

Pastor Curt Ogawa at Journey Evangelical Church, February 14, 2021
curtogawa@gmail.com (408) 889-3983

THAT ONE MOMENT WHEN A STORY BEGINS

Acts 2:36-41; Psalm 30, 2 Corinthians 4:17

THE INCITING INCIDENT: THE STORY STARTER

“Essentially, a story...begins with a situation in which life is relatively in balance. But then there’s an event that throws life out of balance—in screenwriting, we call it the “inciting event.” The story goes on to describe how, in an effort to restore balance, the protagonist’s desire collides into an uncooperative reality. A good storyteller describes what it’s like to deal with these opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper...”
—Robert McKee

Three examples of inciting incidents from well-known movies:

The Christian’s story also includes one major inciting incident, followed by a number of lesser inciting incidents along the way.

THE INCITING INCIDENT THAT BEGAN THE STORY OF THE CHURCH

Acts 2:36-41

Repent = To turn one’s life away from sin in order to follow Jesus.

Baptism = Immersion as an outward sign of an inward reality.

OUR JOURNEY: ORIENTATION → DISORIENTATION → NEW ORIENTATION

Psalm 30

Verses 6-10 From orientation to disorientation

Verses 1-5, 11-12 From disorientation to new orientation

***GROAN* WHY DO WE NEED TO GO THROUGH DISORIENTATION?!**

2 Corinthians 4:17 *“For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.”*

Acts 2:35-41

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” ³⁷*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”* ³⁸*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* ⁴⁰*With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”* ⁴¹*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

Psalm 30

“I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. ²O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. ³O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. ⁴Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. ⁵For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

⁶As for me, I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.” ⁷By your favor, O Lord, you made my mountain stand strong; you hid your face; I was dismayed. ⁸To you, O Lord, I cry, and to the Lord I plead for mercy: ⁹“What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? ¹⁰Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me! O Lord, be my helper!”

¹¹You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, ¹²that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!”

2 Corinthians 4:17

“For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.”

SOME QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DEVOTION:

1. What are the inciting incidents of your favorite movies? Do you detect a pattern of relative balance to a disruption of balance in the movies you enjoy?
2. As you consider your life, has there been a time when you experienced an “inciting incident?” If so, what happened? What was your life before the event and how did your life change afterwards?
3. Even after a Christian receives Jesus Christ, s/he continues to experience a process of orientation, disorientation and new orientation in his/her life. Can you think of 2-3 times in your life when you experienced this cycle, which led to a deeper level of growth in your spiritual life?
4. Is there an area in your life where you had struggled that has now become an area of passion for you? (In what ways have your deepest life struggles changed you?)