

# *Joy Unspeakable*

*Book, Music, and Lyrics by Gloria Emmerich*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

### WOMEN:

MARY (Mother of Jesus)  
SUSANNA  
JARA  
MARY MAGDALENE  
SIMONE

### MEN:

JESUS  
JAMES  
JEDIDIAH  
JOHN  
PETER  
DANIEL

## LIST OF SONGS:

### ACT ONE:

1. Joy Unspeakable ..... Company
2. Jesus in the Middle ..... Jedidiah & Susanna
3. Thread of Hope ..... Daniel
4. Thread of Hope (Reprise) ..... Daniel, Peter & Jara
5. He's My Son ..... Mary
6. Listening to Jesus ..... Jara & Company
7. Joy Unspeakable (Reprise) ..... Company

### ACT TWO:

8. A Stone's Throw Away ..... Mary Magdalene
9. Do You Believe in Me? ..... Jesus & Company
10. The Master Has Risen ..... Company
11. Joy Unspeakable Finale ..... Company

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## *Joy Unspeakable*

### ACT ONE

#### OVERTURE

#### PROLOGUE:

*Opening number: JOY UNSPEAKABLE. DANIEL, JOHN, JAMES, SIMONE, MARY (JESUS' mother, MARY MAGDALENE, SUSANNA.*

#### SONG #1 - JOY UNSPEAKABLE      **Company**

**COMPANY:** Right from the start He was no typical stranger.  
Meeting Jesus was a total life-changer,  
It's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable joy, joy!  
And everybody has a different story;  
So many empty lives now full of glory,  
It's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable joy, joy, joy!

A crippled man now walking; healed of dumbness, she can't stop talking.  
The blind can see, the deaf can hear and the lost are found.  
The sick, the lame, the broken, healed by a touch or a word He's spoken.  
After meeting the Master, you'll be passing the joy all around!

Right from the start He was no typical stranger.  
Meeting Jesus was a total life-changer,  
It's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable joy, joy!  
And everybody has a different story;  
So many empty lives now full of glory,  
It's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable joy, joy, joy! (KEY CHANGE)  
(Repeat twice then go on.)

Yes, it's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable joy, joy, joy!  
Yes, it's a joy unspeakable; unspeakable - - joy!

**(BLACKOUT)**

**ACT ONE SC 1:** *JESUS' mother MARY, JOHN, JAMES, and SIMONE wait near the city gates of Jerusalem for JESUS to join them.*

**JOHN:** *(Watches JAMES pace and is getting more and more irritated with him and finally speaks.)* James, Jesus told us to wait here! Your pacing back and forth isn't going to bring Him here any sooner!

**JAMES:** *(Continues his pacing but this time it takes him right up to JOHN'S face.)* Well, it's better than standing around mumbling in my beard like YOU!

**JOHN:** *(Slightly embarrassed and miffed that JAMES heard him.)* I wasn't mumbling...I was...I was just clearing my throat...something stuck in my throat is all!

**JAMES:** HA! For the past twenty minutes?! You were mumbling like an old man!

**SIMONE:** *(Although use to her sons' frequent bickering it still grates on her nerves.)*  
JAMES! JOHN! Stop this arguing! Jesus will get here when He is good and ready and *your* pacing and *your* mumbling isn't going to change anything. Now, both of you behave! You're *killing* me! And I am *not* ready to die!

**JMS/JHN:** *(Both glare at each other then turn sheepishly to their mother.)* Yes, Mama...

**SIMONE:** *(To MARY.)* If those two *ever* stop picking on each other it'll be a miracle!

**JAMES:** *(Pointing to JOHN.)* He's the one that always starts it!

**JOHN:** *ME?!* You're the one who acts like a donkey all the time!

**SIMONE:** *(Clutches her heart, pretending to have an attack.)* Ohhh...

**MARY:** Simone... are you all right...?

**JAMES:** Shall I fetch some water, Mama?

**JOHN:** *(Scared and serious.)* Is she dying, Mary!?

**SIMONE:** *(Suddenly sits up, good as new, smacking them both.)* YES, I'm dying! I said you were killing me! Now give me some peace and quiet before I go!

**JMS/JHN:** Yes, Mama...

**SIMONE:** Don't you "Yes, Mama" me! And remind me when we get into the city to dunk your heads in the well! *(To MARY.)* You see? This is what they give me after raising them all those years. I'm telling you, Mary. I need a miracle! Maybe you can ask your son, Jesus to give me one. Heaven knows I need a miracle with *these* boys!

