

"Awakenings"

Scene by Scene Similarities to Gospel Messages
Connections and analysis by DPC member Carole Hoffner

Scene: Dr. Sayer starts his new job and enters a hospital full of patients, many of whom have been in a catatonic state for decades.

Gospel message: *We are all in a state of being spiritually "catatonic" until the Gospel permeates our hearts. (Webster's definition of catatonic: a syndrome characterized by muscular rigidity and mental stupor: appearing to be in a daze, unresponsive).*

Scene: Dr. Sayer persistently attempts to interact with patients and finds they can respond with reflexes to catching a ball. His superiors arrogantly dismiss his discovery.

Gospel message: *God is the doctor who pursues us relentlessly until we become "alive" to His love. (1 John 4:19, Ezekiel 34:11, Matt 18:12). The Pharisees in Jesus' time arrogantly criticized his teaching and the miracles he performed. The arrogant are not open to any view other their own.*

Scene: Dr. Sayer addresses Leonard by his name and gets a response.

Gospel message: *God calls us by our name. (Isaiah 43:1,7; Psalm 91:14-16; John 10:14; Isaiah 49:1-26, Rev 2:17). When the Spirit of God calls us and calls out His spirit within us, we respond and this response is "the Awakening" to the spirit filled life.*

Scene: The nurse alerts Dr. Sayer to the fact that when she takes hold of a patient's arm, they are able to walk with her support.

Gospel message: *(Isaiah 41:13-15). "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you I myself will help you, declares the Lord." Our Abba walks side by side with us, hand in hand.*

Scene: Dr. Sayer stands up in a lecture and interrupts the speaker with an ill-timed question.

Gospel message: *Jesus was criticized for not strictly adhering to the Jewish laws and customs of the time. He always brought God's truth and does so today whether or not it breaks some standard of man-made rules or cultural and social etiquette.*

Scene: A patient named Elcy is attempting to get to the water cooler but is hindered by the checkered black and white floor pattern coming to an end. Dr. Sayer and his nurse, on hands and knees, color in the checkered design so that it continues to the water cooler. Elcy is then able to follow the pattern to get to water.

Gospel message: *God prepares a "way" for us, a path, a design, that enables us to drink in the living water so that we will never thirst again. (John 4:13-15)*

Scene: Dr. Sayer continues in his relentless pursuit of bringing Leonard and others out of their catatonic state. Finally, he gets a breakthrough and Leonard awakes from his decades of imprisonment.

Gospel message: *At the appointed time, we "awake" to the pursuing love of the One who draws us to Himself. "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." (Psalm 139:16)*

Scene: Leonard is afraid of falling asleep and going back again into his lifeless state. His mother strokes his forehead and calms him.

Gospel message: *"As a mother comforts her child, so will I [God] comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem." (Isa. 66:13). "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I [God] will not forget you!" (Isa. 49:15) God's love is like the touch of a devoted mother's caressing hands.*

Scene: Dr Sayer has been told by the nurse that patients are beginning to be revived. He goes running down the hallway but in his excitement asks where his glasses are, only to be told they are on his face as he runs into a room of patients.

Gospel message: *God is so overjoyed when we "awake" to his gift of grace that He races to greet us! In the parable of The Prodigal Son, (Luke 15: 11-32) the Father abandons all Jewish customs by lifting his gown above his ankles as he runs toward his returning, wayward son. Or just maybe, in his excitement, the Father forgets Jewish custom!*

Scene: The patients are permitted to take a day bus trip to a place Dr. Sayer picked for them. They find it boring and choose another place where they can experience being "alive" and full of "joy" and where they can delight in the simple pleasures of life--a bar where they all wind up dancing.

Gospel message: *"Awakening" of the human spirit to the redemptive message of the Gospel gives opportunity for us to experience life with a renewed freedom and joy and should result in our ability to dance like no one is watching.*

Scene: Suddenly Leonard starts to exhibit signs of regressing and is having bad reactions to the increasing dosages of leva dopa. The meds seem to have stopped helping. Dr. Sayer continues searching for an answer. Leonard pleads with Dr. Sayer not to give up on him.

Gospel message: *Hebrews 5:5 "Never will I leave you: never will I forsake you." Sometimes we regress back to our old ways but God's love remains constant. We ask God, as Leonard did with Dr. Sayer, not to give up on us and He never does.*

Final Scene: Leonard is experiencing uncontrollable bodily movements and knows the future is one of returning to his former state. He feels he needs to say goodbye to a young woman friend who comes to the facility to visit her father. As he stands to say farewell and reaches out to shake her hand, she takes hold of him and will not let go. She places his hand around her waist and begins to dance with him in the cafeteria, shaky movements and all. As they dance the camera zooms in on the expression on Leonard's face--beaming with joy in an incredible moment of having received grace, compassion and love.

Gospel message: *Quote from What's The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian.*

"This is the way it is with God and human beings. Like Leonard, every human being twitches with flaws and sins and brokenness. And yet God, like this woman, holds us close with compassionate, unconditional love and dances with us across the floor" of our lives--(my addition.)