1961

The Marshall Keeble Story

Russ Marker
Dan Harless
John E. Krik

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs

Part of the African American Studies Commons, Christian Denominations and Sects Commons, Christianity Commons, History of Christianity Commons, and the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons
"THE MARSHALL KEEBLE STORY"

Story by Russ Marker

Research & Bible Consultant - Dan Harless

Screenplay by John E. Kirk

NO CHANGES IN THIS SCRIPT SHALL BE MADE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
"THE MARSHALL KEEBLE STORY"

CAST

Marshall Keeble
as

First Policeman
as

Four Klux Klansmen
as

Man (Colored Preacher)
as

Brother Hollis
as

Heckler
as

Two White Workers

Audience participants (Scenes 1 - 10, etc) (12 - 20)

Prisoner

More audience participants (Scenes 28 - 35)
"THE MARSHALL KEEBLE STORY"

1. MEDIUM SHOT EXTERIOR SMALL CHURCH BUILDING

From the building we hear Keeble preaching. His voice is faint. We hear night background noises.

KEEBLE:

"...Some of you out there are too stubborn to change. You're like the old lady in Louisville, Kentucky, who believed what I was preaching. But, she didn't want to change from her church. She said she didn't believe in jumping from limb to limb."

2. MEDIUM CLOSE UP KEEBLE IN PULPIT INTERIOR CHURCH BUILDING

as Keeble continues.

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)

"...I told her she was right providing the limb she was sitting on was a strong one. But if it was rotten it wouldn't be wise to remain there."

3. TIGHT MEDIUM SHOT OF DOOR TO CHURCH

We see a white man enter church building. As door opens we hear Keeble's voice increase in volume.

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)

"When the limb is so rotten and it is cracking, friends..."

4. MEDIUM SHOT OF AUDIENCE FROM PULPIT

and we see white man come through door and take seat in last row. Keeble continues and audience does not notice man. Several white people in audience.

KEEBLE:

"...then it's time to change. There is folks right here in this audience tonight trying to sit on the dead and rotten limbs of manmade creeds and disciplines and manuals..."

5. MEDIUM CLOSE UP KEEBLE as he continues.

KEEBLE:

"...and those rotten limbs are cracking under you right now. You folks better change -- wise birds don't roost on rotten limbs. Now ----- Jesus said
Continued...

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)
a long time ago, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." The Lord is still asking us to come to him, just as he did so long ago.

We're going to sing a song of invitation and I pray for you to come and accept the salvation of Jesus Christ.

MEDIUM SHOT REVERSE
as congregation stands to sing.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP WHITE MAN FROM SIDE VIEW
as he steps to center aisle and walks to front. Singing continues.

2 SHOT FRONT ON KEEBLE IS SMILING AT THE RESPONSE
as white man walks into shot position. Then Keeble's smile leaves as we see white man throw a punch that sends Keeble out of frame and to the floor. SINGING STOPS!! We hear exclamation from audience, then all is still.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP KEEBLE ON FLOOR. He is bleeding at mouth.

MEDIUM SHOT REVERSE TO BACK OF BUILDING
as we see man run up aisle to door. Several try to catch and stop him. He alludes all and exits as we

DISSOLVE TO: OPENING TITLES AND THEME.

LOOSE MEDIUM CLOSE UP HOLTON IN STUDY
He is standing at fireplace and speaks to camera.

HOLTON:
Welcome to the Herald of Truth. I'm Robert Holton, your host. A moment ago you saw an example of bigotry and prejudice in action. Two evils which beset so many in our time. The incident was true and is documented.
Marshall Keeble, noted Christian evangelist and educator, has spent a lifetime lifting himself above petty intolerance and hatred directed against him; to preach the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ across the length and breadth of these United States. Two events in the early life of this man were to chart his course of dedicated service to God - his baptism, at the age of 14 and his marriage at the age of 18 to Minnie Womak, daughter of the great negro minister, Samuel Womak.

Today, we want to look at some incidents in the life of Marshall Keeble - incidents not connected with particular time or place, but brief portions that demonstrate his humility, his wit, his love of his fellowman, and his dedicated mission of preaching New Testament Christianity.

