



**PREVIEW ONLY**

## **The Two Dead Men**

### **Tales from Beyond the Grave**

by Paul Ellis

- What** In Bethany, a sick man dies and is buried. His friends and family are heartbroken. Then Jesus shows up.
- Themes: resurrection, hope
- Message** Jesus always has the last word. Not even death can separate you from his love.
- Who** Minimum 4 characters with doubling; 8+ characters without
- NARRATOR (for table readings; otherwise replace with lines for direction)  
JESUS, the Resurrection and the Life  
THOMAS, a cautious and worried disciple  
SIMON, a disciple  
PHILIP, a disciple  
MARTHA, a grieving sister of Lazarus  
MARY, a grieving sister of Lazarus  
LAZARUS, a dead man  
Assorted DISCIPLES and VILLAGERS who react with adlibbed lines
- Time** 8 minutes
- Ages** 11+
- Source** John 10:22-33, 39-42, 11:1-45, 20:24-29
- Bonus** Free leader's guide with fun facts, discussion questions, and illustrations.

**Narrator** Thomas skipped a stone across the river. He was so happy, he felt like singing.

**Thomas** *(Singing)* I'd rather be a big fish in the Jordan than a dead fish in Jerusalem.

**Narrator** The other disciples laughed. They knew what Thomas meant.

**Simon** *(Laughs)* You said it, brother.

**Philip** Here, here!

**Jesus** You're in a fine mood, Thomas.

**Thomas** It's a beautiful day and the sun is shining! All these people have come to hear you preach, and none of them want to kill you.

*Thomas skips another stone across the water.*

**Jesus** Ah, you are referring to what happened at the temple.

**Thomas** Those Judeans are crazy. Not like us Galileans. Philip, what was it that Jesus said?

**Philip** "I and the Father are one."

**Thomas** Boy, that made them angry. When they picked up those stones, I thought we were goners for sure!

**Simon** That was a close one.

**Philip** It was a miracle we got out alive.

**Thomas** It was wise to come here to the river. I like it here. It's safe.

*Jesus takes all of this in.*

**Jesus** Thomas, do you believe that I am the Son of God?

**Thomas** *(Rubs chin)* Well, yeah, sure. I guess.

**Jesus** So what are you afraid of?

**Narrator** Thomas held his tongue. Sometimes Jesus said things that were hard to swallow. There were many reasons to be cautious. Angry priests with stones, for example.

**Jesus** My friends, you have nothing to fear. I am with you. What can man do to you?

**Narrator** Thomas frowned. Ever since he had followed Jesus, trouble had never been far away. Hardly a week went by without someone yelling or threatening them. It was only a matter of time before someone got hurt.

*The others notice the worry lines on Thomas's face.*

**Simon** Ha, look at Thomas. He is such a worrier.

**Thomas** I'm just glad we're here and not there. If we never go back to Judea, that will be fine with me.

**All** *(Agreement)* Me too.  
Judea is scary!

**Jesus** We're going back to Judea.

*The disciples groan.*

**Simon** Why? They hate us there.

**Jesus** I received a message from Martha and Mary. Our friend Lazarus is ill.

*No one likes this sad news.*

**Philip** That is terrible news.

**Simon** I hope it's not too serious.

**Narrator** A few days later, Jesus announced it was time to leave the peaceful Jordan.

**Jesus** Alright boys, time to go.

*The disciples grumble.*

**Simon** Are you sure this is God's will?

**Philip** Maybe we could take a vote.

*Thomas seems the most worried and he tries to negotiate.*

**Thomas** Can we talk about this? Jesus, you have a thriving ministry here at the river. People love you. But Judea is hostile territory. Isn't that a sign that we should stay?

**Jesus** I am the Light of the world. Why are you afraid of the darkness?

*The disciples stay silent.*

**Jesus** *(Cont'd)* Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him.

**Thomas** A sleep will do him a world of good.

**Simon** I could go for a nap right now.

**Philip** Me too.

*Jesus does a facepalm.*

**Jesus** That's not what I meant. Lazarus has died.

**Philip** Oh, how awful.

**Simon** He had a good life.

*Thomas is relieved but tries to hide it.*

**Thomas** I guess the trip is off. Too bad.

**Jesus** We are still going and for your sakes I'm glad I wasn't there to heal him, because now you will see something special.

