

MEETING JESUS AT THE MOVIES GUIDE



Just Mercy

2020, 2 hrs 17 min

Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Foxx, Brie Larson

Themes: Justice, Mercy, Perseverance, Human Dignity

Focus: *The Scripture passage from the Book of Exodus demands that the People of God be just and fair when settling legal disputes. Bryan Stevenson dedicates his life to correcting injustices in the American judicial system, one wrongfully convicted prisoner at a time.*

Scripture: Exodus 23: 1-3, 6-9

You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness. You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit. You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or those in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty. You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

(Alternative Scripture—Leviticus 19: 15-16)

For Reflection and Conversation:

1. How does this film make you feel? Do you identify or empathize with any of the characters? Which ones? Why? After having experienced this film, do you feel called to do anything specific to address the injustice evident in Walter's story?
2. What do you think of the way Bryan interacts with the prisoners? How do you interact with those on the margins of society? What can you do to help every person be treated with dignity and respect, no matter their status or actions?
3. Walter's conviction came about through the testimony of Ralph Myers but Myers lied at the original trial. Why? How do threats and fear lead people to make terrible decisions without considering the consequences? Do you ever act out of fear of someone or something or of what others may think? How can you grow in courage?
4. The Catholic Church now opposes capital punishment as a violation of a person's God-given dignity. What are your thoughts in light of this film? What are everyday ways that you can let others know of their inherent dignity, beginning with those closest to you?
5. What does the film say about the justice and mercy mentioned in the Scripture passage?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you were wrongly convicted and sentenced to die. Send your grace upon those in our criminal justice system who are innocent or have been excessively punished for their crimes. Grant them peace. Show us ways to effect just change in a legal system administered by broken and imperfect people. Amen.

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CINEMA DIVINA GUIDE

Just Mercy



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(Alternative Scripture—Leviticus 19: 15-16)

Cinema Divina:

Lectio: What is the story about? What do the words and images, characters, form, and genre say to me? What are my feelings about the injustice portrayed in the film? Why does God ask us to be just in all our dealings? How might I better treat all people, but especially those others look down on, with the dignity and respect they deserve? Am I inspired by Bryan and his work? How might I support others through tough times like Walter's family did for him? How might I contribute to making the legal system more just and merciful?

Meditatio: What part of today's Scripture reading and which part of the movie "chose" you?

Oratio: Let your spontaneous prayer flow from reading and meditating on the film and/or Scripture.

Contemplatio: Spend some time relishing the film as a spiritual experience.

Actio: As a result of viewing this film and praying with it, what concrete action is the Holy Spirit calling you to take beyond the film into your everyday life and the world?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you were wrongly convicted and sentenced to die. Send your grace upon those in our criminal justice system who are innocent or have been excessively punished for their crimes. Grant them peace. Show us ways to effect just change in a legal system administered by broken and imperfect people. Amen.

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