him and he goes to a private school, so he really has no friends around here.

Mother: How sad. You see son, sometimes nothing can be the best gift of all. But friendship is a very great something to give.

Set: Rich girl and maid enter carrying clothes. Poor boy goes off playing.

Rich Girl: Excuse me, I'm Melanie Smith and this is Nellie. Our pastor told us of your daughters need for a job and we are here to take her to the mall. I think she can find a job there.

Poor Girl: How wonderful! My name is Karen.

Rich Girl: I have brought you some of my clothes to see if you would like them.

Poor Girl: Great! Is there something I could put on for my job interview?

Rich Girl: I'm sure we can find something.

Poor Girl: Please come with me.

Set: Rich and Poor girls exit. Take the scene slow to allow time for poor girl to change.

Maid: I am the Smith's maid. How are you all doing today?

Mother: Fine, thank you. This certainly has been a good day.

Baby Girl: Hi, my name is Cindy.

Maid: Well, hi there. You certainly are a pretty girl. How old are you?

Baby Girl: 5

Maid: 5? You remind me of my little girl.

Mother: How nice! You have a daughter? Children are such a great joy to me.

Maid: Well, my little girl died. She was killed in an automobile accident.

Mother: Oh! I'm so sorry! If I had known...

Maid: Oh! That's o.k. I still miss her very much, but it does me good to talk about her sometimes.

Baby Girl: Your little girl lives with Jesus, doesn't she?

Maid: That's right.

Baby Girl: Jesus loves me whole bunches.

Maid: Oh! Do you know that's exactly what my little girl used to say. You are so sweet to remind me of that.

Set: Baby girl and Maid hug lovingly. Rich and poor girls reenter. Poor girl has changed.

Mother: Well! How beautiful you look!

Poor Girl: I even feel beautiful.

Rich Girl: Nellie, are you ready to go?

Maid: Would you mind picking up the things I need? I have a list (hands list to rich girl). I would like to spend some more time with the Wilson's. That is if you don't mind Mrs. Wilson?

Mother: I'd love for you to stay.

Rich Girl: O.K. We'll be back soon. Goodbye.

All: Goodbye.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 8, The Day Before Christmas

Props: Same as in scenes 3 and 6.

Cast: All Rich family, Maid and Butler.

Set: All seated casually talking about the Wilson's.

CURTAIN OPENS

Maid: Those Wilson's are certainly nice people. And that little Cindy is so precious.

Boy: Jimmy is nice too and so fun to play with. Dad, I've been wondering what I could give him for Christmas. Rev. Charles says to give your best, but my best is my video game system. I know he would like it, but I don't know if I can give it up.

Father: It's very nice of you to want to give your best. I'm sure you will make the right decision.

Mother: I want to know what all this secret business you're having with Rev. Charles is all about dear.

Father: Rev. Charles and I are working on a special surprise for the Wilson family. I'll tell you all about it tomorrow.

Butler: I hope to have a nice surprise for the Wilson's too.

Rich Girl: Oh! Did you find Henry Wilson and is he coming here for Christmas?

Butler: Tomorrow, we'll know tomorrow. (Exits stage)

Maid: Oh! I must check on dinner. (Exits behind Butler)

Rich Girl: I think this will be the greatest Christmas ever. Karen and I had the nicest time yesterday. Karen says I should never take anything for granted. She said she used to but that now she cherishes everything, especially her family. I want you all to know I really love you very much.

Set: Whole family embraces

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 9, Christmas Day at the Shelter

Props: Same as Scene 7.

Cast: All poor family and Rich Mother.

Set: Poor family preparing to leave. Mrs. Wilson has cherry pie. Poor girl has on same clothes that rich girl gave her earlier. Boy and baby girl are dressed neatly.

CURTAIN OPENS

Mother: We must hurry children. Mrs. Smith will be here any moment. Now, don't you all look nice.

Oldest Girl: I wish you had a new dress, Mom. If I get the job at the mall, I'll buy you one!

Mother: Oh, My! How strange it will feel to have money to spend. But a new dress will certainly not be in our budget.

Set: Rich Mother enters carrying a package (Her new Christmas dress).

Rich Mother: Well! Don't you all look nice? Are we all ready?

Poor Mother: Yes! I just finished the pie.

Rich Mother: My, it sure smells delicious. I have something for you, Mrs. Wilson (Hands her the package).

Poor Mother: For me? Why? You shouldn't have.

Rich Mother: I wanted to. It's the least I could do. You and your family have brought so much joy to our Christmas.

Baby Girl: Go ahead, open it, Mom.

Set: Poor mom opens the package to reveal the new Christmas dress.

Poor Mother: Why it's beautiful..... so beautiful..... thank you so much.

Oldest Girl: I guess it was in the budget after all, huh mom?

Poor Mother: Will you all please excuse me while I put it on? It will only take a minute.

CURTAIN CLOSES

Scene 10, Christmas, Rich Family Home

Props: Rich family home, cherry pie, keys, deed to house, tea service, doll, coat rack.

Cast: All members of the cast except the Pastor. Henry Wilson in scene.

Set: Everyone is excited about Christmas.

CURTAIN OPENS

Rich Mother: Nellie, Mrs. Wilson has baked a wonderful cherry pie. Please take it to the Kitchen.

