

At the Movies: The Journey
The King's Speech
March 3, 2013

PRELUDE – “Christ is Risen”

Worship song (just one): “Remind Me Who I Am” (Jason Gray)

Setup song: “You’ve Got a Friend” (James Taylor)

Closer: “Who Am I” (Casting Crowns)

Good morning everyone. Today we are continuing in our “At the Movies” series with the movie

Slide: *The King's Speech*.

How many of you have seen the movie? I wasn't very excited to see it when it first came out because I thought it had a boring title. But eventually I did see it and I'm glad I did. This movie turned out to be THE big hit of 2011. It won four Oscars including best picture, best actor,

best director and best original screenplay. It is one of those movies that you don't quickly forget because it's a great story about overcoming adversity. But that's not all. It's also a great parable about the power of friendship. Today we are going to delve into this idea of “friendship” in a big way because it's the final leg of the journey of faith Rick's been talking about.

Before we begin, I want to remind you of our purpose for doing a movie series. First of all, movies are a powerful medium in today's society and therefore they are a very effective form of communication. Second of all, movies are often modern day parables that illustrate truth. Since Jesus used parables to teach the crowds and his disciples the truth about the gospel, we believe we can do the same, given the right choice of movies that contain the right kind of messages.

For that reason, we're using *these* five movies – *The Hunger Games*, *The Adjustment Bureau*, *Moneyball*, *True Grit* and *The King's Speech* – to progressively paint a portrait of the typical journey of faith.

The Hunger Games

illustrated what it feels like at the beginning of the journey when you become aware that there is no hope for you apart from God.

The Adjustment Bureau

illustrated the next stage – the “seeking” stage – which most people go through when they become aware of the reality of their spiritual condition. When we looked at

Moneyball

we saw an amazing metaphor of the third stage – the “all in” stage when people to say “yes” to Jesus’ invitation to “repent” – to *rethink everything* about our lives. Last week’s movie,

True Grit

illustrated the importance of obedience, which represents the fourth stage of the journey. Today, we’re going to examine the fifth and final stage on the journey of faith as we look at the movie, *The King's Speech*. So, let’s get started. Let’s watch part of the opening scene which sets up the whole movie.

VIDEO Clip - SPEECH PROBLEMS (1.8 min)

B: Mic with blinking light

E: Elizabeth looks down

The person at the microphone with the speech impediment is Prince Albert, the second son of King George V. The scene we just saw was the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley on October 31, 1925. At that time, Europe was recovering from World War I, but it wouldn't be long until a man by the name of Adolf Hitler began his rise to power.

Unfortunately, for Albert (or Bertie as he was called by his family), that meant that he and his older brother were going to have to spend more time encouraging the nation through even more public speaking ... as his father, King George, explains.

DVD Clip – DO IT! (1.2 min)

B: King George: "Herr Hitler intimidating half of Europe ..."

E: George: "Do it!!!"

Obviously, Bertie's speech impediment is a problem. But as you can see, he has another problem: an overbearing, impatient father whose relentless pressure causes Bertie to feel like an utter failure...a fact that comes out later on in the movie.

So, Bertie's wife, Elizabeth decides to take matters into her own hands. After dragging Bertie to several speech therapists without finding a cure, she learns of a therapist whose methods are said to be "unorthodox and eccentric" and visits him on her own – incognito, of course ... as "Mrs.

Johnson.”

Let’s watch.

DVD Clip – MY GAME/TURF/RULES (1.2

min)

B: Lionel: "Where's Mr. Johnson?"

E: Lionel: "Good Afternoon"

The “doctor” to whom Elizabeth is speaking is not really a doctor (though he never claims to be; she just assumes that he is). He’s Lionel Logue, a self-trained former actor who has successfully cured many people with speech impediments. Lionel is totally unaware that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are the Duke and Duchess of York.

However, after Logue turns her away, Elizabeth identifies herself and her husband and Logue agrees to take the case. But the deal remains the

same: It doesn’t matter if “Mr. Johnson” is a Duke or a Prince or anything else. It’s still “my game, my turf, my rules.”

That particular phrase, “my game, my turf, my rules” is a helpful spiritual metaphor for our purposes because it describes the way God works. This is God’s game we’re in, not ours. This world is God’s turf, not ours. And therefore, He’s the one who makes the rules, not us.

