

Feb 15 – Bible Story – Good Friday, Acts (Romans 5:8, John 15:13, Philip 2:4-8)

Movie – Frozen

Theme – Sacrificial Love

Song (Let it Go)

So what movie are we talking about today? Frozen! As you may remember, it was released November 27, 2013. It was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Snow Queen*.

The film was a massive commercial success; it accumulated nearly \$1.3 billion in worldwide box office revenue, \$400 million of which was earned in the United States and Canada and \$247 million of which was earned in Japan. It ranks as the highest-grossing animated film of all time, the fifth highest-grossing film of all time, the highest-grossing film of 2013, and the third highest-grossing film in Japan.

*Frozen* won two Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song ("Let It Go") the Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature Film, the BAFTA Award for Best Animated Film, five Annie Awards (including Best Animated Feature), and two Critics' Choice Awards for Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song ("Let It Go").

The studio also developed several new tools to generate realistic and believable shots, particularly the heavy and deep snow and its interactions with the characters. Several Disney artists and special effects personnel traveled to Wyoming to experience walking through deep snow. An animated short film, *Frozen Fever*, will be released in spring 2015.

Maybe I should ask, who has NOT seen this movie?

Ok, so here's the story:

Anna, a fearless optimist, sets off on an epic journey - teaming up with rugged mountain man Kristoff and his loyal reindeer Sven - to find her sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter. Encountering Everest-like conditions, mystical trolls and a hilarious snowman named Olaf, Anna and Kristoff battle the elements in a race to save the kingdom. From the outside Anna's sister, Elsa looks poised, regal and reserved, but in reality, she lives in fear as she

wrestles with a mighty secret-she was born with the power to create ice and snow. It's a beautiful ability, but also extremely dangerous. Haunted by the moment her magic nearly killed her younger sister Anna, Elsa has isolated herself, spending every waking minute trying to suppress her growing powers. Her mounting emotions trigger the magic, accidentally setting off an eternal winter that she can't stop. She fears she's becoming a monster and that no one, not even her sister, can help her.

Last weekend we talked about love that lasts a lifetime with the movie *Up*. Today we are again going to talk about love. (After all, yesterday *was* Valentine's Day.)

What is love? It isn't a noun. It isn't a thing. You don't possess love. You don't keep love on your shelf in a jar so when people come over you can pull it down and say, "Look, this is my love. Isn't it pretty?" No! Love is a verb. A verb expresses action. You don't have love, you do love. Love is dynamic. It disrupts and dissolves our pre-conceptions and pre-judgments of others. When we do love, we bind ourselves to each other. Love is sticky. It's messy. Once you get a little on you it's hard to shake. Love is the superglue of the human race.

John 3:16: Because God loved [a dynamic action] the world [every human being, whether you are black, brown, white, male, female, Christian, Catholic, Atheist, Muslim] it doesn't matter because God loves you! How do we know? Remember that [dynamic action]? God allowed his perfect son to die as the payment for the lack of doing love. 1 Corinthians 13 God is patient. God is kind. God is not jealous. God does not brag. God is not prideful. God is not rude. God is not selfish. God is not easily angered. God does not keep a list of mistakes. God does not enjoy evil. God protects. God hopes. God trusts. God perceivers because... God is love. And God never fails.

This Wednesday is the start of Lent. Lent is the season of preparation for Easter. It starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter, lasting for 40 days (not counting Sundays). We prepare for Easter by fasting and practicing spiritual discipline during this time - to reflect on His sacrifices. Basically, Lent is a time for "spring cleaning" our lives while giving thanks to God and strengthening our relationship with Him.

This Wednesday, we begin a journey. We begin a journey to the Cross... to Good Friday. It is in Lent that we are to think about the great blessings bestowed upon us. How God has blessed Christians past and present. And how God gave us the greatest gift, that of his son Jesus Christ. And how that gift showed us true love, Sacrificial Love.

We see sacrificial love in Frozen... WATCH

Paul Asay, senior associate editor for Focus on the Family, compares the sacrificial love in the film to the love of Jesus. "That sort of love, of course, points directly to the love of Jesus – the affection he had for his disciples, the affection he has for all of us, the love that eventually sent him to the cross for all of our sakes."

I once heard a pastor say, "Where and how you begin the story, and where and how you end the story, shapes and determines what story you're telling..." Parents know this routine: one child runs upstairs crying, "Brother slapped me in the arm." You yell for brother, who appears in tears carrying the Lego ship he spent 4 hours building, now in 100 pieces. Anyone familiar with this? Where you begin the story determines what kind of story you're telling.

So when it comes to the big, big story; the cosmic story of the world and where it came from and our lives, and what they mean... Where and how you begin, and where and how you end that story will determine what kind of story your life is telling.

Pastor Tim Suttle writes, "In the movie *Frozen*, the Anna tells a story about an older sister who is cold—an ice queen— who used to be fun, but now she's completely withdrawn. It felt like her sister didn't love her anymore. But she wasn't beginning from the beginning of the story. The older sister tells a very different story. Elsa tells the story from the beginning, with this gift that seems wonderful, but it's dangerous and she can't control it. She thinks she is acting out of love. What's strange is that it's the same reality. They are living the same reality. But they begin the story in very different places. And where and how you begin the story will determine what kind of story you're telling. Now, endings have a similar impact on the story as well.

As our story builds... we begin to see that the older sister has become consumed with the fear that she'll end up hurting the people close to her. So she isolates herself; she runs off and builds this superman-style fortress of solitude... it's this ice castle for a snow queen. She's so afraid her life will end badly, that she cuts herself off. This has an impact not only on her younger sister, but the whole land, which is now in this perpetual winter.

Anna has a very different ending in mind, especially after their parents die. She believes that the story can have a happy ending (together). So she refuses to give up on it; she trudges off through the snow to find her sister. They both have these different ideas of how the story will end. Elsa thinks it's a tragic story of isolation and

loneliness and fear. Anna thinks it is a love story. And how you END the story will determine what kind of story you are telling...

The movie *Frozen* is actually a resurrection story. You remember what happens at the end of the movie? Anna, she dies for her big sister... the ice Queen. There's an assassin who's about to kill her and Anna steps in front of him and gives her own life to save her sister... It's the gospel... it's Jesus saying, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13-14).

The self-sacrificial love unleashes new life and that changes the two sisters' story forever. If you think about it, this is a radical departure for a Disney Movie. The whole Disney narrative is built on the power of true love's kiss, right? (that's *Beauty & the Beast*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*). But in *Frozen*, they subvert their own narrative. It's not romantic love, but self-sacrificial love that changes their story.

When Anna lays down her life for her sister, Elsa is broken-hearted. Then comes the resurrection scene and Elsa finally sees that love is stronger than fear (or sin, shame, blame, hatred, and anything else). And their whole story changes. Self-sacrificial love become her entrance into a whole new story. And all of the sudden order is restored, ice melts, and the queen is able to steward her gifts in a good way.

That's resurrection. When Jesus is resurrected, we see how the story is going to end; we know that what God did for Jesus, God will do for all of us one day. We learn that the end of the story is really a new beginning.

If that's the end of the story, then we can live without fear. If that's the end, then it changes everything that comes before it... because it means that life will overcome death in the end. And if that's true, all the sudden we can pour out our lives for each other. We don't have to worry that life might run out. There will always be more life for those who live like Jesus lived. So we are able to live differently, unselfishly – actually we live a life that is rightly ordered, like God designed from start.

So join us on this Lenten Journey, the journey to the cross and ultimately the resurrection. Join us this Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday this week. Join us as we learn about prayer and sacrificial love. Amen.