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Liars, Cheaters, Cowards, and Other Bible Heroes Lit B – Summer (Delivered by Brian Crook) Week #1 – Adam

Well, am I right in saying that summertime is a great time to go to the movies, right? There are always great summer blockbusters coming out this time of year. Who went and saw Jurassic World last week? Broke the box office record for biggest opening weekend ever and, wait for it, stay in your seats, I know you're so excited because later this summer, a new Terminator movie is coming out. Who's going to go see Arnold? Well, that's a terrible Arnold Schwarzenegger impression. Well, looking back too, there have been just some epic historic movies that have come out as summer blockbusters. I'm thinking first and foremost of Jaws, E.T., Raiders of the Lost Ark, some really great movies have come out in the summer. And as we are gearing up for this awesome summer message series, where we're talking about the heroes of our faith, the heroes of the Bible, I went online and did a little bit of poking around to see who were some of the best movie heroes? The best summertime block-buster, action movie heroes.

Turns out there are a lot of people online, who post their really strong opinions about movies there. I mean, they're shocking to me, but people do have strong opinions and as I was looking around, I was really curious to see what people were going to say, because for fear of sounding old, I just turned 30 this winter. So, I don't want to sound like an old geezer, but I've gotta say it, even if it makes me sound old, movies just aren't what they used to be, all right. Movies just aren't made in the same way. I mean it doesn't seem like movies are good anymore. I mean, sure there are lots of comic book movies that come out, some super hero movies. A lot of people love them, I don't. You know, I just didn't grow up with those stories, and so you can come up and argue with me later if you love those movies. But it just seems like every action movie that comes out these days, is just a re-harsh, it's just a reintroduction of an old plot, or an old theme, or an old character. It doesn't seem like movies are good anymore.

So, as I was looking around online, and as everyone knows, everything that you read online is true, so I thought I'd share with you some truth that I learned as I was getting ready for this series. The truth about action movies, specifically hero movies, is the most popular movies, the best heroes, the ones that we love the most are portrayed as flawed. Turns out the heroes that we love the most are the most human. And when I read that I kind of agreed, it makes sense, because I think a flawed hero creates suspense. We want to be on the edge of our seat watching and wondering what's going to happen next. Boring movies are the ones where the hero's never in doubt, all right. You know what's going to happen. So, that made sense to me. And then I think also, we like to be able to compare and relate to a hero. The more human, the more we like the hero. And that made sense.

I was watching a movie a few weeks ago, came out early this year called "Selma." I don't know if you've heard of Selma, the story of Selma Alabama in the '60s. Specifically, it's a story of the march that was organized in the civil rights movement that Martin Luther King Jr. organized. I love the movie, for what it's worth, I would recommend it. And what I love so much about Selma was it showed the behind the scenes story. That there was all this intentional planning, and all these critical decisions that were made leading up to this eventually, monumental march.

Now, I would say absolutely hands down, that Martin Luther King Jr. is a hero, right? I mean, hands down, he is certainly a hero. And what I think we do with heroes is we put them up on a pedestal. We maximize their accomplishments, and their victories, and all their successes, and we kind of gloss over, we minimize their flaws and their failures. That's what we do to heroes. For us, for ourselves, I think we do the opposite, because we live with us every day. We know all our mistakes and all our mishaps. We know all our flaws, and so we have a tendency to minimize our accomplishments and our feats, while maximizing our own mistakes and our own faults.

And you see what I loved about Selma was it showed the behind the scenes. It showed a hero that actually struggled. It showed Martin Luther King in a way that I hadn't seen him before. When I thought of Martin Luther King, you know, I think of the highlights. I think of the March on Washington, the "I Have A Dream" speech. I see him as being out, ahead of this movement, leading with boldness, and

courage. Now, don't get me wrong, I did not think that the civil rights movement was a walk in the park, and certainly the tragic events of this week show that as a country, as a society, we have a lot of work still to do. But Selma showed Martin Luther King as flawed. It showed that he had hesitations, and fears, and doubts. It showed that he even had conflict with the people that were on his team, his own family members. He had great difficulty and ultimately that encouraged me.

That encouraged me because I was reminded that heroes struggle. That heroes aren't off in the distance doing things that we couldn't possibly imagine ourselves doing, but the more human the hero, the more flawed the hero, we can actually relate to them. And you see that's what we're trying to do this summer. As we get to know some of the heroes of the Bible, we are not going to explain away their accomplishments. We're not going to minimize the great things that God has done through some great people throughout the history of our faith, but what we are going to do is zoom in a little bit.