**MARY:** *(Trying to hide a smile through all of this.)* I'll see what I can do, Simone.

**JAMES:** *(Quickly changes the subject.)* I remember Jesus' first miracle!

**JOHN:** I do too!

**MARY:** The wedding in Cana.

**JAMES:** *(Looks surprised.)* In southern Galilee; *that* was the first for you too?

**MARY:** *(Laughs.)* Oh yes. And He wasn't quite ready to show His powers yet. But...I asked Him anyway.

**JOHN:** So *you're* the one who got Jesus started with the barrels!

**MARY:** *(MARY laughs.)* At first I didn't understand why He wanted those barrels.

**JAMES:** You didn't understand?! Imagine how all of *us* felt! I *still* can hardly believe it. I watched the servants fill those barrels with *plain water*. When Jesus told the bride's father to dip his cup into one of the barrel, I held my breath!

**JOHN:** *(To MARY.)* Evidently not long enough! *(JAMES slugs him.)*

**MARY:** *(Laughs.)* I must admit, I wasn't sure what to expect myself. I only knew that Jesus had the power from God above to turn that water into wine.

**SIMONE:** I wish I'd been there! Did you taste it, James?

**JOHN:** *(Jumps in.)* Are you kidding? None of us could wait to try it. I mean, we *watched* the servants pour water into those pots. And seconds later, those same vessels were bursting with wine!

**JAMES:** The bride's father said it was the best he'd ever had. I know *I've* never tasted any wine that was better!

**MARY:** Looking back, it was such a simple miracle really; considering all that we've seen Him do since.

**JOHN:** It just shows how much Jesus really cares about the people...turning water into wine for a wedding.

**JAMES:** Such a simple thing, yet, Jesus knew it was important to that couple in Cana.

**SIMONE:** I don't know, James; it seems appropriate to me. It sounds like Jesus' first miracle was to show all of you that He cares for the little things too. If He can turn water into wine at a simple wedding, just think what He can do for *us!*

**MARY:** You know, I'm actually leaving soon for Cana to visit the couple that was married. Do you remember them, John...James? Jedidiah and Susanna.

**JAMES:** *(He and JOHN both laugh.)* Oh, yes...I remember. How could I forget! What a couple of characters *they* were!

**JOHN:** Made me laugh so much my sides ached. But it was mostly their accent that got to me. They sure talk different down there, don't they?

**MARY:** That's part of the charm of Cana. I've never met a friendlier, warmer people than in the regions of southern Galilee.

**SIMONE:** I've never been to Cana. Maybe someday...if my boys don't *kill* me first!

**JAMES:** (*Ignores her comment.*) You'd love it, Mama. Susanna would talk your leg off!

**JOHN:** (*Aside to JAMES.*) If Mama didn't talk *hers* off first! (*Both laugh; an arm around each other's shoulder.*)

**SIMONE:** (*To MARY.*) There now. Why can't they always get along like loving brothers?

**MARY:** Hmmm, sibling rivalry I suspect.

**SIMONE:** Hmmpf! With *MY* boys it's more like sibling *Rebel-ry!* (*She and MARY laugh.*)

**JOHN:** Well, be sure to send greetings from James and me when you see them, Mary.

**MARY:** I will, John.

**JAMES:** It seems everybody's off on some trip or another. Isn't Peter gone too?

**JOHN:** Yeah; he went to visit Daniel, remember? He had to take his mother-in-law Jara with him and he wasn't exactly thrilled about it: Said he'd rather clean a boat load of rotten fish than travel around with his mother-in-law! (*The boys laugh.*)

**SIMONE:** (*Scolding.*) John! James! That's not funny! Jara's a wonderful woman and the sooner you learn to respect your elders, the better! Maybe next time Jara goes on a journey I'll send both of *you* with *her!* (*The boys look horrified. SIMONE chuckles, turning to MARY.*) She'd whip them into shape in no time, don't you think, Mary? But that would take *another* one of Jesus' miracles, no doubt!

**MARY:** (*Smiles.*) I would think so, Simone. (*JESUS enters.*)

**JAMES:** Jesus, you're finally here! Seems like we've been waiting forever! John was impatiently grumbling so much I was about to send him out looking for you.