**Thomas** *(Skeptical)* Let me get this straight: You want to go where you are no longer welcome, to pray for a man who is no longer alive.

**Simon** The Jews will kill you!

**Philip** And us!

*Jesus raises his hands in exasperation.*

**Jesus** How long do I have to put up with you? Follow me, or don't, but I'm going.

**Narrator** Thomas was conflicted. It made no sense to follow Jesus, yet he couldn't bear to be left behind. Jesus was like no man he had ever met.

**Thomas** Come on, lads. We might as well go and die with Jesus.

**Narrator** No one laughed at Thomas's joke. In silence, Jesus and the disciples set off up the road to Bethany, the home of Martha and Mary. As they approached the village, a wailing woman came out to meet them.

**Jesus** Martha...

*The distraught woman rushes up to Jesus and begins pounding on his chest.*

**Martha** *(Sobbing)* Where were you? Where were you? If you had been here, my brother would not have died.

*Jesus wraps his strong arms around her pulling her into an embrace.*

**Jesus** Martha, it's going to be okay. Your brother will live again.

*The woman wipes her eyes with the hem of her sleeve.*

**Martha** I know he will rise with everyone else on the Day of Resurrection.

**Jesus** You don't have to wait until then. I am the Resurrection. I am the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.

**Narrator** As Jesus spoke these words, Thomas shivered with goosebumps.

**Jesus** Martha, do you believe in me?

**Martha** *(Nods fervently)* Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God come to save the world.

**Jesus** Fetch your sister.

**Narrator** Martha ran into the village leaving Jesus with the disciples. Thomas sensed something was going to happen, but what? Lazarus was already dead; Jesus was too late. Thomas looked around nervously hoping not to see any of the temple priests.

**Jesus** Thomas.

**Thomas** Yes, Jesus.

**Jesus** Stop worrying.

**Thomas** Yes, Jesus.

**Jesus** *(Smiles)* Trust me.

**Thomas** I'm trying, Jesus.

**Narrator** A woman with pain on her face came out of the village followed by a crowd of wailing mourners. She fell at Jesus' feet sobbing.

**Mary** *(Weeping)* Lord, if you'd been here my brother would not have died.

**Jesus** Mary.

**Narrator** Jesus gathered Mary in his arms and began to weep. Their intermingled tears spilled into the dust.

*Simon and the others stare at the scene with sadness.*

**Simon** Look at him. He truly loved Lazarus.

**Philip** Lazarus was a great guy. I miss him too. *(Sniffs)*

**Thomas** If he'd been here, he could've stopped Lazarus from dying.

*A look of resolve appears on Jesus' face.*

**Jesus** Martha, Mary, show me where you have laid him.

**Narrator** The two sisters and the mourners led Jesus to a hillside cemetery at the edge of the village.

**Thomas** Ugh, I hate cemeteries.

**Narrator** The crowd stopped before a cave that had been sealed with a large stone. Jesus was trembling with indignation, as though the death of his friend angered him beyond all words. At the sight of his face, the mourners stopped wailing and became silent.

**Jesus** Take this stone away.

*Everyone gasps.*

**Martha** But Lord, my brother has been dead four days.

**Simon** His body will be decomposing.

**Philip** It will smell.

**Jesus** Martha, did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? Take the stone away.

**Narrator** At first, nobody moved. Then Martha went to the stone and began pushing. She strained, but the stone was far too big for her. Thomas, Simon and Philip went to help.

**Thomas** On the count of three: one, two three. Push, lads.

**Simon** *(Strains)* Push harder!

**Philip** I am pushing. These stones aren't made to be moved.

**Narrator** The men pushed with all their might and finally managed to roll the stone aside. It fell with a crashing thud. Thomas moved away from the gaping tomb and stood next to Jesus.

*Jesus raises his hands to heaven.*

**Jesus** Father, I thank you that you always hear me, but I say this for the benefit of those here, that they may believe that you sent me.

*Jesus turns to the dark door and utters a command.*

**Jesus** Lazarus!

**Narrator** Thomas jumped in fright. *That voice!* It radiated power. Who could resist it?

**Jesus** Lazarus, come forth!

**Narrator** Thomas stared at the dark tomb. With wide eyes he watched as the shape of a bandaged man appeared in the doorway.

**Thomas** *(Puts hand over his mouth)* It can't be ...

You have reached the end of the preview.  
To purchase the entire script, please click:

**PURCHASE**