We're going to zoom in and see that they're really not that airbrushed after all. They're not picture perfect. In fact, our heroes, the heroes of our faith are flawed just like us. They can be liars and cheaters and cowards, just like we all can be at times. And so, you are cordially invited. You are invited to join us this summer as we get to know the heroes of the Bible a little bit better. We're going to get to know some awesome stories of some really great heroes. Guys like Abraham and Jacob, Joseph and Moses, Joshua, Samson, David, Elijah, Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah. Some great men and women, and you are invited to join us all summer long.

As you travel, I know a lot of you are headed to the beach or to the mountains, maybe even out of the country this summer for vacation, we invite you to worship with us online. We live stream our 9:00, 10:30, 12:00, 5:30, all of our Sunday masses live online. So, wherever you are, you can always stay tuned, worship with us and check out the message. Here is greetings to everybody worshipping with us online this morning. Also, another invitation for you this summer, if you want to do more than sit back and watch, if you want to actually get involved and participate, I want to invite you to give ministry a try this summer. You see the green T-shirts around today, it's our first Serve Summer, and we've got a display set up out in the Great Hall all summer long, highlighting different opportunities for you to get involved and to serve.

And so we'd love to see you there this weekend for Father's Day.

We are highlighting our parking team and our ops team. Everybody knows our awesome parking ministers out on the lot in the humidity and heat this morning, welcoming you onto our campus. You might not know about the ops team, there are men and women serving behind the scenes each and every week, so that you have a great experience here. It was rumored at one of the last ops meetings over some barbecue, one of the ministers said, "Everybody knows about those pretty boys out on the parking lot. But nobody knows about us." So, now you know about the ops team, and if they have barbecue at their meetings, they're doing something right.

So, dads, everybody, if you want to give ministry a try this summer, we invite you to do that. It's a great time to get involved, but again in keeping with our Father's Day theme, happy Father's Day to all the dads. We're going to take a look at the story of a dad, the first father of the first family. We're going to look at the story of Adam today. So, the little bit of time we have left, we're going to jump in to Scripture.

Adam's story picks up right in the beginning of Scripture. Genesis 1 tells us about the creation of the world, and the creation of Adam, and we read this. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep." Scripture tells us that God created the world out of nothing, that darkness was over the surface of the deep. He creates the world "ex nihilo," that's the term, "out of nothingness."

It's amazing to imagine, to think that our God is so great and powerful, that He existed before anything else existed. That God exists outside of time and that He has the power to create something from nothing. I mean, it's incredible to think about. I was trying to think about nothingness this week. It was almost impossible. I might say that it is impossible to think about nothing. I mean, I was either thinking, or I was sitting or I was breathing or I was holding my breath. I mean, nothingness is amazing to think about, and it just goes to show how great and powerful God is, but that's probably a whole another topic.

So, we read on in the creation story, "Then God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light." We read in the creation story, that God creates the light and the darkness and He separates them. He creates the heavens and the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars. He

creates the land and separates it from the water and the fish and the birds and the plants and vegetation, and then at the pinnacle, at the very peak of creation, He creates mankind, and we read this later in Chapter one.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him. Male and female, He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth, subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." God creates mankind as His masterpiece. Man, we, Adam, is the masterpiece of creation and also we are the stewards of creation.

Pope Francis this week, in his newest encyclical that he just published, reminds us that, that that's what we are. We are the stewards of creation, and although this Scripture is very dense, I just want to point out three things that we learn about Adam, that we learn about ourselves that are important as we begin the study of the heroes of the Bible.

First, the creation story tells us that God creates Adam with God's purity. And that creation is made pure, totally perfect, and blameless. There are no flaws. There is nothing out of place. It is all just as it's supposed to be. There are no messy situations. There's no awkwardness. There's no broken relationships. Adam isn't afraid of running into anybody at the grocery store. Creation is pure and perfect. So, we learn that. We also learn that creation is given God's image. That Scripture tells us Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. That God's image is reflected in man.

What an amazing thing that we are made in the image of God. I mean, I don't have kids, but I can see the beauty and the mystery that it is that children bear the image of their parents. What an amazing thing that we bear God's image. So, creation is given God's purity, God's image, and finally God's authority. When God creates Adam, He gives him His authority, says, "I give you dominion over everything, every creeping thing that creeps along the earth. I give you authority and dominion over it. So, fill the earth, multiply, be fruitful and be blessed." God gives

him His authority.