One of the most outstanding virtues of this Christian gentleman is his forgiving spirit toward those who have afflicted persecution on his person through the years.

Several men have gathered about Keeble and the service is over. Keeble is wiping the blood from his mouth.

Following his assault, worship service was resumed and concluded a few moments later.

as a policeman walks toward Keeble with assailant in hand.
Continued....

Keeble:
Yes, suh....

Tight group shot high on
as policeman and prisoner join Keeble.

Police:
This man has been identified as the man who assaulted you awhile ago. If you will come with me to the station and swear out a complaint....

Keeble:
(interrupting)
Oh, no suh. I couldn't do that.

Close up prisoner He is hanging his head.

Police:
But this man hit you with these.....

Close up Brass knucks in policeman's hand.

Keeble:
Yes, suh. I know what he hit me with.

Medium close up Keeble
as he continues....

Keeble: (Cont'd)
...but that wasn't really him that hit me...it was the devil and I been hit by the devil many times.

2 shot policeman and prisoner

Police:
Then you're not going to prefer charges -- make out a complaint?

Keeble:
No, suh. -- I've got nothing...

Medium close up Keeble
Keeble: (Cont'd)
against this man. I only hopes that he will obey the gospel some day!
20. **CLOSE UP OF PRISONER**

as he raises his head and looks at Keeble.

Dissolve:

21. **SUPER OVER A MAP OF THE UNITED STATES**  **SHOTS OF TRAIN WHEELS.**  **HOLD DURING HOLTON VOICE OVER.**

HOLTON: (V.O.)
Keeble's reputation as a great evangelist spread far and wide as he carried the message of Christ to the South - West - North and East.

22. **EXTERIOR**  **FRONT OF TENT**  **WIDE SHOT**

Four Ku Klux Klansmen are standing in front of tent with clubs in hand.

HOLTON: (V.O.)
But because of the color of his skin Marshall Keeble was often confronted with the specter of racial discrimination and prejudice.

23. **INTERIOR TENT**  **HIGH MEDIUM SHOT**  **OVER HEAD OF KEEBLE**

as Klansmen advance toward him.

24. **MEDIUM CLOSE UP**  **KEEBLE.**

KEEBLE:  
(HUMBLY AND RATHER SADLY)
I've been preaching for a long time and in many places...and I've always tried to preach to the needs of the people.  (SMILES)  
This is the smallest group, I believe, that I've ever spoken to.

25. **TIGHT GROUP SHOT OF KLANSMEN.**

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)
I can't even see your faces - but I want you to know that you are welcome.

26. **MEDIUM CLOSE UP**  **KEEBLE**  **(DIFFERENT ANGLE)**

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)
This particular occasion calls to mind a passage of scripture from the 16th chapter of John which seems to me to be appropriate (Opens Bible and Reads)
26. Cont’d.

KEEBLE: (Continuing)

"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye not stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

(HE CONTINUES MOS)

HOLTON: (V.O.)

That night in Georgia, Keeble gave one of the greatest and most moving sermons of his entire career.

27. CLOSE ANGLE OF HEAD. \[HIGH SHOT OVER KEEBLE’S HEAD TO KLANSMEN\]

and we see three of them in process of taking off head pieces and dropping them and clubs to floor, as Holton continues. They sit down and the fourth Klansman exits in disgust.

HOLTON: (V.O.) (Cont’d)

So stirring was his theme, so wonderful his knowledge of God’s word, and so sincere his approach that a spiritual change was brought about in the hearts of some who had come there as his enemies.

28. INTERIOR \[SECOND CHURCH BUILDING. MEDIUM CLOSE UP KEEBLE as he is speaking (MOS)\]

HOLTON: (V.O.)

Wherever he went, Marshall Keeble had a capacity audience. Many who attended his gospel meeting were members of various religious organizations (denominations). There were ever present those who would try and discredit him.

KEEBLE:

(FROM PULPIT)

....And what was it that Peter told us to do? Why, children, it's recorded in the book of Acts, the second chapter and the 38th verse: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ..."
and we see colored preacher seated in foreground — as Keeble continues.

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)

...unto the remission of your sins;
and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Preacher raises hand)

KEEBLE: (HE PAUSES AND POINTS TO FINLEY)

Yes, sir? Did you wish to ask me a question?