Now that was main point of last week’s message on the obedience. Since it’s God’s game, he wants us to obey his rules and commands. Why? Because “obedience is better than sacrifice”, according to the bible. In other words, obedience is always better than having to repair the consequences of sin. With that said, I want to make one thing very clear when it comes to

obedience: even though obedience is an important step in our journey of faith, it's not the end. We can't stop there.

If our life with God ends up being nothing more than obedience, we are endanger of becoming "legalists."

A legalist is someone who

- **takes a strictly "mechanical" approach to the Christian life.**
- **who focuses on abiding by a set of rules or "dos/don'ts" in order to be acceptable to God. Just give a legalist a rule book, and they will take it from there.**
- **Legalists don't need Jesus. That's because they don't want to relate to God in a personal way.**

- **They gauge their spiritual life by how well they perform against their man made set of religious rules or standards.**

This is how Bertie begins his relationship with Logue. Bertie just wants Logue to simply teach him the rules and mechanics so he can overcome his problem, but notice how Logue refuses to stop there. Logue wants more. Watch.

DVD Clip – BETTER IF WE'RE EQUALS
(2.5 min)

B: Bertie: "Aren't you going to start treating me Dr. Logue?"

E: Bertie: "then we shan't speak"

Do you sense the resistance in Bertie? He's sitting in the room of a man who can heal him but he's

not willing to engage at a personal level. “It’s better if we’re equals,” Logue says. But Bertie, because of his high position, can’t even conceive of such a thing.

If we’re going to move to the next phase in our journey of faith, we must be willing to engage with God on a personal level.

This is Stage 5. We must develop a friendship with God.

We can’t just stop with obedience. This is what Logue is trying to get Bertie to see. If anything positive is going to happen to Bertie in this treatment, it’s going to come out of a personal, friendly relationship with Logue.

Jesus said this same thing to his disciples. In John

15 he said,

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15 ESV)

Jesus is saying that when you and I became Christians... we became friends of God, not merely servants or clients. God desires a friendship with us. In fact, if anything positive is going to happen in our spiritual lives, it’s going to come out of a personal friendship with God. And that’s what Logue wanted between himself and Bertie.

Now, even though the first meeting doesn’t go so

well, Bertie does come back for another session. As we watch this next clip, notice the shift in Logue's strategy when Bertie resists his friendship.

DVD Clip – SIMPLE MECHANICS (1.2 min)

B: Bertie: “strictly business - no personal nonsense”

E: Elizabeth: “that's all we ask”

“Alright,” Logue says, “you want mechanics instead of the personal approach? I can do mechanics.”

Oftentimes that's the way we approach God. We say to God, “Just teach me the mechanics...the rules, the tips, and the tricks on how to be a good Christian and I'll figure it out from there. Let's keep this strictly business-no personal nonsense”.

That's the way Bertie wanted it. And as you can see in this next clip, the results speak for themselves.

DVD Clip – IT DOESN'T WORK (1.9 min)

B: Lionel voice (empty couch): “Take a nice deep breath ...”

E: People standing in semi-circle (cut before "father")

“It doesn't bloody work!” he says. Most of us would agree that the mechanical approach didn't work for Bertie.

This clip illustrates how God often works with us. At some point in our life (and maybe at many points in our life), we realize that we have a problem and we need help, so we turn to God.

And God says “OK, I want to help you, but it’s my game, my turf, my rules.” He doesn’t say that to be dictatorial. He says that because He loves us and He knows better than us.

But a lot of times we resist God because we want to do things our way. We think we know better. And so we ignore the Scripture or other godly counsel God sends our way.

And a lot of times what God does is exactly what Logue did. He says, “OK, have it your way and let’s see how it turns out.”

I remember trying to have it my way early on in my Christian life. I wanted to be obedient to God, so I formulated my own plan for spiritual growth. My plan was simple: No bible, no breakfast. (this was my idea, not God’s) Since I thought that daily

bible reading was the key to spiritual growth, I was convinced that my highly disciplined, “mechanical approach” would work. It should be no surprise to you that my plan was a dismal failure. In less than a month, I was miserable. I was strictly business in my approach to God, but I began to resent having to read the bible before breakfast. My so-called spiritual growth plan did nothing for my spiritual life except to cause me to hate reading the bible for a time. Thankfully, one of my spiritual mentors came along side me after a while and informed me that my plan was legalistic and my approach was all wrong.