Now, I don't know what's crazier to imagine. The fact that God, who exists before anything else exists, who has the power to create something from nothing, that God is that great, or the fact that the end of creation, God would hand over the keys, He would give the authority to us over the rest of creation. I mean it seems amazing, because sure enough just a few verses later we read that Adam and Eve mess it up, right? They eat that forbidden fruit, the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that they were forbidden to eat from. They do that and they sin, and now their purity and their image and their authority that they were created with, are all damaged and diminished. They are no longer totally pure and perfect because now they have made a mistake. They are no longer perfectly bearing God's image because they are stained with Original sin. And they no longer fully have God's authority, because they relinquish it, and minimize it, diminish it, when they obeyed the serpent rather than God. And this is our stuff. These are all our problems. This is the root of our issues and all the problems that our heroes that we'll get to know this summer all struggle with.

Since we no longer have God's purity and perfection, we seek and strive for perfection apart from God. A lot of us this summer are going to try to have the perfect yard. You know, we're going to get the house to the perfect place, and then we're going to have the perfect party to show off our perfection to everyone. Well, it's not going to work. You know, we no longer have God's perfect image as well. And so we doubt ourselves, we doubt our worth and our value. We don't think we have what it takes. We don't think we're good enough. And we no longer have God's authority.

Instead, we seek to control situations and to control other people, and manipulate things so we can get our way. And sometimes we just resent people for not doing what we want, when we want. Here, we read about Adam, the first potential hero of the Bible. It turns out he's more of a scapegoat than he is a hero. I mean, faced with this choice between good and evil, he chooses evil. And as a result all future generations inherit this bent, this propensity towards sin and selfishness and isolation. But one thing Adam does, he does actually a really big thing, a really important thing, a crucial thing. Adam becomes a dad. Adam becomes a father, the first father of the first family. He establishes the pattern of fatherhood for us, and God does an amazing

thing when He decides to use Adam as a hero. Even though he isn't all that heroic, God chooses to use Adam in His love, in His faithfulness, and He shows us through Adam's story that God chooses to use imperfect people. Even though the story has become about sin and the consequences of sin, God makes a promise in the midst of sin, in the midst of imperfection that's going to change everything.

As he's giving out the consequences to sin, God is explaining to Adam and to Eve, and He curses the serpent actually, as He's explaining the consequences to sin, and there are always consequences to our sins. He makes this promise, when He says this. Genesis 3:15 is a very important verse. It says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman." God promises, God says that, "I will put animosity, hatred, between the serpent and the woman. There will be a battle between good and evil, and between your offspring and hers." God promises that He will give offspring to Adam. More than that, He promises a male offspring. "He shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at his heel." God promises to send a male offspring. A redeemer, a savior, God promises to send His son, right here in the midst of the story that has become about sin and imperfection, God promises to send Jesus. And Scripture would tell us that the reason Jesus came, the reason the Son of Man came to the world was to destroy the works of the Devil, and to fulfill this promise. This verse, Genesis 3:15, it's called the proto-evangelium.

"Proto" meaning first, it's the first Gospel. It's the first sign of the good news that Jesus would come to restore all that was lost and broken in sin. And elsewhere in Scripture, Paul, St. Paul, he would compare and contrast Adam and Jesus. He would call Jesus the last Adam. But here we have the first Adam who was created as the very first living being. And the last Adam would come as a life giving being. That Adam would choose selfishness, and Jesus would choose righteousness. That Adam would leave behind a legacy of death and Jesus would come to leave a legacy of life, but in Adam we would find brokenness and separation and isolation and destruction. But in Jesus, we would find hope and redemption and restoration. We would find our salvation in Jesus.

You see, these heroes that we're going to study this summer they don't get it all right. They are far from perfect, and we are far from perfect. Adam was far from perfect, but what Adam does is he points us to

Jesus. He points us to Jesus. Even though these heroes aren't going to get it right, they're going to do one thing. And they're all going to point us to Jesus, because Jesus is our hope. Jesus is our Savior and our redeemer. He is our rock and our refuge. Jesus is our life. And so, wherever you find yourself this summer, whether you don't know this Jesus guy at all, whether you're just beginning a relationship with Him or you've known Him for a long time, all these heroes are going to point us to Jesus. So, this summer, join us. Join us as we get to know the fact that God uses imperfect heroes to point us to Jesus.

Let me pray. God, thank You so much. Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the truth in the history of Your story, the history of salvation, God, that You choose to use imperfect people. God, thank You that You choose to use us as well, that You sent Jesus to be perfect, so that we don't have to be, God. We thank You for that. We pray this summer God, that You would help point us to Jesus, that You would help us grow in our relationship with Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us this summer God, and point us to Jesus. And father, Heavenly Father, we thank You for being our Heavenly Father. And this Father's Day weekend, God we pray for our fathers. We pray that You would bless them and the leadership that they have, and give them wisdom and courage and grace. God, we thank You so much for our dads, and we pray that you will give them an extra, special blessing this weekend. And God we thank You. We thank You that You are our perfect Heavenly Father. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.