

Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if we only take time to look.

So here are some questions you can apply to any film. Sometimes, you may feel that there is nothing much to say—but that itself can be its own message. Other films can be truly life changing! But whatever film you are watching, enjoy the experience!

Questions to ask yourself

What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?

Which incidents made you *think* or *feel* most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?

What issues did the film raise for you?

What character(s) do you most identify with and why?

Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values? How does the Bible tackle the issues the film raises?

Some facts about the film

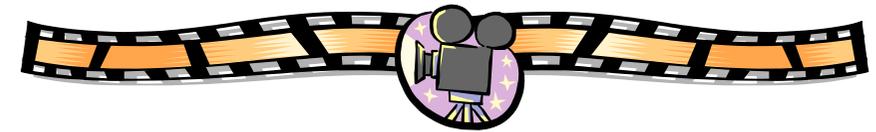
Luke's prison number (37) is a reference to the Bible: Luke 1:37. "Nothing is impossible for God!"

Originally, Telly Savalas was going to be cast as Luke.

Donn Pearce, the author of the original book, also had a bit part in the movie.

The original music from Cool Hand Luke was composed by Lalo Schifrin. An edited version of the musical cue from the "Tar Sequence" has been used for many years as the news music package on several television stations' news programs, mostly those owned and operated by ABC.

The film was nominated for four Academy Awards—Best Actor, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best Music and Best Screenplay. It won just one, for George Kennedy as Dragline (Best Actor in a Supporting Role).



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

**5th Nov
3rd Dec
7th Jan**

**The Man Who Sued God
Cool Hand Luke
Harry Potter
& the Prisoner of Azkaban**

**4th Feb
4th Mar
1st Apr**

**Pulp Fiction
Pleasantville
Man dancin'**

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

**10 Bletchingdon Road
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)
Or email info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk**

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Cool Hand Luke

Cool Hand Luke, made in 1967, is an American classic. It belongs to that series of films about rebels standing up to authority. Luke is sent to a prison camp, where he gets a reputation as a hard man. The head of the gang hates him, and tries to break him by beating him up. It doesn't work, and he gains respect. His mother dies, and he escapes, but is caught, escapes again, and is caught again. Will the camp bosses ever break him?

Some key issues

Indomitable spirit

The key to Luke's character is his indomitable spirit. Whatever happens to him, he simply comes back smiling. Nothing gets him down. Even when he has a non-scoring poker hand, he still manages to win. As Luke 1:37 reminds us, nothing is impossible for God. And here, nothing can destroy Luke's smile.

Authority

Luke is a rebel against authority. Because of that, "the system" simply cannot let him win. He either gets "his mind right", or else he dies. As Christians, how do we handle "authority"? In Romans, Paul calls on us to be good citizens. Jesus says "Pay unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar; and pay unto God that which belongs to God." How rebellious are we called to be? And what is "the system"? World powers? Governments? The culture in which we live? The church?

A Christ-type figure?

The character of Luke is often interpreted allegorically as a Christ figure. What is your initial reaction to this? Some parallels people have drawn include:-

- Luke is gunned down by the spiritually blind "man with no eyes," a guard who wears reflective sunglasses throughout the film. Dragline, Luke's companion, attacks the guard and his trademark glasses are crushed, suggesting that Luke's death has liberated the inmates once and for all.
- There isn't a one to one relationship for this analogy, but the scene after Luke comes out of the box for a week, and his stomach is shrunk so that he can't eat his rice, when prisoner after prisoner takes a scoop of his rice so that he won't have to be punished anymore gives me a strong feeling of the communal aspect of the Lord's Supper. Take and eat, this is my body...
- After he's escaped for the last time, and before he's delivered unto his death, Luke tells Dragline that he's done enough world-shakin', that he's going to leave that job to them (his disciples), which Dragline proves in the final sequence as he has gathered about him all the inmates, who will spread Luke's story.
- Judas also enters into the story in that Dragline betrays Luke by telling the authorities where Luke is hiding.
- In his conversation with his mother, he makes sure his brother John ought to receive the inherited land, just as Jesus made sure John and Mary took care of one another from the cross.
- Another way that Luke is like Jesus is that Luke is a miracle worker. The road gang completes their assignment of preparing the road for paving two hours ahead of schedule. He gave the prisoners, or disciples rest at the stop sign. In another scene, Luke picks up a deadly rattle snake without being hurt as if to say that Satan has no power over him. In his final escape, Luke tells two African-American children "when I return you can tell me all about it." Luke was referring to the humour of the bloodhounds

Memorable quotes

[Dragline has repeatedly knocked Luke down during a boxing match]

Dragline: Stay down. You're beat.

Luke: You're gonna hafta kill me... [struggles back to his feet]

[Luke won a game of poker on a bluff]

Dragline: Nothin'. A handful of nothin'. You stupid mullet head. He beat you with nothin'. Just like today when he kept comin' back at me - with nothin'.

Luke: Yeah, well, sometimes nothin' can be a real cool hand.

Captain: What we got here is... a failure to communicate.

Boss: Sorry, Luke. I'm just doing my job. You gotta appreciate that.

Luke: Nah - calling it your job don't make it right, Boss.

Captain: You gonna get used to wearin' them chains afer a while, Luke. Don't you never stop listenin' to them clinking. 'Cause they gonna remind you of what I been saying. For your own good.

Luke: Wish you'd stop bein' so good to me, cap'n.

Luke: Anybody here? Hey, Old Man. You home tonight? Can You spare a minute. It's about time we had a little talk. I know I'm a pretty evil fellow... killed people in the war and got drunk... I know I got no call to ask for much... but even so, You've got to admit You ain't dealt me no cards in a long time. It's beginning to look like You got things fixed so I can't never win out. Inside, outside, all of them... rules and regulations and bosses. You made me like I am. Now just where am I supposed to fit in? ... What do You got in mind for me? What do I do now?

[Gets on knees, closes eyes and begins to pray]

Luke: . On my knees, asking.

[Peeks up with one eye, waits. Then opens eyes and crosses arms]

Luke: . Yeah, that's what I thought. I guess I'm pretty tough to deal with, huh? A hard case.

[Headlights shine through window as police cars surround church]

Luke: [Shakes head and smiles] Is that Your answer, Old Man? I guess You're a hard case, too.

Dragline: He was smiling ... That's right. You know, that, that Luke smile of his. He had it on his face right to the very end. Hell, if they didn't know it 'fore, they could tell right then that they weren't a-gonna beat him. That old Luke smile. Oh, Luke. He was some boy. Cool Hand Luke. Hell, he's a natural-born world-shaker.

sneezing after sniffing the pepper and powder. Jesus often spoke to people about his second coming.

- In the final scene, Dragline is reminiscing/preaching about Luke and the torn photograph of Luke with the two prostitutes is superimposed on the shot. As the camera pulls away further into the sky, the crossroad becomes a cross and Luke of course is imposed on it.
- Conflict with the prison establishment is inevitable and the last straw comes when Luke encourages his fellow inmates to complete, with enthusiasm, the arduous task of repaving a highway well before five o'clock. The road paving episode is the equivalent of Jesus cursing the Jerusalem Temple. Luke is seen as a dissident and the ruling authorities plot to humiliate him.