MAN:


KEEBLE:

Yes sir?

MAN:

Mr. Keeble, would you mind giving us that passage in the Greek?

KEEBLE:

Greek, sir? I don't see why it would be necessary to discuss it in Greek. We have translations of the Bible given to us by some of the ablest Greek scholars in the world.

When we go to the store to buy some peanuts we can get them either one of two ways, shelled or in the hull. (HOLDS HIS BIBLE ALOFT) The Bible has already been hulled for us.

MAN:

Well, surely Mr. Keeble, you don't mind just quoting the passage in Greek?
32. Cont'd.

33. close up keebie speaking to audience

keebie:
how many in the audience know greek?
raise your hands.

34. wide shot audience

and we see men standing and looking for show of hands.
these are smiles on the faces of audience.

35. medium close up keebie

keebie:
well, nobody here seems to understand greek. so what's the use of
discussing the scriptures in greek? we'll stay with the english.

(he continues mos as we pick up holton's voice over)

holton: (v.o.)

thus, with the quick wit that has
never deserted him, marshall keebie
turned the tables on an unethical
opponent who had tried to discredit
him before his audience. yet, he did
it in a clean, good-natured way and
totally without rancor.

36. medium shot exterior cemetery and grave.

keebie in kneeling beside a fresh grave fixing some
flowers.

holton: (v.o.)

like all other men, marshall keebie
has known personal loss and grief.

37. tight medium close up keebie looking down at grave.

keebie:
that you, minnie, for all you did for
me. you were a faithful companion
and devoted helper for 35 years....
you never let me down. (pause)
I won't let you down either. I'll
carry on in the work of the lord
just as long as he wants me to.
FADE OUT

FADE IN:

38. OMITTED

39. EXTERIOR MEDIUM SHOT OF TRAIN

as it comes into station, Keeble gets off and looks around.

HOLTEN: (V.O.)
Through the years and after countless thousands of miles traveled over our nation in the cause of Christianity... and after thousands of baptisms, Marshall Keeble earned the love, admiration and respect of men of every race.

40. CLOSE UP OF SIGN "HOPKINSVILLE"

HOLTEN: (V.O.)
He would receive invitations from far and wide

41. MEDIUM CLOSE UP KEEBLE

HOLTEN: (V.O.)
... to come and preach and he would always try, as he still does, to honor those requests.

42. 2 SHOT FRAME

HOLLIS:
(LOOKS OFF OUT OF FRAME)
Brother Keeble! Over here.
(PAUSE)
Welcome to Hopkinsville.

KEEBLE WALKS INTO FRAME

KEEBLE;
(STEPING INTO SCENE)
Mornin', Brother Hollis. Nice of you to come down to meet me.
( THEY SHAKE HANDS)

HOLLIS:
It's a pleasure. I've looked forward to seeing you again, for a long time. I've a room all ready for you and it's not far from here. It's such a nice day, let's just talk.
KEEBLE:
That sounds fine to me.

HOLLIS:
Here...let me take your bags.

KEEBLE:
Well, now, I don't know. That might not look quite right for you to carry my......

HOLLIS:
(TAKING THE BAGS)
Don't worry about it. After all, I'm a little younger than you are.

(They both laugh as they move out of scene)

(Travel this 2 shot as they walk and talk)

KEEBLE:
They don't have a church building in this town yet, do they?

HOLLIS:
Not yet. But we're getting a tent put up today. We'll run out and you can take a look at it.

KEEBLE:
Fine.

43. 3 SHOT EXTERIOR VACANT LOT

Where two white workers are driving tent stakes. An uncouth type Heckler walks up. (Workers look up)

HECKLER:
What's goin' up here?

WORKER:
We're puttin' up a tent.

HECKLER:
What for?

44. MEDIUM CLOSE UP FIRST WORKER

FIRST WORKER:
An evangelist coming in today. Gonna hold a meetin' for the colored people.
"THE MARSHALL KEEBLE STORY"

45. CLOSE UP HECKLER

HECKLER:
Gonna preach to the Negroes huh?
That's a waste of time.

WORKER:
Yeah? How do you figure that?

