

Lazarus... Come Out!

By Richard Bott

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This script was first created for London Conference of The United Church of Canada. The Conference was looking at the theme, "Push Open the Box". The script was meant to be a "voice play" for two male voices, for use during a worship service. If you decide to do it some other way, I'd love to know how it went! Richard Bott

1—Jesus

2—Lazarus

1—Lazarus.

2—*(sounding sleepy)* mmmm?

1—Lazarus.

2—*(still not awake)* Wha...?

1—Lazarus!

2—*(awake and not happy about it)* What!

1—Come out.

2—*(questioning)* Come out?

1—Come out.

2—No.

1—*(surprised)* No?

2—No.

(pause)

1—Why not?

(pause)

2—Why?

1—It's exciting out here!

2—It's terrifying out there!

1—There's so much joy.

2—There's so much sadness.

1—There's so much life!

2—There's so much death.
(*pause*)

1—Lazarus.

2—Yes?

1—Come out.

2—No.

1—Why not?
(*pause*)

2—It's safe in here.
It's warm.
It's peaceful.
No worries.
No "hustle and bustle".
No arguments.
No complaints.
No frustrations.
No tears.
No hurt.

1—Ah.

2—Ah?

1—Yes.
(*pause*)

2—What, "Ah?"

1—Just, “Ah.”
(*pause*)

2—I've done that “living” thing.
I've laughed.
I've cried.
I've worked.
I've played.
I've loved and hated and I've followed and led. (*pause*)
I'm done.

1—You're done.

2—Done.

1—Done.

2—Yes.

1—Ah. (*pause*)
Lazarus.

2—Yes?

1—Come out.

2—Haven't you been listening?
Haven't you heard a word I've said?
Don't you understand?
I'm in *here*... without breath, without thought, without need, without want...
just being...
just being... in God's presence...
just... being?

1—I understand.

2—(*incredulous*) You understand??

1—Oh, Lazarus... I understand!

2—(*chuckling*) Yes... of all the people walking the face of God's earth,
you would understand.
You always have.
No matter what confusion and frustration I faced,
I always knew you would understand. (*pause*)
By the way... what's happening out there?

1—Don't worry about it.

2—It sounds like there are a bunch of people around.

1—It's nothing that needs to concern you, Lazarus.

2—That sounds like Mary... and Martha!

1—Lazarus. Stop.

2—They sound so terribly sad.
I've not heard such tears since our parents died.

1—Lazarus. Don't listen.

2—Are those tears that I'm hearing in your voice?
(pause)

1—*(slowly)* Lazarus.
Listen to me.
If you don't want to come out, you have to stop.
Now.

2—Why?

1—Because you are truly a child of God.
You have a heart full of compassion.
You have a mind for those around you, as well as for yourself. *(pause)*
Because if you keep listening, you are going to realize something...
and when you realize it, you're going to come out.

2—No way!
Nothing is going to make me come out of here!
Nothing.
Un-unh. *(pause)*
Don't you *want* me to come out?

1—Oh, yes, I do.

2—Oh. *(pause)* *(pause)*
What is it that you don't think I should hear?

1—Sorry, Lazarus.
You've told me that you don't want to come out here.
If I tell you, it's going to make it really difficult for you to stay in there.
If I tell you... you may not be able to stay in there.

2—Oh.

1—Lazarus.

2—Yes?

1—I love you. I have always loved you. I always will love you.
You will always be my brother, my disciple and my friend.
No matter what you decide.

2—I know. *(pause)*

Is that what you didn't want to tell me?

Is that what you thought would bring me out?

1—No.

2—Good. Because it isn't working.

I'm doing just fine in here.

1—I know.

(pause)

(pause)

(pause)

2—Are you sure they're doing alright?

1—Who?

2—Martha, Mary... the guys... you?

1—We're doing alright, Lazarus... *(quietly, almost to self)* but...

2—But what?

1—Don't worry, Lazarus. We're going to do alright.

2—But *what?*

1—Are you sure?

2—I'm sure! But WHAT?

1—But... we need you.

They need you.

I need you.

2—What?

1—We need what you've learned - out here.

We need *you*, Lazarus.

2—But... that would mean giving up all those things that I really enjoy about this place.

(pause)

1—Would it?

(pause)

2—Not completely, eh?

1—*(smile in voice)* Not completely. "God is with us."

2—"We are not alone."

In here. Out there.

1—Yes.

2—Ah.

1—“Ah?”

2—Ah. *(pause)*
You were right.

1—Ahhh.

2—Yes.
I thought I had already decided.
Now I have to decide.
I thought I knew that I wanted to stay right here...
but...

1—But?

2—But... now I know – there's a place for me *there*,
as much as in *here*.
You need me out there... as much as in here.
(pause)
I need to decide.

1—Yes.
(pause)
You do.