

Listening and learning from the best.

Recently I wrote about going to the cinema to watch *The Salt Path*, a film based on the real-life story and bestseller. I mentioned we were disappointed with some aspects of the script. The author of the book, Raynor Winn, has since come under accusations of falsifying some aspects of the story. All may not be as it seems, so we wait and see.



Well, this last week we went again to the cinema. Over in Wetherby for the day, we had a morning appointment and an evening engagement, so I decided to book in to see a film. Being restricted to the day and time, the only showing that appealed to me was 'F1 the movie'. Not sure what to expect, I can honestly say we thought it was a fantastic film. Neither my husband nor I are particularly interested in F1 or motor car racing, so was quite surprised how spell bound we were throughout the whole showing. Eyes glued to the screen, it was intense and exciting, captivating our interest to the very end, not sure what the outcome and conclusion would be. A nail-biting finale. With the *Salt Path* we were disappointed, but not this time.

Sonny, who is played by Brad Pitt, in his earlier years had been a very successful racing driver and yet had never won a Formula One title. He is persuaded, after having 3 decades away from the sport, to return to the circuit, to help a team who are performing badly, last on the grid and bottom of the line up. Sonny was their final hope of turning the team around, and he was also brought in to help a less experienced, egotistical, young driver, who was 'full of himself'. Sonny was to teach him some of his tactics and skills.

The two of them don't hit it off at first, a classic example of clashes between youth and experience. A crucial time comes when, during one race, the puffed-up youth has an accident on the circuit. His injuries are severe, and with scenes of him in hospital, we wonder if he'll make it.

No spoilers here, as I would strongly recommend going to see it, but the main reason the young driver had the crash, was because he didn't listen to Sonny, the experienced one, the guy who knew what he was talking about!

Pondering this, I thought about Jonah in the Old Testament. Many of you will recall how he was swallowed up by a large fish, often thought to be a whale, which then spat him out onto the beach.

Why did this happen? Simply because he thought he knew best and wouldn't listen to God. Or perhaps he did hear God but chose to be disobedient and did what he wanted, pleasing himself.

God spoke to Jonah, telling him to go to Ninevah, where the people in the city were living sinful lives. However, God in his love and mercy wanted them to have an opportunity to repent from their wicked ways and turn to him. Jonah was the one God chose to go and warn them that if they did not change, they would be punished.

Instead of going to Ninevah, Jonah boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, a city in the other direction. It was while on the ship, a terrific storm rose up, so severe all the men on board were afraid. The sailors questioned Jonah, who admitted it was due to him that they were enduring this life-threatening situation and told the men to throw him overboard. We read how, reluctantly, the men did throw Jonah over the side of the ship and immediately the storm ceased, and the sea was calm.

God gave Jonah a second chance. By being swallowed by the fish, Jonah's life was spared. Whilst in the fish's belly he prayed, repented and praised God. After three days, the fish spat Jonah out onto the shores of Ninevah. At last, Jonah was where God wanted him to be. He preached to the people who turned to God and were saved.

Jonah had more lessons to learn but at last he realised he needed to listen to God. We may at times think we know what is best, and we 'do our own thing', then we realise God knows everything, and His ways are better than our ways. So, we need to listen, be obedient and learn. Thank God he's a God of second chances, for us all.

God bless,

Eileen

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