HECKLER:
I reckon I know somethin' about the Bible.

46. 2 SHOT HOLLIS AND KEEBLE walking to group.

HECKLER: (Cont'd)
And according to it, the savior himself said to preach to all the nations.

47. 2 SHOT WORKER AND HECKLER

HECKLER: (Cont'd)
And the negroes ain't no nation.

WORKER:
Now, that's a silly idea if I ever heard one.

HECKLER:
All right. If you don't believe me, you just read the 19th verse of the 28th chapter of Matthew.

WORKER:
What does it say?

48. MEDIUM WIDE SHOT OF GROUP

as Keeble and Hollis join them.

KEEBLE:
(CUTTING IN)
Matthew 28:19? I'll tell you what it says. It says: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing th.......

49. 2 SHOT KEEBLE AND HECKLER as Heckler turns to Keeble

HECKLER:
(CUTTING HIM OFF)
You see there? It says all the nations.
(HE HAS SAID THIS TO THE WORKER)
MEDIUM CLOSE UP  KEEBLE

KEEBLE:

(PUZZLED)

That’s right. **All** the nations. That’s what it says.

HECKLER:

Exactly what I was tellin’ them.

51. OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT OF WORKER 3 SHOT

WORKER:

(TO HECKLER)

Tell him what else you was saying.

HECKLER:

(A BIT EMBARRASSED. LOOKING TO WORKER AND INDICATING KEEBLE)

Is this the... (TURNS TO KEEBLE) Are you... the man that’s going to preach here?

52. CLOSE UP  KEEBLE  LOOKING AT WORKER

KEEBLE:

(SMILING)

Yes, I am. Marshall Keeble’s the name.

53. MEDIUM CLOSE UP  WORKER

WORKER:

(TO KEEBLE)

Brother Keeble, this man was just saying as how it was a waste of time to preach the gospel to people of your race. He said your people ain’t a nation.

54. MEDIUM CLOSE UP  HECKLER

HECKLER:

(WITH BELIGERENT FALSE COURAGE)

Well, that’s right! You just said the passage from Matthew yourself. It says to make disciples of all the nations. And the colored people ain’t a nation!

55. CLOSE UP  KEEBLE  TURNING TO HECKLER:

KEEBLE:

(SOFTLY)

I think perhaps you’ve forgotten what Mark says. Mark says to preach to every creature.
"THE MARSHALL KEEBLE STORY"

55. Cont'd.  

KEEBLE: (Cont'd)  

(HUMBLY) I'm a creature.

56. CLOSE UP HECKLER  

HECKLER:  

Well, I....uh.....I.......

Dissolve:

57. INTERIOR HOLTON STUDY.  

He is seated in same chair as opening. MEDIUM CLOSE UP  

HOLTON:  

And so once again, with quiet dignity and a firm knowledge of the scriptures, Marshall Keeble had proven himself the better man, not only spiritually, but mentally as well. He bore no grudge against his insulter...for retaliation for a wrong has never been a part of him.

DOLLY BACK SLIGHTLY AS HOLTON GETS UP FROM CHAIR AND WALKS TO CENTER OF THE ROOM.

Today, at the age of 82, Marshall Keeble still preaches. He has never accepted local work with any congregation but has always been an evangelist, taking the gospel to wherever he thought it was most needed.

It is not unusual for him to have over one hundred additions to the church during one meeting. On several occasions there have been well over 200!

By actual count Marshall Keeble has baptized over 30,000 of his people, during his career. Quite a remarkable accomplishment! And it is estimated that he has baptized an equal number from the white race.

What is it that makes this man so effective in his work; what qualities are there that make him one of the outstanding evangelists of his time?
HOLTON: (Continuing)

B. C. Goodpasture, editor of the Christian publication, Gospel Advocate, answered that question when he wrote:

(READS FROM A PAPER)

"Marshall Keeble's keen logic, his unstudied and apt illustrations, his irresistible flow of humor, his ability quickly to grasp and handle unexpected situations, and his knowledge of the Bible.

"But perhaps the secret of his power and success is to be found in his humble and prayerful walk with God." He has often said of his work: 'The power is in the gospel - not in Keeble.'"