**JOHN:** Ha! I should've sent James out after you, Lord. With all the pacing he's been doing, if I'd set him in a straight line he'd be in Jericho by now!

**JESUS:** (*Always amused with the "Sons of Thunder."*) Really? Why, I thought the two of you would have been exercising the words of one of David's psalms. "Rest in the Lord, and wait *patiently* for Him. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." [*Ps. 37:4 & 7*]

**JAMES:** (*Sheepish.*) Um...that *was* in the back of my mind, Lord...

**JOHN:** Uh...mine too....I *love* the psalms...

**JAMES:** Me too.

**SIMONE:** Sorry, Lord. (*glares at her sons.*) I think their only "desire" was getting into the city to eat before dark! (*Wags a finger at her boys.*) Purely selfish desires!

**JOHN:** (*Desperate to get the focus off of himself and JAMES.*) We were actually having a great time reminiscing about the wedding in Cana, Jesus. Your first miracle!

**SIMONE:** (*Wanting full credit for the subject.*) I'm the one who brought it up, Lord. I was telling your mother, Mary that it would take a miracle to make my boys behave! So, what do you think, Lord? Will you give us a miracle today? Because, my boys are killing me!

**JESUS:** (*Laughs.*) Well, you look healthy and strong enough to me, Simone. But, you never know what life-changing miracle from God is waiting to happen.

**MARY M:** (*Enters, hysterical. She falls at their feet and screams.*) Help me! Please, someone save me. They want to stone me!

**JESUS:** Woman, what is your sin?

**MARY M:** (*Full of guilt.*) My sins are many, Lord. But I don't want to die! Please save me! I know I was wrong...but don't let them kill me! (*Collapses and weeps.*)

**MARY:** James, go find out why those men want to stone this woman.

**JAMES:** *(Aside to JOHN.)* John, look at her. Obviously, she's one of those women who...

**SIMONE:** *(Interrupts.)* James, ask them; you don't know that for sure... *(JAMES exits.)*

**JESUS:** *(Watches JAMES leave then speaks to MARY M.)* What is your name?

**MARY M:** Mary Magdalene, Lord.

**SIMONE:** *(Approaches MARY M. to wipe the blood off her forehead; but MARY M. stops her.)* You're bleeding, Mary. I was only trying to wipe away the blood.

**MARY M:** *(Embarrassed, she snaps at SIMONE then turns away.)* It's none of your concern! I'm...I'm not worthy of your kindness.

**SIMONE:** *(Slightly hurt, she forces a smile.)* None of us are worthy, Mary. *(She holds the cloth out to MARY M. who quickly grabs it and dabs her forehead, embarrassed.)*

**JAMES:** *(Enters, going up to JESUS.)* They say she's possessed of many demons, Lord and she was caught in the very act of adultery.

**JOHN:** The Law of Moses says she must be stoned...to death. I don't think they can be talked out of it...they're very angry. What should we do, Lord?

**JESUS:** *(Squats down, writes in the sand, then stands and speaks to the mob offstage.)* Is there a man among you, holy and blameless; who is without sin? *(Pauses for a response but gets none so continues.)* If so, let him cast the first stone at this woman. *(Getting no response, He leans down again to write in the sand.)*

**JAMES:** *(To JOHN.)* Look; they're all turning away. They're leaving!

**JOHN:** Lord, all of her accusers have left!

**JESUS:** *(Stops writing. He lifts her chin to look into her eyes.)* Where are your accusers?

**MARY M:** *(Looks over, amazed to see that those waiting to stone her are gone. She turns to JESUS, speaking with trembling voice.)* They...they've all gone, my Lord.

**JESUS:** *(Rises, never taking His eyes off MARY M.)* No man condemns you...and neither do I. *(He takes MARY'S hand, helping her to her feet and smiles.)* Go, and sin no more. *(He turns to leave. The others smile at MARY M. too then follow JESUS.)*

