

Christmas at the Movies “The Greatest Showman”

Welcome to CHC. We are so grateful you are here today. Your presence matters!

For many we are entering into the most wonderful time of the year. The world puts its focus on the birth of Christ. As much as some want to change the meaning...the facts are that God gave the world His only Son and we still celebrate it thousands of years later.

For those of you who are regulars here at CHC let me encourage you to use this Christmas season to invite someone to church. You never know what God can do with just an invitation.

We have been looking forward to kicking this brand-new sermon series off called **Christmas at the Movies.**

We are spending a few weeks combining faith and film to help everyone see and believe in the true meaning of Christmas.

How many of you love watching movies? Some great classics that re-air during Christmas that we recycle each year. We love the feel-good movies and the make-believe hallmark movies that all have the same ending.

Today we are going to look at a movie called “The Greatest Showman.” The film is a musical about the birth of show business inspired by the life of P.T. Barnum, an American showman and founder of Barnum & Bailey’s Circus.

There are several Biblical lessons we can learn from this film, but 2 stood out.

PT Barnum was a creative full of ideas. He finally opened Barnum’s American Museum of Curiosity. The only thing is, no one came. But, his young daughters offered some help and it changed his perspective.

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We see something different going on here. Barnum started going against what was normal in his culture. He started seeing people differently.

He began to value the people on the fringes of society and brought them into a family. He saw the gifts in them overlooked by others.

He gave them a platform for purposeful service that brought meaning not just to their own lives but to the lives of others as well.

My mind immediately goes to a command Jesus gives us...**Romans 13.8-10** | ⁸ **Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another**

has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not covet; and any other commandment, are summed up by this commandment: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

The way Jesus calls me to treat the people around me is different than the rest of the world. The way that Jesus loves me and you is different from the rest of the world.

When we love the people that are hard to love, we are fulfilling this command God gave us.

There are so many examples of this through Scripture, but Jesus is the standard. You see, the reason Jesus was born was so that you and I could look at his life and mimic. We have this movie to watch and strive to live as He did.

The takeaway here is that you and I get to this place where we can...**Love without Borders.**

Let me show you a prime example of this...

Mark 2.13-17 | ¹³ Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. ¹⁴ Then, passing by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me,” and he got up and followed him. ¹⁵ While he was reclining at the table in Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. ¹⁶ When the scribes who were Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he told them, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus was always looking for the unique. The outcast. The one that didn’t seem to fit.

The religious elite distanced themselves in disgust from those who were not “close” to God.

Jesus spoke and lived with compassion toward the ones still far from Him, trapped in the grip of their sin. He loved them. He built relationship with them. He invited them into freedom from sin and relationship with God with gentleness and humility.

But let’s be real for a minute. It’s so much easier to build walls and borders to keep us away from the people that aren’t like us. This is an area that Christians have got to lead the way.

Different doesn’t mean disconnect.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you are held to a higher calling than to participate in the wall-building tendencies of the culture. You are called and empowered by Him to genuinely love, value, and befriend people who are different from you. And in doing so you become a tangible expression of the love of Jesus to people.

How can you connect with someone different this holiday season? A neighbor. A co-worker. Or...

For many of us, it's not the people we don't know that are hardest to love, it's the people we do. It's our family members who make choices we disagree with. It's our relatives who we shake our head at time and time again.

Maybe for this year to be the most wonderful time of the year, it's going to take you loving someone in your family without borders.

Maybe that's your prayer this Christmas season is, **Lord, how can I love them without borders?**

So, PT Barnum teaches us to love but there is another big takeaway that we can apply. Barnum has a dream, but not everyone likes it.

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When you're trying to live for Christ...the enemy does not want you to succeed. If God has started something new in your heart, the enemy is going to do all he can to cast doubt. To cast fear. To distort the truth.

Maybe the Christmas season brings feelings of doubt, struggle, hurt.

I want to encourage someone who maybe is feeling like giving up. You've been praying for years. You've been striving for years. You've been reading for years. Don't you give up.

The person who prevails is the person who refuses to give up.

Remember what Jesus says...**Matthew 11.28-30** I ²⁸ **“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

The thing in front of you may seem like its burnt to the ground....but my God can make beauty from Ashes. My God can take the broken and bring healing. My God can take the mess and turn it into a miracle.

You're not a failure for falling down, you're only a failure when you stay down.

Don't give up. Stay the course. Keep praying. Keep pushing. Keep loving. Keep showing up.

Somebody needs to know today that you're gonna make it. Somebody needs to know today you're doing alright.

You may not be what you ought to be, but you're not what you used to be. You're gonna get there by Gods grace. Don't you quit.

John 16.33 I I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world." (MSG)

I believe what God has placed in you matters. The things He calls you to do matter. I believe He will use them to bring joy to your heart, to make His name known.

You're still alive, therefore God is not done with you. He has a purpose and a plan for you!

Encourage yourself in the Lord.

Conclusion:

Whether it's a broken relationship or a calling that God has put in your heart that you have given up on...it's time to pick up the pieces.

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This Christmas season...may we **Love Different and Live Different** so that He gets all the honor and glory.