



STUDY GUIDE

April 24, 2022

Message Series:

AT THE MOVIES

Message Title:

The Peanut Butter Falcon

Teaching Pastor:

Brian Hughes

Warm-up/Icebreaker:

If you were a famous wrestler, what would your wrestling name be and why?

Pray:

Dear Lord, You are worthy of our honor and praise. How amazing that You speak to us in our everyday experiences, even in creative ways like through movies. We know there is power in a story and the greatest story is that of the Bible; Your desire to be with us. Thank You for extending Yourself and stretching out to reach us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Get Started:

"Since movies are an important part of our lives, it's helpful for us to be able to see God at work there, too. We do this 'At the Movies' series every year because there is no place that you can go and NOT see God at work. Not all movies INTEND to teach us about God, of course. In fact, many movie makers may intend the opposite. But no one can remove God's ability to show up. No, God's goodness shines through everything, in every moment and every circumstance, if only we would have the courage to search for him, we will find Him there."

-Pastor Brian Hughes

- Can you think of a movie that impacted you in such a way that you felt God speaking through it?
- What was your response to the movie Peanut Butter Falcon? What impacted you the most through the movie clips and/or with Pastor Brian's take on it?

"At a quick glance the story is about Zak. But there's much more to it. It's really about an unlikely friendship between two broken people. Just to be sure you know, everybody is broken. Zak's challenges are easier to see. He has no friends, no support, no one who cares enough about him to help him. Except Tyler, his reluctant rescuer. The flashbacks of Tyler's brother, who had died, happen throughout the movie and it becomes evident that the loss of his brother left a massive hole in Tyler that he didn't know how to heal from. Surprisingly, Zak sees Tyler's brokenness, which is more obscure, hidden behind his anger and the emotional walls he's put up around him. I wonder, though, how God thinks about this. Does God condemn us for our bad choices and expect us to do the same to each other? I'm not talking about accountability - which we need. I'm talking about condemnation. Does God want us to discard each other just because our problems are of our own making?" -Pastor Brian Hughes

Read Romans 8:1-17.

- Why do we often feel condemnation, not freedom, in our lives?
- What does being "in Christ Jesus" have to do with our not being condemned?
- How does this text give you hope when we feel like we are failures, frustrated with our sin?

Read Psalm 103:10-11.

Watch and Discuss Video: (No follow-up videos for At the Movies)

Reflect and Commit:

“The real twist of the movie is that in the process, all three of them - Zak, Tyler, and Eleanor - find freedom. The best kind of freedom - the kind that comes when our lives are not just selfishly focusing on ourselves, but are truly putting the needs of others above our own. And along the way, each of them finds redemption in each other. You and I have a chance to step back and look at those around us, those in front of us, and discover that same freedom along the way. We get to decide to be on the side of condemnation or on the side of freedom. God wants us all to experience the best life possible and that only comes when we look at the brokenness around us and within us and, instead of judging it, we offer it release.” -Pastor Brian Hughes

Read Romans 5:1-20.

- Take 1-2 minutes to silently reflect on the following: What is one thing that you have been condemning yourself or someone else for that you can release to God? Share if time permits.

**And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.
(John 8:11b, ESV)**

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank You for doing a healing work inside of us that we cannot do on our own. We praise You for the love and forgiveness You so freely offer. Please give us the wisdom and strength to forgive those who have hurt us and to forgive ourselves as well. We want our lives to be living examples of Your unconditional love, mercy and grace. Thank You for giving us a new day, a new chapter and a new story of freedom. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

MOVIE TRIVIA (optional)

- The movie came about because the directors met Zack Gottsagen at a camp for disabled and non-disabled people and he expressed his desire to be a movie star. So the directors wrote the script around him and Zack's hopes and dreams that bled into the script and people they knew who would allow them to film for free and without permits.
- Zack Gottsagen ad-libbed the answer "party" when he was asked for the first time by Tyler what rule number one is.
- On July 30, 2019, the Ruderman Family Foundation honored this movie with its Seal of Authentic Representation for accurate depictions of people with disabilities.
- It became a sleeper hit, becoming the highest grossing independent film of 2019.
- Although the film received no Academy Award nominations, the two stars appeared together at the Academy Awards show. Gottsagen became the first individual with Down syndrome to present an Academy Award when he and LaBeouf announced the Best Live Action Short Film on February 9, 2020.
- In the scene where Zak, Tyler, and Eleanor jump off the oil rig on the rope, the respective actors were the ones who swung on the rope. No stunt doubles were used.
- Two former professional wrestlers appear in the movie, Jake Roberts aka Jake the Snake, and Mick Foley who wrestled under the monikers Mankind and Cactus Jack.