



# the SHARE PASSION

The soldier taunted and jeered, mocking the man's pain. His face actually contorted as he laughed, unconcerned with how much his prisoner—nearly flogged beyond recognition—was suffering.

How could anyone love someone like that?

If you thought back to your most embarrassing moment, that time when you wished the ground would open and swallow you whole—the pain and humiliation was not even a shadow compared to what this prisoner faced. He was beaten. Blood poured down his face. Everyone around him laughed, pointed fingers, and shouted insults.

And the amazing part? If this prisoner, accused of a crime he never committed, had wanted the ground to swallow them whole, he could have easily made it happen. But he didn't. He said nothing. He even stepped forward for more.

It was all because he loved them...and us.

It was a scene straight out of *The Passion of the Christ*...and straight from the pages of history.

BY STEPHANIE DUBE



## BASED ON THE TRUE STORY...

More than a movie, *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson is an experience. It is the closest any of us will come to witnessing an event in history that changed everything.

"Watching this film is like being at the foot of the cross," said Dr. Jack Graham, our Pastor. "The movie is biblical, powerful, and life-changing."

"Although Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is labeled a movie, it is so much more," said Laura Aston, a Prestonwood member who saw an advance screening. "Starting with the opening scene, I was given a chance to experience what it must have been like to witness the last hours of Christ's life."

In advance screenings across the country, viewers returned with the same report: as the movie ended, the audience was silent, gripped by the reality of what they had witnessed.

Arch Bonnema, a member of Prestonwood, was among the first to see an advance screening.

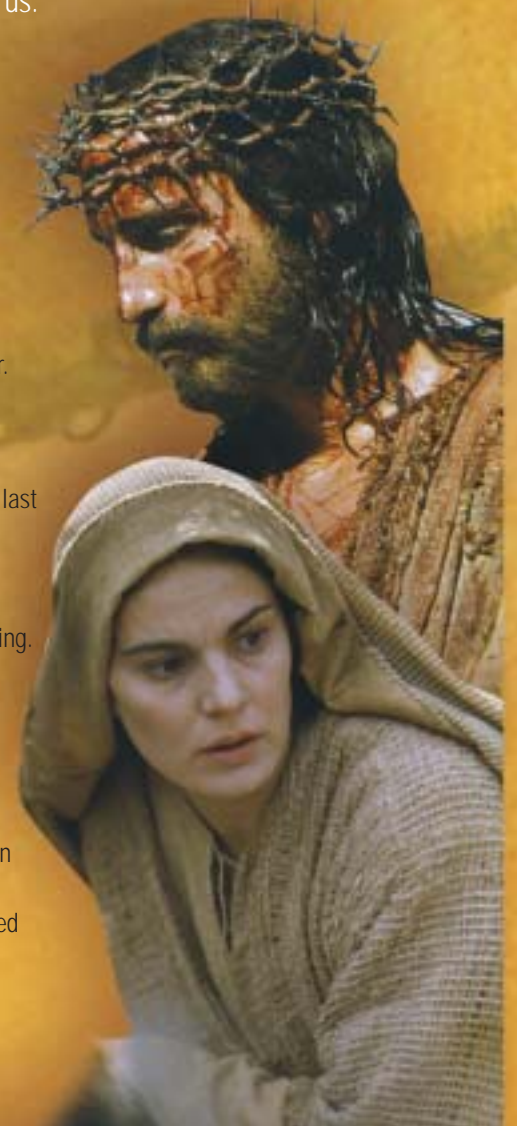
"The first two to four minutes after the movie ended, it was dead silence," he recalled. "Everyone sat in total silence as it was sinking in."

Arch's son, Jacob, was also speechless.

"The screen went dark and nobody moved," Jacob said. "After awhile, there was a standing ovation. I had never seen anything like that in a movie before."

When they left, the Bonnemas knew this was no ordinary film—and they should not have an ordinary reaction.

"We knew there was something very different about this movie from the second we walked out of theater," Jacob said. "But the question was, what were we to do about it?"





