



The “Gravity” Prayer

By

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If you have not seen the movie “Gravity” starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney and you plan on seeing it soon, you may not want to read any further.

What I’m going to share may spoil it for you ... but then, it may not. It could be just the thing you or someone you love needs to read.

“At 372 miles above Earth, the view is breathtaking, but life is impossible. Whatever you do: don’t let go.”

This is some of the official promotional copy for the movie:

“Academy Award® winners Sandra Bullock and George Clooney star in ‘Gravity,’ a heart-pounding thriller that pulls you into the infinite and unforgiving realm of deep space. The film was directed by Oscar® nominee Alfonso Cuarón (“Children of Men”). Bullock plays Dr. Ryan Stone, a brilliant medical engineer on her first shuttle mission, with veteran astronaut Matt Kowalsky (Clooney) in command of his last flight before retiring. But on a seemingly routine spacewalk, disaster strikes. The shuttle is destroyed, leaving Stone and Kowalsky completely alone—tethered to nothing but each other and spiraling out into the blackness. The deafening silence tells them they have lost any link to Earth...and any chance for rescue. As fear turns to panic, every gulp of air eats away at what little oxygen is left. But the only way home may be to go further out into the terrifying expanse of space.”

I'd like to focus on one brief moment in the film that addresses what may be the most important aspect of life – the reality of death.

Dr. Ryan Stone, played by Sandra Bullock, is a researcher and first-time astronaut. She is also a mother who is still dealing with the accidental death of her young daughter. Because of an accident in space Dr. Ryan is alone, adrift and facing the reality that she will probably die. That leads to this monologue:

“No one will mourn for me ... No one will pray for my soul. ... I've never prayed. ... Nobody has taught me how.”

There's more to the movie – a lot more – but I will leave that out in case you have not seen it yet. What I'd like to focus on is what I'll call “The Gravity Prayer.”

Gravity moves. Simple statement, but true. **Gravity** is “the force of attraction that moves or tends to move bodies towards the centre of a celestial body, such as the earth or moon” (Collins Dictionary). **Gravitational pull** is “attraction caused by gravitation” (Collins Dictionary).

Most of us take “gravity” and “gravitational pull” for granted. We experience it every day. If we jump up, gravity pulls us down. Because the gravitational pull is just right we are not pulled through dirt and rock to the middle of the earth, but if dirt and rock are removed gravity will continue to pull us toward the force which pulls us.

Dr. Stone (Bullock) was being pulled toward something, though she didn't know what. She mourned for her daughter, but who would mourn for her? Who would pray for her soul? She had never prayed. Nobody had taught her how.

I find those words hauntingly sad. Dr. Stone speaks for millions of people in our world today. Who will mourn for them? Who will pray for their souls? They've never prayed. Nobody taught them how. Why is that? Why is it that millions of people do not know how to pray?

There are many reasons and I could spend the next few hundred words enumerating them, but I'd rather spend this space and time looking to a solution to a real "life and death" situation.

It's estimated that more than 100 people in the world die every minute. Several hundred people will die while I'm writing and you are reading this post. More than 6,300 deaths per hour, more than 150,000 deaths per day, more than 55,000,000 deaths per year. Those are real people, immortal souls, being moved in one direction or another through a real spiritual gravitational pull.

People who know how to pray **must** teach people who do not know how to pray **how to pray**. When we tell people about God's Love for them through His Son Jesus Christ we must make sure they know how to communicate with God. Many people we talk with about Jesus do not pray to Him while we're with them. So, what happens after we part? We must remember Paul's words to the Corinthians that some people plant spiritual seed and others water the seed, but it is God

who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). People confess their sins to God. They ask Him to forgive them. They trust in Jesus for eternal life. We don't have to be with them in order for them to pray, but we or someone needs to teach them how.

Salvation is not a natural phenomena. It is spiritual. I love that because it takes something so precious and important out of our fallible hands. Yes, we preach the Gospel. Yes, we plant the seed of Truth. Yes, we water the seed with our tears, prayers and God's Word. But, no, we do not save souls. The Holy Spirit saves as He convicts people – "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:9-11). God saves. God gives the increase.

We must teach people how to pray because God alone gives the gift of eternal life (John 3:14-17). Many of the children, teens and young adults you know and will meet this coming year have little or no spiritual training. Many have never been to church. Many have never read the Bible. They don't know about God's love for them. They don't know that Jesus died to redeem their souls and set them free. They don't know about the spiritual gravity pulling them in a dangerous and life-altering direction.

I like to use the story of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 when talking to people about God's love for them. The jailer was asleep when an earthquake struck the prison about midnight. The foundations of the prison were shaken and all the jail doors were opened and

everyone's chains were loosed. The jailer thought the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." The jailer called for a light, ran into Paul's cell, saw Paul and Silas there, and fell down trembling before them. The jailer brought Paul and Silas out of their cell and said to them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Why did the jailer ask them that question? Because Paul and Silas had been witnessing to the jailer and others in the prison all evening. How did they witness? "Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." Paul and Silas were in chains, in jail, in a foreign country, but that didn't stop them from teaching others how to pray and worship God. That's why the jailer asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved. Here's how Paul and Silas answered the jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." The jailer invited Paul and Silas into his house and the apostles taught his entire family how to pray. They all believed in God that night.

Nice story, but what if people you're talking with don't want to pray to believe in Christ? Teach them to pray. Be sure to tell them how to pray to God when they want or need to pray for their soul. The best way to teach is to do. Pray **for** them **with** them. Let them see and hear how you pray. Let them hear you pray for them. They may remember how you prayed for them when they pray to God for themselves. Even the Lord's disciples who prayed regularly asked

Jesus to teach them to pray. That's because they had seen and heard Him pray. They knew that Jesus had a relationship with God the Father that was far deeper and more personal than theirs. Pray for people with people. Teach them how to pray through your example of heartfelt prayer.

If each of us determines to tell people about God's love for them and we teach them how to pray, we will be doing what we can to prepare people for God's **gravitational pull on their soul**. May they never say - "No one will mourn for me ... No one will pray for my soul. ... I've never prayed. ... Nobody has taught me how" – because we will have taught them how. May they know that we are praying for their soul – **that we really do care about their soul**.

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