Maid: Gladly! Oh! It sure smells good. Thank you, Mrs. Wilson.

Poor Mother: Oh! It's the least I could do.

Set: Maid exits with pie.

Rich Boy: Mom, can we go to my room and play?

Rich Mother: Sure, dinner won't be for a while yet.

Set: Boys exit stage.

Rich Girl: Come on Karen. Let's go to my room. I have a surprise for you.

Poor Girl: A surprise! Great! Let's go!

Poor Mother: My! My! Isn't this all so exciting? I haven't seen my children so happy in a long time.

Rich Mother: You took the words right out of my mouth. Please do come in and sit down.

Poor Mother: Come along Cindy don't be shy.

Butler: (After hanging coats) May I offer you some tea?

Poor Mother: Thank you, that would be nice.

Butler: And you miss Cindy?

Baby Girl: (Buries her face in mother's lap) Yes, please.

Butler: Very good. I'll be right back.

Set: Butler exits to get the tea service.

Rich Father: Well now! This house has certainly been abuzz with conversation about you and your family this week Mrs. Wilson. It's certainly good to have you all here to share Christmas with us and my don't you look nice.

Poor Mother: Why! Thank you. This dress was a gift from your wife.

Rich Father: Well, my wife does have good taste in clothing. (Looks at wife's dress in question).

Set: Maid and Butler return. Maid carrying doll. Butler carrying tea service. Butler waits until after Maid's conversation to serve tea.

Maid: Well, hi there Cindy! I have something for you. (Cindy looks at maid and smiles). This belonged to my daughter. It was her favorite doll. I'd like you to have it.

Baby Girl: (Gets up, hugs Maid, kisses her on the cheek, and takes doll) Thank You!

Maid: Oh, child, you are so precious.

Poor Mother: This is so nice of you.

Maid: (Warmly) Nonsense! It was only collecting dust in my closet. It's only right that she should have it.

Poor Mother: God Bless You.

Set: Maid exits. Butler serves tea and leaves tea service on the table and goes to stand by the door. Rich and Poor girls return. Poor girl is carrying and jingling keys as she runs to her mother. Rich girl sits down.

Poor Girl: Oh, mom! You will never guess what Melanie has done. She gave me her car. She says I am going to need it to get to work at the mall on Monday.

Poor Mother: Dear Melanie? Mr. Smith? How can you give such a generous gift? Surely, we can't accept this, Karen?

Rich Girl: You certainly can, and you must accept it. Dad and I have already discussed it. Right dad?

Rich Father: That's right. Although I think you should know that I have agreed to buy her another car.

Poor Mother: This is too kind. You people are truly Christians. How can we ever thank you?

Rich Girl: You already have by making this our best Christmas ever.

Set: Poor girl sits down by mother. Rich boy and Poor boy reenter. Rich boy sits down with parents or sister. Poor boy goes to mother and kneels in front of her.

Poor Boy: (Putting his hands on his mothers' knees) Mom, Ethan wants to give me his video game system. He says he wants to give me his best and that I must accept it. I said I'd have to ask you.

Poor Mother: Oh, my! The blessings just keep coming. Ethan, are you sure you want to do this?

Rich Boy: (Looks at mom and dad, dad nods reassurance) Yes, I'm sure.

Poor Mother: Then, yes son you may accept the gift.

Poor Boy: Thanks Mom. Thanks Ethan. You're the best friend I've ever had.

Set: Knock at the door. Hans opens the door.

Butler: Well, I see you made it. Good, very good. (Brings him in). Henry Wilson is here!

Set: Mrs. Wilson drops her tea. Poor boy and baby girl run to him, hugging him and saying daddy, daddy. The oldest girl stands looking at him for a moment before running to him and hugging him.

Henry Wilson: (Full of emotion) Oh! I am so sorry children. I have missed you all so terribly much.

Poor Girl: I love you, dad.

Poor Mother: (Full of emotion) Henry, oh, Henry, you've come back.

Henry Wilson: Hans found me and offered me the chance to be with you all for Christmas. He even bought me these clothes. I couldn't say no.

Poor Mother: (Runs to him embracing him) I love you, Henry!

Henry Wilson: I love you, Betty.

Rich Father: Well, enough of this. I would like to give you all a gift now. (Hands them as envelope). Go ahead and open it.

Henry Wilson: (Opens the envelope) Why, this is a deed. A deed to a house. A house on 27th street, and it has our names on it. Surely, we can't accept this as a gift.

Rich Father: It's already legally yours so you must accept it.

The Wilson's: (Each thank him individually) Thank you!

Rich Father: There is one other thing Henry. I would like to have you come to work for me at my construction company on Monday. Would you be interested in a job?

Henry Wilson: I can't believe how nice you are to us. I'll gladly come to work for you.

Set: Maid reenters.

Maid: Come now, dinner is served.

Set: All follow maid except rich father and mother.

Rich Mother: Honey, you gave them your nicest home. What about the one on 23rd street?

Rich Father: That run down old house? It's like Rev. Charles said, "We must give our best." Your new Christmas dress certainly looked nice on Mrs. Wilson.

Rich Mother: Only our best. Besides last year's Christmas dress still looks pretty good don't you think?

Rich Father: Yes, indeed, let's go have dinner.

CURTAIN CLOSES