

NAME

Garden State - Sunday Service for July 12, 2020.mp3

DATE

July 14, 2020

DURATION

19m 13s

START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:02]**

Good morning.

[00:00:03]

My name is Beverly Fox, and I am beyond honored to be serving as a preacher today. They are going to be sharing a message from our SpiritFlix series, which for any of you new comers welcome, who may not know what that is. It is Wellspring's way of driving spiritual messages from the movies and media that we are exposed to in everyday life. And today's message is about my absolute favorite movie of all time. Garden State. I get into the movie a little bit about why I chose it. Yes, it's my favorite movie of all time. But more importantly for me, it kind of served a really profound and important validation of an experience that I was having in my life at the time that I saw. It came out in year 2004, which for me was my senior year of college. The main character, and I'll get into this a little bit more later, comes to the conclusion over the course of the movie that he has been pretty numb for most of his life due to heavy duty psychiatric medications that he had been taking, which he ultimately concludes he does not need, because the diagnosis that he received as a young boy wasn't real.

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And over the course of the movie, in terms of coming into his own experience fully and not being numb anymore, he starts to really live and embrace his life at this point in my life. I was coming to a relatively similar conclusion myself at the age of 15. I was, I can now say, mis diagnosed as having bipolar disorder. And I was prescribed a bunch of medications which I took throughout the remainder of my adolescence, because that's what I thought I was supposed to do, because that's what I thought I was really dangerous. Thing you can sometimes do with diagnosis in terms of saying I am this. And over time, I started to conclude that perhaps the difficult mood swings I was experiencing were simply part of adolescence and that maybe this wasn't quite right. It didn't feel right. And I came to the conclusion not because of this movie, but the time just happened to coincide that I wanted to stop. And I did. And I didn't enter into a world of chaos because I'm not bipolar. Don't get me wrong, medications are incredibly helpful and necessary tool for so many people.

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I am a therapist.

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I know that it is vitally important for a lot of people to be able to maintain and to be able to practice the things that they have to do to manage a real psychiatric disorder.

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But doctors are people.

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They are not omnipotent. And sometimes we as the consumers don't do the best job of being able to express to them whatever experiences are. And I understand why this happens. You know, most of the time when people come to see me for the first time, it's because they're sort of at the end of their rope. And I don't know about you, but when I'm really struggling emotionally, it's kind of hard for me to put into words what it is exactly that I'm experiencing, let alone correctly. Check off a list of symptoms that are going to point to. This is what's going on. So the world isn't perfect. And in this case, in my case, it was. Watching it recently, I had a little bit of a different experience because in addition to this weakening, one of the main messages of the movie that comes up over and over again. And what is the point of today's message? Is this idea of home not as a place, not even as a group of people or a family, but as an experience of fully embody what it is to be a living fully within your own skin? Good, bad and sometimes ugly. And that is demonstrated for us throughout the course of the movie in terms of the character waking up and coming into his own home for me has meant a number of different things over the past few years. While ago, I was living with a man in a lovely suburban town and nice neighborhood. And I thought that

that was home for the rest of my life. I had made the decision that this was where I was going to stay. And that relationship, like unfortunately relationships do, fell apart for a number of reasons, one of which was the fact that home wasn't a really honest space for both of us.

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And over the next four years, I moved a total of five times into a series of different apartments or rooms for rent.

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And it lets me to being here in this beautiful home that I am now with a new man that I have been with for four years and holding something very different to me now.

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I realized that in the home that I shared with my ex there, there wasn't a whole lot of vulnerability. There wasn't a whole lot of connection. There wasn't a whole lot of confronting challenges head on and using them as opportunities to grow closer to one another.

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I have them here and sometimes it's challenging and it requires me to continuously make myself vulnerable and open.

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It requires me to continuously express what it is that's going on inside the home of my own money. And I can be scary, but it's also the source of all of the intimacy and all of the connection that I have. And I think that that's sort of what home means. It's not a place. It's not even just the people. It's the honesty and the expression and the full embodiment of one's experience, just like understanding and love.

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And gone home is a verb. And I think that that's the message that we kind of get from Garden State. It starts with Andrew Largeman, who in this case is played by Zach Braff, and this movie is his brainchild.

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It comes mostly from his personal experiences. He is seen receiving a phone call from his father, letting him know that his mother has your stuff and that he needs to return from his place of residence and even really call it a home in a way, to his previous place of residence. We call that a home in New Jersey and we see him receiving this news with no reaction whatsoever. He is blank slate. There is no emotional affectation in his expression. There is no notice that there is a human being in there.

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There is just a great wall. And we see him come home and we see a very painfully offered interaction with his father.

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And we learn that he has been away from home for nine years and that he and his father are extremely strange. And there's definitely some serious conflict underneath the surface there. And he proceeds to avoid having contact with his father by reconnecting with a series of old high school friends. And it's here that we get to see the landscape of New Jersey Garden State. And for any of you who know that place, I think that there is some familiarities that can kind of make you feel at home. And for us watching, we are sort of carried along this journey where he's interacting with these people and relating these stories and ultimately meeting his hero in this case, a woman named Sam, played by now important.

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She is. The opposite. She is vibrant. She is full of life. She is expressive. She is emotional. She is a little bit of a liar.

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And he confronts traumas pretty early on and she confesses to having. Yeah, it's kind of a problem, but I always feel really bad about it.

