

# The Movie Under the Bridge

Millions of people around the world have been inspired by Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*.

The 2004 biblical drama film primarily covers the final 12 hours before Jesus' death, consisting of the Passion, hence the title of the film. It begins with the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, the brutal scourging at the Pillar, the suffering of Mary as prophesied by Simeon, the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, and ends with a brief depiction of the resurrection. The film also has flashbacks to particular moments in Christ's life.

The film grossed more than \$622 million worldwide and became the highest-grossing film domestically at the end of its theatrical run. It is currently the highest-grossing Christian film of all time.

Maxine Raines, director of a ministry to the homeless in Knoxville, Tennessee, knew her homeless friends couldn't afford to buy a movie ticket, so she brought the movie theater to them. With the support of her church and private donors, Raines erected an outdoor theater under a downtown bridge where homeless people like to congregate. There she showed the film to a group of more than 400 street people.

Many were moved to tears; dozens prayed to receive Christ that night. Raines commented: "I wanted them to be able to see that somebody cared enough for them to give His life for them. ... They tell me they are hopeless, nobody can help, and I say to them, 'I know One who can.'"

Nobody is hopeless. Nobody is beyond help. Why? Because there is a Man with nails in His hands who says, "You're so important I gave my life for you."

Here is what Jesus said in the temple when He was confronted by the chief priests and the elders of the people: *Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him* (Matthew 21:31-32 NIV).

Maxine Raines took the kingdom of God to a group of people who are usually overlooked, discounted, and left out. And many of them responded with repentance and faith.

No one is left out of God's grace.

So whatever your position in life may be today, no matter what circumstances may be challenging you, just remember: God loves you. And He is a God of grace and mercy.

– Beecher Hunter