My mechanical approach to the Christian life didn’t work and neither will yours. God isn’t interested in just mechanics. He wants to relate to us as a person... friend to friend.

Let's push pause for a second and ask a question: If God wants a friendship with us and not mere mechanics, what does that look like? How is a friendship with God supposed to work?

I believe a friendship with God is similar to any real friendship.

Every real friendship includes the elements of honesty, vulnerability, confession, and trust.

It works the same with God. These four elements are critical in order to create a lasting bond of friendship with our heavenly Father.

Let's take the first element: honesty. In order to have a friendship with God, we have to be honest, and truthful with him.

That means we have to be truthful with Him. We don't pretend everything is ok when it isn't. When we come to God, we tell it like it is. We tell him about the good, the bad, and the ugly things in our lives.

King David is a supreme example of this kind of honesty. He never shied away from telling God exactly how he felt about everything. For example,

Ps. 13:6 I "I will sing to the Lord because he has been good to me."

Psalm 22: 2 "Every day I call to you, my God but you do not answer. Every night you hear my voice, but I find no relief."

Psalm 13:1 "O Lord, how long will you

forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?"

Now that's honesty. Sometimes when we read those angry responses in the bible we wonder, "Isn't it a sin to talk to God like that?" It may seem so on the surface but it's not. In King David's case, it wasn't a sin because he came before God with pure motives. He was genuinely sharing how he felt because he sincerely wanted more of God. We would do well to imitate his honest and candid communication with God.

In this next clip. Logue begins to get very personal with Bertie, it's not personal because Logue just wants to be friends (although he *is* a friend.) It's personal because ... well, you'll see.

At this point in the story, Bertie's father, King

George has died and the two men are discussing Bertie's childhood. Let's watch.

DVD Clip - GETTING PERSONAL (2.1 min)

B: Lionel: "Did David ever tease you?"

E: Lionel nods

Wow!

Logue wanted to get personal because he wanted Bertie to be honest with him. He wanted to bring Bertie face to face with the real issue, the real problem, which *wasn't* mechanics. The real problem, the real issue with Bertie – as it was with almost everyone Logue had cured – was *fear*. Fear was the cause of the stammering. But it wasn't simply a fear of public speaking. It was deep-seated fear that he wasn't good enough and never would be and because of that he would be rejected – just as he was in his childhood.

This is what a friendship with God looks like. If we are honest with God, we will confront our deepest, darkest fears and tell them to God. We can do that with God because he's our friend. When we are honest with God, we don't need to fear rejection. He will remain faithful to us no matter what.

Honesty is only the first element of a true friendship with God.

The second element is vulnerability.

Vulnerability is about inviting God to speak truth into our lives; allowing him to influence us. Vulnerability is an openness to change, even if it's difficult for us.

Sometimes when we are trying to be vulnerable with God, we don't always respond well when he

reveals something to us we don't want to hear.

For example Jesus told his disciples that he was going to suffer, be killed and after that rise again on the third day. But when Peter heard this, he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Matthew 16:22,23

Peter didn't respond well when Jesus told him he was going to the cross. I'm pretty sure he didn't like being called "Satan", either.

How would you have responded if Jesus had called you out like that? We don't always respond in a vulnerable, teachable manner when we are challenged to think or act differently. Oftentimes

we just get angry and want to lash out at God.

That's what happens when Logue pushes in on the deepest darkest issue in Bertie's life – his fear. In this next clip, Bertie's older brother David is about to be crowned as king in succession of their father. But David has “issues” that would prevent him from being king.

As we watch, pay attention to how Logue strikes a nerve.

DVD Clip - YOU'RE A NOBODY (2.0 min)

B: Lionel: “what's the matter? why are you so upset?”

E: Bertie walking away

And the sessions *are* over for several months until David, Bertie's older brother abdicates the throne

and marries Wallace Simpson of Baltimore ... which means that *Bertie* is now the king.

Let's watch as that reality hits home with him ... and pay particular attention to what *Bertie says about himself* in comparison to what *Logue said*.

