

June 11, 2023

GATM: Across the SpiderVerse – Do Good (John 18)

Sacrifice Follow Jesus and do good, no matter what the cost.

Bumper In – Trailer

- *Shorter trailer

Greetings (5min)

- Greetings, Connect Card
- **Sermon notes in app**
- Disclaimer (need to say every year) – these are not all Christian movies, and we are not endorsing them. Use your own discretion, and you don't need to see them to hear the message. The sermons are about interacting with the world's stories and ideas to see how they compare with the Bible – much like Paul did in Acts 17.

Prayer

- Clip – Gwen and Miles – 60sec
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyEr9rrz9E>

Plot and Themes (5min, -25)

- Plot – Miles Morales is Spider-Man and he is fighting the Spot – a scientist who got exposed to the portal collider (in the first movie), blames Miles, and can travel between the multi-verse. Gwen Stacy is part of a Spider Society from all different multi-verses, and she is helping track down the Spot. She runs into Miles and he convinces her to bring him along to help.
 - In their next confrontation with the Spot, Miles sees a vision of his father dying – considered a “canon event.” Miles wants to stop this from happening, but he is told this is not acceptable by Miguel, the leader of the Spider Society, who also tells Miles that he shouldn't even be a Spider-Man since the spider that bit him is from a different multi-verse.
 - Miles has to choose to accept his father's death or work to save his father – even at great cost.
- **Free will vs determinism – is Miles required to stick to the “script” for Spiderman – specifically that his loved ones have to die?
 - You can hear this theme especially in the dialogue when these big questions are being asked.
 - Possibly a little rebuke to the fans who claim everything has to follow the “canon.”
- Parents and kids – Gwen and Miles both have struggles with their parents.
 - Freedom, communication
 - You can see this theme in the colors used – when Gwen is struggling it is blue/grey, but when she has a breakthrough with her father it is warm tones.
 - Gwen thought she couldn't go home.

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- Honesty – Gwen and Peter not telling Miles the truth to not hurt him.
 - This comes up multiple times in the movie, and especially at critical moments.
 - There are a lot of relationships – and trust is at the center of all relationships.
- Goodness – Doing the right thing no matter the consequences.
 - //Miles told he can't save the ones he loves because that will break the Spider-Verse – but he can't refuse to do what he knows is right.
 - //You don't know the future – do what is right no matter the consequences – a huge act of FAITH (trust in God).

DO GOOD (15min, -20)

- *Doing what you know is wrong for the sake of some “greater good” is a form of villainy.
 - Not talking about human rules (i.e. the Underground Railroad was illegal but still moral).
 - *In the movie – the Spiderman Miguel (Oscar Isaac) is set up as the villain. But he believes he is doing the right thing and saving people.*
 - This theme of villainy for the greater good is common in fiction.
 - Harry Potter – Grindelwald does evil “for the greater good.” Dolores Umbridge is such a strict rule follower that many consider her the most evil person in the books.
 - Captain America – “Every time someone tries to stop a war before it starts, innocent people die.”
 - History tells the same stories:
 - Tyrants who wanted to stop the monsters – only to become the monster.
 - Religions (including Christians) who have forced conversions.
 - Bible – Paul was hunting down Christians before he converted.
- John 18:12-17 (p.899)

¹²So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. ¹³First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

¹⁵Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. ¹⁷The woman asked Peter, “You’re not one of that man’s disciples, are you?”

“No,” he said, “I am not.”

 - Caiaphas condemned an innocent man to keep his political and religious power.
 - Peter lied to save his skin.

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- What about you?
 - Ever lied to someone to avoid hurting their feelings?
 - Don't be mean but do good. Do good and be kind.
 - I have met so many who wished someone would tell them how they were breaking social rules – many which are invisible.
 - Integrity – doing the right thing, all the time, no matter who is watching.
 - *Great power, great responsibility – do good.
- *There is never a wrong time to do the right thing.
 - Often said, “Right thing at the wrong time is the wrong thing.”
 - Not talking about that.
 - Talking about how we say to ourselves, “I can't do the right thing here because...” and then give some excuse.
 - John 18:19-23

¹⁹ Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. ²⁰ Jesus replied, “Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. ²¹ Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said.”

²² Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he demanded.

²³ Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?”

 - Jesus was on trial!
 - For most of us – a GREAT time to lie, deceive, whatever – to get out of trouble.
 - PROS and CONS – the game we all play when it will cost us to do what is right.
 - Warning – humans have a tremendous capacity for self-deception.
 - *Show JH picture of myself – I thought this was cool! (self-deception)
 - Jesus didn't play the pros and cons game – do good.
- JRR Tolkien (we don't know the future – theme in movie)
 - He invented a word called “eucatastrophe” – an unexpected good thing that changes everything. This theme is all over his writing.
 - Do what is right even when there is no logical “hope.” There is still hope because you don't know the future.
 - Born out of his time in the trenches in WWI and the British people standing against the Nazis who bombed London through WWII.
- Examples from Bible:

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- Ruth – left her country, culture, and security to care for her mother-in-law.
 - Jeremiah – spoke the truth to warn people even when they tried to kill him for it.
 - Rahab – trusted the Lord and hosted spies because it was the right thing to do.
 - Mary – accepted her calling to be the mother of Jesus, not knowing if her fiancé would stay engaged to her.
 - Paul – converted, knowing that people would hate him and seek to kill him – which they eventually did. But his death was not the end of the story.
- *Follow Jesus and pay the price to do what is right.
 - John 18:33-38
 - ³³ Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him.
 - ³⁴ Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?”
 - ³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?”
 - ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”
 - ³⁷ Pilate said, “So you are a king?”
 - Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”
 - ³⁸ “What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime.
 - Jesus spoke the truth, even when it would cost Him.
 - Pilate didn’t believe in truth – he hid behind his philosophy.
 - He skirted his responsibility – tried to get the people to choose Barabbas (a murder and insurrectionist) – but the crowd turned on Jesus and the priests threatened to report Pilate to Caesar.
 - He refused to pay the price to do what is right.
 - Jesus is the original rebel.
 - Would not fit the script of those in power.
 - Showed a different WAY – we are followers of the Way.
- Justin Martyr
 - Platonist philosopher who lived around AD 150. Converted after seeing the good life of an elderly Christian. Traveled all over to teach about Christianity as the “true philosophy.” Eventually moved to Rome and started a school. You can still read some of what he wrote.
 - Along with other Christians, he was put on trial during one of the persecutions against Christians.

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- Prefect Rusticus said, “Sacrifice, all of you, to the gods.” Justin replied, “No one in his right mind gives up piety for impiety.”
- Rusticus says: If you do not obey, you will be tortured without mercy. Justin replies: That is our desire, to be tortured for Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and so to be saved.
- And all the martyrs said: Do as you wish; for we are Christians, and we do not sacrifice to idols. The holy martyrs glorifying God betook themselves to the customary place, where they were beheaded for confessing their Savior.

True Goodness (5min)

- True goodness
 - Justin taught that the way of Jesus is the only way to true goodness.
 - This is not philosophy, behavior modification, self-help, or working harder.
 - Jesus showed the way – DIE to yourself, He lives inside of you and changes your will (desires) through LOVE – transforms your character, actions, and attitude (fruit).
- *Galatians 2:20
- **The good you do is never good enough...**
 - To live up to the expectations of others (or yourself) – feelings of shame and guilt
 - To earn forgiveness
 - To change your nature
- Jesus gives you His goodness.
 - Verse – Gal 2:20
 - Christ is not about behavior modification but transformation through love.
 - **Advil doesn't cure cancer.**
 - You don't just need better behavior.
 - You need a new nature.
 - You need the fire, passion, and goodness of Jesus living in you and bursting out of you.
 - This is the goodness that Justin was teaching was stronger than any philosophy.
 - This is goodness that Paul said no law is against it.
 - This is the goodness that will get you into trouble because it doesn't always follow the self-righteous rules that people put up to protect their power.
- Gal 2:20 – the invitation
 - To be truly good...die to yourself.
 - Lose your life and live His life in you.
 - Let HIM do the work through you.
 - Do what is right no matter what the cost – your life is in His hands (you are already dead). No shame or need for approval (you're dead).
- **Prayer of surrender**

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Bumper Out – The Shack trailer

Benediction – John 15:5

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