**MARY:** *(To SIMONE.)* There's your miracle, Simone. A life changing miracle from God.

**SIMONE:** *(Looks at MARY M.)* You're right, Mary; isn't it wonderful? *(Both smile at her.)*

**MARY M:** *(Suddenly calls out to JESUS.)* Wait! My Lord, please! I...I don't know what to do now.

**JESUS:** *(Turns to MARY M.)* You must be born again, Mary. Come. *(Turns and exits.)*

**MARY:** *(Confused.)* Born again? *(Calls to JESUS.)* I don't understand, Lord.

**SIMONE:** *(Excited.)* Yes! Come with us, Mary, and Jesus will teach you so many things!

**MARY:** We'll help you, Mary; we were all been lost and alone...until we met Jesus. Now we live our lives for Him.

**JOHN:** All of us follow Jesus now. You're more than welcome to come with us.

**SIMONE:** There's nothing to stop you, Mary! You won't regret it, I promise!

**MARY:** *(Smiles.)* I've never felt so at peace about anything before! *(Makes up her mind.)* All right...I will! I will come with you. *(The women embrace her, laughing they all exit to follow after JESUS.)*

**(BLACKOUT)**

**ACT ONE SC 2:** *The home of the Cana couple, JEDIDIAH and SUSANNA. Jesus' mother MARY is visiting.*

**SUSANNA:** Mary! What a pleasure it is havin' you visitin' us! I can hardly believe it's been, what, two years since the weddin'?!

**MARY:** I think so.

**SUSANNA:** *(Turns to call her husband.)* Jed! Honey bunch! We've got company, Darlin'. It's Jesus' mother, Mary. *(Turns back to MARY.)* Well... *(Looks around before continuing.)* Time does fly when you're havin' fun, I reckon. *(She chuckles.)*

**MARY:** *(Chuckles too.)* Yes, it does.

**SUSANNA:** *(Offers MARY a chair.)* Sit, Mary...

**MARY:** *(Sits.)* Of course, I've been busy traveling...with Jesus.

**SUSANNA:** That's *wonderful!* We hear Jesus is still goin' from town to town preachin'. Bless His heart! Well, may God in Heaven give Him strength! I know it can't be easy never knowin' where you're gonna lay your head each night.

**MARY:** We always seem to manage, and there are several other women who travel with us. We all lend a hand in whatever way we can.

**SUSANNA:** And what a blessin' that must be! Servin' the Master *every day!*

**MARY:** God supplies all our needs. Most people we meet along the way are very kind and generous, and share whatever they have in return for Jesus' preaching.

**JEDIDIAH:** *(Enters, excited to see MARY. He takes her hands and kisses them, embarrassing her till she giggles.)* Welcome, welcome! I can't believe it! We haven't seen you since the weddin', have we, sugar pie?

**SUSANNA:** *(Giggles.)* I know! That's what *I* said too. Now, next time you meet up with Jesus you let Him know that Jed and I tell *everyone* we meet about Him and what He did for us, and who He *IS*, of course. I still get chills when I say it...the *Son of God!* And to think, He was at our very own weddin'!

**JEDIDIAH:** He sure was, sugar pie. Quite an honor...

**MARY:** *(Giggles and gives SUSANNA a strange look.)* Sugar pie...?

**SUSANNA:** *(Giggles.)* I know, I know! It's our silly accent, isn't it? Don't you remember?

**MARY:** *(Laughs.)* Oh, *yes*; I remember. But it still surprises me when I hear it.

**JEDIDIAH:** It's hard to get use to if you're not from our neck of the woods.

**SUSANNA:** *(Lovingly pats MARY'S arm.)* It's all right, hon. I'm afraid we're a dyin' breed

**JEDIDIAH:** You know how it is. So many folks from the north shore have moved down here. Then the younguns pick up *their* way of talkin' and before you know it there won't be any true southern Galileans left!

**SUSANNA:** It's already happenin'. People even now can't figure out why we talk like this. I just say, "You're not from around here, are you? Well, we were born and breaded right here in *southern Galilee*...and we're mighty *proud* of it!"

**JEDIDIAH:** Uh...I think it's "born and bred" sugar pie...

**SUSANNA:** *(Tickled.)* Oh...did I say breaded? *(Giggles hysterically.)* Well, I sound like a big ol' hush puppy, don't I? *(She and JEDIDIAH laugh, amusing MARY.)*

**JEDIDIAH:** People think just cuz we talk different...must be somethin' wrong with us.

**SUSANNA:** *(Looks at MARY.)* Isn't that the silliest thing you ever did hear? Why, Jesus didn't mind being at our weddin'! He never made one comment about our accent, did he, honey bunch?