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— THE BONNEMA FAMILY



## A CALL TO ACTION...

Jacob and Arch discussed the movie with their family. And together, they came up with a plan. The Bonnema family—Arch, Jacob, Sherry, Kelly, and Justin—bought out 22 screens at Cinemark Tinseltown in Plano for the morning of the movie's opening debut, on February 25.

In all, they purchased 5,873 tickets for showings from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. Word of the Bonnemas' generosity quickly spread across the nation, reported by news sources ranging from small-town newspapers to *USA Today* and *The New York Times*.

"So few really great events come along in your life that when you see one this incredible, you have to be a part of it," Jacob said. "We're hoping that other families will be inspired to do projects like this in the future."

"This is the type of film people will tell their friends about," Arch added. "But if they don't see the film until the last day it's shown, how can they bring their friends? We are hoping that instead of just 6,000 seeing the movie now, it will lead to 20,000 or 30,000 seeing it later."



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The Bonnema family gave 3,000 tickets to Prestonwood. The tickets were distributed through Bible Fellowship classes with a challenge to "bring someone who needs to see Jesus." People are still being encouraged to purchase tickets for the regular showings and invite someone to see the movie with them.

"We know there are people all around us who need to know Jesus," said Mike Fechner, minister of spiritual development. "It is my prayer that we will ask God to show us who we should bring to receive this great gift of God's love."

In one of the most poignant and wrenching moments in the film, Jesus does not simply step up to the cross—He crawls onto it, barely able to support His already exhausted body, beaten almost beyond recognition. It is a stark reminder of a prophecy written about Christ thousands of years earlier, in Isaiah 52:14: "there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness."

Jesus did not enter this world without knowing how His life would end. God had everything planned. *The Passion of the Christ* reminds us of that truth every step of the way. Jesus knew what would happen and He could have left—but He didn't.

"Christ was crucified, and that is vividly portrayed. But what is so unfathomable is that He suffered so that we don't have to," said Laura Aston, Prestonwood member. "When He is shown walking out of the tomb, that is the beginning of life for us! There will be many opportunities in the coming months for Christians to explain what happens when the movie stops. I pray we are ready."

When the movie ends, the story for many will just be beginning.

Will you be ready?

[www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie](http://www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie)



## A CALL TO ACTION

Ask God who you can invite to see *The Passion of the Christ*. Support the movie by attending—even multiple times! Take friends to the movie and then invite them to attend the weekend services so they can hear our Pastor's message series: *The Passion of Jesus Christ*.

## HOW CAN I FIND MORE DETAILS ON OBTAINING TICKETS AND HELPING?

Visit [www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie](http://www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie). Here you will find more information on the movie, tickets, people's reactions, and how you can help.

## I HEARD THE MOVIE IS R-RATED. ARE WE STILL ENCOURAGED TO SEE IT?

The movie has received an R-rating due to the violent depiction of the crucifixion. Our Pastor, Dr. Jack Graham, has said: "It is extremely violent because the cross was violent."

## MOVIE RESOURCES

**TRACTS** Tracts from the American Tract Society and written by Greg Laurie, designed specifically for the movie, are available in the Prestonwood Bookstores for you to share with friends, family, and coworkers.

**WEBSITE** A special section of the Prestonwood site, [www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie](http://www.prestonwood.org/passionmovie), contains helpful information on additional resources and links to websites with more details about the movie.

**BOOKS** Visit the Prestonwood Bookstores for books you can purchase about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Josh McDowell's *More than a Carpenter* is a good book to give to those who need to learn more about Jesus.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Mel Gibson makes a cameo appearance in *The Passion of the Christ*. It is his hand that nails Jesus' hand to the cross. It is said that he did this as a personal recognition of his own sin and guilt in Christ's crucifixion. The idea for the movie was born from years of research prompted by a time when Mel felt "spiritually bankrupt"—once again proving that God's power is made greatest in the midst of our weakness.