

Unbroken

Movie Synopsis:

As a boy, Louis "Louie" Zamperini is always in trouble, but with the help of his older brother, he turns his life around and focuses his energy into running. He qualifies for the 1936 Olympics and sets a world record. When World War II breaks out, Louie enlists in the military. After his plane crashes in the Pacific, he survives an incredible 47 days adrift in a raft, until his capture by the Japanese navy. Sent to a POW camp, Louie becomes the favorite target of a particularly cruel prison commander.

Redemptive Analogy:

Based on a true story, this movie's message is for those who are in the midst of a struggle, experiencing a hard time or don't think they have what it takes to make it through the present challenges. How do we keep going? How do we remain strong? It's never by our own strength. It's only from God's all-surpassing power. We may be perplexed, but because God is faithful, we need never to be in despair. We may be persecuted, but God will never abandon us. We need to not give up. As Louie's brother said, "A moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory."

Unbroken

INTRO before showing the movie:

This movie is based on a true story about Louis Zamperini, who is not only an Olympic track star but a true war hero. The movie starts out in World War II when Louie and the rest of his crew were sent out on a mission to search for a lost aircraft.

This story is for those who are in the middle of a trial, a struggle, a hard time, and don't think they have what it takes to make it through the present challenges. As we watch this movie together, look for the ways that Louie finds strength to face his trials.

TO SHARE AFTER THE MOVIE:

The foundation of faith in Louie's life as a child would be the strength that sustained him through more than he could have ever imagined in his adult life, especially the words "Live through the night. Love thine enemy."

Louie's brother said two things that stand out. While running near their home, Louie's brother encouraged him, "If you can take it, you can make it." Then before boarding the train for the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, his brother reminded him of this truth, "A moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory." This quote is similar to an even more important truth from the Bible when the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians:

Therefore, we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 1 Corinthians 4:16-17

You may be going through something right now that's really difficult, but we have to remember, compared to eternity, these trials are light and momentary. They do not last forever. And there is always purpose in our pain.

You see, God uses what we endure for a higher purpose. These temporary trials achieve for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. A moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory. Paul continues in verse 18:

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
1 Corinthians 4:18

And this is something that over and over again Louie would learn to do because, after his plane crashed in the ocean, he would honestly face more challenges than most of us could ever imagine. He and his friends were on ill-equipped life rafts, without a sail, without a First Aid kit or a flashlight, all of which would be included in the standard military life rafts the following year.

Yet God is a faithful God; and in very mysterious ways God answered the prayer that Louie prayed while he was on the life raft by providing rain and unexpected sources of food.

On the 47th day, Japanese forces captured Louie and Phil, and they became Prisoners of War. Louie was sent to a separate prison camp in Tokyo, headed by a Japanese sergeant, known by those he tormented and tortured as “The Bird.”

Sometimes you’ll feel like that, like you failed, like you are nothing. And when you’re down, discouraged and defeated, like the weight of the world is too much for you, think about what the Apostle Paul said in the Bible:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

In other words, on our own, we are nothing. We are just jars of clay. But with Jesus we have power. We have all that we need to do everything that God wants us to do. Paul continued, saying,

We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed. We may be perplexed, but we are not in despair. We might be persecuted but we are not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed. 2 Corinthians 4:7

So how do we keep going? How do we remain strong? Well, it is never by our own strength. It is only from God’s all-surpassing power and never, ever from our own power or ability.

As Louie was fighting to stay alive, his family and friends were absolutely convinced that Louie was dead. In an attempt to deceive the American public, Louie was given the opportunity to broadcast a message to America to let his loved ones know that he was still alive.

Because Louie refused to broadcast a second message that would have been full of lies, he was sent back to the prison camp where the Japanese Sargent, “The Bird,” forced each of the several hundred prisoners to punch him in the face as punishment.

If you are hurting today, physically or emotionally...as tough as it may be, never forget that you may be hard pressed on every side but because of Jesus, you are not crushed. You may be perplexed, but because God is faithful, you are never in despair. You may be persecuted, but God will never leave you. He will never abandon you. These momentary troubles are achieving for you a glory that far outweighs them all. That's why you don't give up. As Louie's brother told him, "If you can take it, you can make it."

But you don't have to make it alone. You have the power of Christ dwelling within you. This last scene shows the dramatic moment when everything started to change for Louie. After spraining his ankle, the sadistic Sargent "The Bird" forced Louie to hold a massive piece of wood above his head. If he dropped it, Louie was to be shot dead on the spot. But, Louie was the type of person who never gives up. These types of people are so inspirational.

This was such a powerful story, wasn't it? Take a moment to reflect on what God might be saying to you right now. Some of you may be hurting. You might be going through relational struggles and you don't think you are going to make it. Some of you may have a financial weight on you and you don't know how you are going to get through this challenge. There may be others who have health problems, maybe your own or somebody that you love, and it's tearing you to pieces. It could be any number of different things you are going through right now, a trial, hardship, a burden.

I want to take a moment and pray for you, particularly for those of you that feel like the weight of what you're going through has crushed you.

Closing prayer example:

Father, we thank you so much for this amazing man that was transformed by the grace of Jesus and can inspire us even today. I pray, God, that all of us would be sustained and transformed by the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. Father, it is my honor to pray for those who are going through a difficult time right now. I thank you, God, that in the light of eternity what seems like heavy trials, one day will seem very light and momentary. God, as difficult as they may be, I thank you that we can actually rejoice in the middle of the challenges...because they are doing a work in us. They are bringing us to a point where we HAVE to trust you and lean on *your* strength.

God, I pray that you would relieve the pressure. We thank you, God, that although we may be hard pressed on every side...because of Jesus, we are not crushed. God, I pray that right now in the middle of the trials that your presence would be made known, Father, that your Holy Spirit would bring comfort to those who are hurting. And even in the midst of the pain, help us to recognize that one day, we will see a divine purpose in this pain. Father, I pray that you would use these trials to do even a deeper spiritual work in those who may not yet know you.

Right now, as we are praying today, there may be some of you who recognize that you are going through all of these things without God. You need to know that sometimes God will allow us to get to a place in our life where we get so low – that all we can do is look up towards him. Some of you may realize that you've been trying to do life on your own – and it's not working out that well. Maybe you've been trying to get through all of these trials in your own strength, and you need a greater power. The problem is – sin separates us from that greater power. Sin separates us from God – but by the goodness of God, he didn't leave us separated. He sent his only Son, Jesus, who was born without sin to become sin for us, literally to die in our place on the cross. And on the third day he was raised from the dead so that anyone --and that includes you --who would call on his name, Jesus, would be saved, and would be forgiven.

And here's what will happen:

- the very presence of God will come into you
- will you be forgiven, (but not only that)
- He will wash away the sin, the shame, and the guilt.

He will make you brand new – and give you a fresh start. And like Louie, you may still be hard pressed on every side, but you are never crushed because you have the presence of God dwelling within you. There are some of you here today that God has led here specifically for this moment. You would like to experience God's presence, you need His comfort, you need His forgiveness. You need a fresh start. If that's you, I would love to talk with you more about it.