VIDEO Clip - 09 NOT A KING (2.5 min)

B: Bertie: “Christmas ... broadcast”

E: Shot of Lionel

Both Bertie's return visit and his apology indicate that he and Logue have gotten beyond mechanics and entered a new level in their friendship. In fact, that last clip illustrates the third element of our friendship with God: Confession. For some of us, confession is a dirty word and conjures up unpleasant memories we've had in other churches or parishes. But confessing our sins to God is a

very biblical concept and a part of a healthy relationship with our heavenly Father.

Confession is basically admitting to God we have sinned and telling him we are sorry. When we confess, we say things to God like I'm sorry for responding inappropriately, sorry for being rebellious, sorry for putting other people and other things ahead of you.

One of the best examples of confession is found in Psalms 51 where King David confesses his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. He says to God,

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I

sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Ps. 51:2-4

Without the element of confession, our relationship with God becomes stagnant. It starts to shut down due to our pride and stubbornness. But when we confess our sins, our heart softens and we can once again hear the still small voice of God.

And here's the other cool thing about confession. When we've confess our sins, God promises to forgive us. The bible says,

“If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteous.” 1 John 1:9.

Confession helps to put our sin behind us and restores our relationship with God. It's reopens the lines of communication, just like it did when Bertie apologized to Logue.

Now, at this point in the story, Logue and Bertie resume their sessions. And since Bertie is going to be crowned as king, Logue begins to prepare him for the ceremony at the hallowed Westminster Abbey where kings throughout the centuries have been crowned. It's very intimidating and Bertie is glad to have his help until something is revealed that shakes his faith in Logue and he is faced with a crisis of belief.

Let's watch.

DVD Clip - NO CREDENTIALS (2.2 min)

B: Bertie: "I vouched for you and you have no

credentials"

E: Shot of Bertie

Notice how Logue once again reaffirms Bertie's worth and capability, but also how he takes everything that Bertie considers sacred and thoroughly dismantles it. "This is just a chair. This is just a rock. All the kings that came before you were not gods. They were mere mortals just like you."

And it's at this point that Bertie finally begins to trust Logue. He begins to truly hear what Logue is saying to him.

And that brings us to the fourth and final element of our friendship with God: trust. Trust is leaning on God's resources instead of our own. Trust is a willingness to accept God's assessment of our worth

and capability.

We may say “I’m not enough to be or do what You have called me to be and do.” But God says, “Yes, you are. I *have* made you enough and I *will* make you enough.”

Bertie had to trust and believe in what Logue saw in him instead of what he saw in himself. And we have to do the same. This bible says,

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5,6

When we trust in the Lord, we let go of all of our pre-conceived notions and idols and grab hold of God instead. We turn to him for all the resources

we need to live the Christian life. That’s what trust is: relying on God instead of ourselves.

In the final scene of the movie, the leadership of Great Britain realizes that they must make an attempt to stop Hitler. Bertie, as king, is charged with making a speech to the British Empire all over the world.

Here’s what happens just before the speech and right after it.

DVD Clip - THE SPEECH (2.5 min)

**** NOTE: THERE IS A SHORT FADE AT ABOUT ONE MINUTE IN BUT CLIP RESUMES****

B: Shot of typewritten text with markup

E: Movie fades to black

Did you catch what Logue said to Bertie right before the speech? “Forget everything else, and say it to me as a friend.” Bertie and Logue had come full circle. What started out as strictly a business relationship had blossomed into a full fledged friendship because of honesty, vulnerability, confession and trust. That’s what God wants for us. Not a business relationship. Not mechanics. Not just obedience, but something more. A friendship.

If you’re like me, you are thinking, “but who am I, that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name and feel my hurt?” I know it’s hard to believe, but the God of the universe, the one who sits on the throne of heaven, wants to get up close and personal with the very likes of us. It’s amazing, but it’s true.

As we close today, I want to read you some of the closing credits at the end of the movie, they read like this:

King George VI made Lionel Logue a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 1944. Lionel was with the king for every wartime speech. Lionel and Bertie remained friends for the rest of their lives.

That’s my prayer for each of you today; that you too may remain friends with God for the rest of your lives. Let’s pray.