**JEDIDIAH:** Treated us no different than anyone else. I was real impressed with Him the first time I met him. You raised him up right, Mary; He's a fine man!

**MARY:** *(Smiles shyly.)* Well, thank you; but I think our Father in Heaven had a lot more to do with Jesus' upbringing than Joseph or I did.

**SUSANNA:** Now, don't you go puttin' yourself down, hon. God could o' chose someone else to be Jesus' mother....but He chose *you!* Must be a reason for that!

**JEDIDIAH:** There sure was!

**MARY:** *(Laughs.)* All right, all right. Thank you.

**SUSANNA:** *(Leans down and takes MARY'S hands.)* Mary, tell us. Where's Jesus now?

**JEDIDIAH:** Yeah; what's He been up to the last few years? I mean, we hear bits and pieces from time to time of where He's been, but it's hard keepin' up with it all.

**MARY:** *(She suddenly relaxes, opens up: JESUS is her favorite topic.)* Well, first of all, you wouldn't believe the miracles! He's healing the sick, casting out evil spirits; eyes that were blind since birth have been opened...

**JEDIDIAH:** And I thought the miracle at our weddin' here in Cana was a big deal!

**SUSANNA:** *(Giggles, and pats JED'S hand.)* Hush now, Jed. Let her go on...what else, Mary?

**MARY:** The teachings...He's taught us so much about God, His love, how to live our lives to serve Him. It's just wonderful. You'd love it, Susanna.

**SUSANNA:** *(Winks at MARY.)* Well, if I wasn't tied down to a certain young man, I'd be off with you in the blink of an eye...!

**JEDIDIAH:** Well then, maybe I'd be off *after* you with a "blink" of *my* eye! I saw you a winkin' at Mary, my sassy little sweet potato pie! *(They laugh.)*

**MARY:** You'd be welcome to join us too, Jed.

**SUSANNA:** *(Excited.)* You hear that, Jed?!

**JEDIDIAH:** Now listen, little darlin', there's nothin' I'd love to do more than follow Jesus around from town to town. But we've got responsibilities here...

**SUSANNA:** *(A little sad and mopey.)* I know...I know...

**JEDIDIAH:** *(Tries to cheer her up with a little song he sings to the "familiar" folk tune.)* "Oh Susanna, don't you cry for me. For I love my little sweetie pie, from southern Galilee!"

**SUSANNA:** *(All laugh and SUSANNA gives him a playful push so he'll stop.)* Now stop, Jed...

**MARY:** Besides, you and Jed have your own ministry right here, Susanna. You've been spreading the news about Jesus all over this area. That's important, too.

**JED/SUSA:** *(Spoken together.)* That's right. *(They look at each other and laugh again.)*

**MARY:** *(Rises.)* Well, I really must be going. *(Hugs SUSANNA.)* Take care of yourselves. And of course, you know Jesus sends His love to you both. He has fond memories of Cana and His time at your wedding.

**SUSANNA:** *(Proud as can be.)* Really? Well, it *was* quite a weddin', wasn't it?

**JEDIDIAH:** You give Jesus our love too, Mary, and tell Him that no one comes to Cana without hearin' about Jesus! *(He takes MARY'S hand in his and kisses it before letting go.)* You take care, Mary. You know you're always welcome in our home, you *and* Jesus.....and all the disciples for that matter.

**MARY:** *(Smiles.)* Thank you, Jed. God bless you. *(JEDIDIAH nods goodbye.)*

**SUSANNA:** I'll walk you out, Mary. I'll be right back, honey bunch. *(Gives JED a smile and a pat on the arm then exits with MARY.)*

**JEDIDIAH:** All right, sweetie pie. *(Watches them go then turns to the audience.)* Yep, I admit it. Oh Susanna came after *me!* I didn't even know she existed till one day there she was, standin' next to me at the harvest dance in the village square. Hooey! What a beauty! I thought I knew every girl there *was* in our town but I'd never seen her 'round here before. Course, I found out later she was visitin' relatives and would be here the whole summer. *(Sees SUSANNA coming so winks at audience and comments.)* Best summer I ever had! *(Laughs.)*

**SUSANNA:** *(Upon her return JED stops laughing, making her suspicious.)* Now, what are you laughin' about, honey bunch? You tellin' these nice folks stories again?

**JEDIDIAH:** Just tellin' 'em how we met. 'Member the harvest dance at the village square?