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So I always confess immediately. And you can trust that. So you're able to sort of establish a little bit of a bond going forward. And we see them starting to open up just a little bit through some common jokes.

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And she asks him to give her a ride home from the clinic where they met.

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And we see her home and kind of like her. It's messy and it's crowded and cluttered.

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But there's also massive amount of love between her and her mother and her brother and her menagerie of pets.

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And we see him kind of getting pulled into this. And as you might expect, they go on to fall in love, but they do so. What I consider to be a very real way through vulnerability, through openness and honesty about their experiences. She confesses to him the reason that she had her own helmet when he took her home that first time on his motorcycle, because the law office that she works in requires her to wear it while she's there, because otherwise they would not insure her with her epilepsy. It's not really fun to be wearing a helmet inside of an office things. But she laughs at it because that's her philosophy. Life is what it is. might as well laugh at what you can't change. And he in turn, is vulnerable with her. And he tells her why he's been gone for nine years and what happened to him when he was a young boy that his father, the psychiatrist, prescribed to all of these medications and this accurately diagnosed him at the time. I won't ruin what that is, because I think that it's a moment that's worth viewing on your own.

[00:11:01]

But I can't let you know that it serves as a source of deep connection for the truth and the intimacy.

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I was thinking about different resources that I might use in conjunction with the movie, which is great. Don't get me wrong to kind of help us really embody what it is that I'm speaking. And I remember a poem by Rumi that I read a number of times and that I continued to return home to.

[00:11:32]

It's called the guesthouse, and I'm going to be sharing that with you. This being human is a guest house. Every morning, a new arrival, a joy, the depression, a meanness, some momentary or it comes as an unexpected visitor.

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Welcome and entertain them all, even if they are a crowd of sorrows who violently sweep your house, empty your furniture, still treat each guest honorably and maybe clear you out for something you don't.

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The dark felt the shame and the malice.

[00:12:18]

Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whatever comes because each has been sent as a guide from.

[00:12:31]

I think that that kind of says it better than anything else that I can think of.

[00:12:38]

We're showing the same kind of message, this awakening in the movie through a couple of different scenes. One is with him. And so she looks at him and she says, you're in it right now, are you? And he says the truth. We've been waiting for. Which is that this hurts.

[00:13:02]

He is finally fully experiencing the depths of grief that comes from so many lost things that he had never had with his mother. And he is fully allowing himself to completely experience it. And he cries for the first time in a decade.

[00:13:25]

I get so excited that she grabs a cup to collect the tears and she hugs him and she asked him how he was feeling.

[00:13:37]

But I was you. I feel so sick like I'm home.

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The emotional climax becomes when he finally does what we've known he needed to do from the beginning. He confronts his father, he goes into Sportage bedroom or he's falling asleep watching TV.

[00:14:00]

Then his father confronts with the fact that he's been boarding in which he reluctantly agrees to, and his father tells him. All I ever wanted was for us to be happy. That's.

[00:14:18]

And Andrew says, when was this time in your memory, when we were also happy together? Because I'll remember it. If I did, I could somehow help steer us back there. Then he confesses how angry he is with her and how he wants to forgive her for prescribing all those medications all those years ago and for keeping him so numb and disengaged his whole life.

[00:14:48]

And he places his hand on his father's heart and he says that there may not be as happy as always wanted us to be, but maybe let's just be what we are.

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And I think that'll be good.

[00:15:09]

And he leaves it there that perfect.

[00:15:15]

And his father's kind of rotating in his body. It's uncomfortable receiving this much affection because he hasn't been getting it. He certainly has not been giving it.

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But he doesn't pull away doesn't move his son's hand. And there's maybe a little bit of hope here.

[00:15:34]

And at the end of the movie, there's no grand declaration. We don't know whether or not he and his father will reconcile completely. We don't know whether or not he and Sam will live happily ever after. But we have hope because we know that whatever happens, he's going to be doing it with the full embodiment of his own experience, his thoughts, his emotions, the states.

[00:16:01]

He's going to share them. He's going to embrace them. And he's going to embody some.

[00:16:12]

That's the point in the message where I would normally ask you to join me in prayer. Something that feels like a little bit more home to me is contemplative practice.

[00:16:24]

So I ask you now if you are safe and feel comfortable to close your eyes.

[00:16:32]

Take a deep breath in. Let it out.

[00:16:40]

And start to feel. Into the world, inside your own skin, noticing. At first, the points of contact that you have with the chair, the seat that you're in. Noticing your own heartbeat and the breath serving as your anchor team for moving to this deeper space of contemplation. Go a little bit deeper in to investigate. There's an open and curious mind all that there is to feel and experience in this world right now. Your emotions are always present in your body, sometimes manifested as a little bit of tension somewhere, maybe even some pain or shakiness. Or there could be a comfort, a joy just felt in the experience being settled, knowing in this moment that we're all sharing this together. In her beloved community and whatever it is that you find here in your home, I ask him to lean into it, to seek with understanding and acceptance, to offer compassion for the points of hurt, to experience joy, the points of gratitude.

[00:18:12]

No right or wrong, no shots, simply acceptance and a fully embracing this moment of being alive, knowing that this is not the place that you're in. This is home.

[00:18:33]

This practice of cultivating awareness and presence within your own skin.

[00:18:39]

This is home.

[00:18:41]

And we are invited to return here every time we take a breath.

[00:18:48]

Every time we pause and notice with wonderment the old reality of our experience in any given moment.

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You can come back any time you need.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

