

Relating it to the Bible

John 15: 12—17

In this passage, Jesus articulates what he eventually enacts: out of love, he lays down his life for his friends. Viktor's prime reason for coming to New York is to keep a promise he had made to his father. It was something which was very dear to him. He has it within his grasp but, to get the signature he needs, he would have to sacrifice his friends. So he turns back. His friends initially misunderstand what is happening. One even calls him a coward. Yet, when they discover what he has done, they then find the courage to become free themselves.

Suppose Viktor had told his friends right away what had happened in Dixon's office? Would that have had the same effect? Or would it have frightened them even more? Heartbroken as he is, his love of his friends and their need is greater than completing the work that his father had started. What "fruit" do they bear as a result of his self-sacrifice?

2 Corinthians 4: 7—12

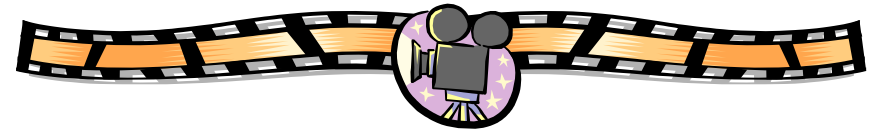
Paul reminds us here that, though we may feel persecuted, we are never abandoned; though we may be at our wit's end, we are never without hope. Viktor, as he continues his vigil within the airport, never loses hope that he will keep his promise to his father and never loses heart. What do you think of his quest? Is it of any real value? He has handed himself over to those who make him feel the weight of their authority. Yet there is a stature to his waiting. Is there anything Christ-like about it?

He has the patience of a saint. He finds hope in unpromising circumstances and rejects quick-fix but morally dubious solutions. His presence spreads light all around but this also makes him enemies. Are we talking about Jesus or Viktor?

Some trivia about the film

- The film was inspired by the story of Merhan Nasser, an Iranian refugee. In 1988, he landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport near Paris after being denied entry into England because his passport and UN refugee certificate had been stolen. French authorities would not let him leave the airport. He remained in Terminal One, a stateless person with nowhere else to go. Even when granted permission to either enter France or return to his own country, he instead chose to continue to live in the terminal and tell his story to those who would listen. Reportedly, he left the terminal in August 2006 to be treated for an unspecified illness.
- The terminal set was a near-full-size replica built in a former hangar, with three working sets of escalators, and populated by many familiar stores. Many were built by the construction crews that build actual mall and airport stores for the respective companies, and some had fully-functioning equipment (e.g. ovens, cash registers, etc). However, the inclusion of a brand on the set was not a guarantee of inclusion in the film: Dreamworks retained full control over editing, and some brands appear only briefly or not at all.

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

2nd Sep	The Wind That Shakes The Barley
7th Oct	I, Robot
4th Nov	<u>The Terminal</u>
2nd Dec	Tsotsi
6th Jan	Star Wars
3rd Feb	Into Great Silence

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

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The Terminal

Made in 2004, *The Terminal* tells the story of Viktor Navorski, who arrives at JFK airport in New York just as his home country (“Kraakhozia”) suffers a military coup. With his country no longer being recognized by the United States, he is unable to enter America. But with no planes going back to Kraakhozia, neither can he go home. Instead, he finds himself trapped in the international transit lounge. As days turn to weeks, and then months, he slowly begins to make the airport his home. As he does so, his inherent goodness and determination has a profound effect on those around him.

Being unacceptable

On arriving at the airport, Viktor finds himself, in the words of the chief of security, to be “unacceptable”. As such, he cannot enter the United States—and there is nothing he can do about it. Later on he wears a sticker saying “Temporarily out of service”. What have been your experiences of being excluded? Have there been times when others have labelled you as “unacceptable”? If so, how did you react? And how does this relate to your experience of God? At the heart of the Christian message is the belief that **everyone** is loved and accepted by God. As Paul Tillich once wrote: “we are accepted even if we know ourselves to be unacceptable”. The challenge is to believe it.

Temptation

Viktor suffers a whole host of personal deprivations, things which might encourage him to act illegally or badly. Yet he refuses to do so. Even when the customs officer tries to entice him into making an escape through leaving the exit doors unguarded, he chooses not to go. How do you think you would have reacted in a similar situation?

The power of goodness

There are a number of films (eg. *Babette’s Feast*, *Bagdad Café*) which portray the effect one person can have on a community. This is another. Hostility from various quarters is overcome by Viktor’s genuine goodness and the whole community is transformed by his presence. Nonetheless, not all succumb. Reflect for a moment on which characters respond positively to Viktor and which don’t. Why do you think that is?

Freedom

An airport terminal is not generally somewhere people want to spend much time. Instead, everyone is on their way somewhere else, and is keen to get there as soon as possible. To be trapped within that artificial bubble would be most people’s idea of a nightmare. Yet Viktor adapts to it with cheerful good humour. Meanwhile, many of the others around him—Amelia, Frank, Enrique, Gupta, Delores—seem to be far more trapped by their circumstances than Viktor. Despite being rejected by “the land of the free”, Viktor finds a much greater freedom than those who have made the US their home. What does it mean to be truly free? Are we *all*, perhaps, inhabitants of *The Terminal*, but, looking through the “bars”, one sees the mud and one sees the stars?

Memorable quotes

Amelia: Are you coming or going?
Viktor: I don’t know. Both.

[on first arriving in the transit lounge]

Viktor: What do I do?

Thurman: There’s only one thing you can do here, Mr Navorski. Shop!

Delores: Let me ask you something, Mr Navorski. Why do you wait here two hours every day when I’ve told you there’s nothing I can do for you—that your new visa will not arrive until your country is reconized by the United States?

Viktor: You ... you have two stamp. One red. One green.

Delores: So?

Viktor: So, I have chance go New York, 50—50.

Delores: *[laughs]* Yes, that’s a beautiful way to look at it. But America doesn’t work that way.

Gupta: Do you have an appointment?

Worker: What’s he doing?

Iverson: I don’t know

Worker: Well, ask him.

Iverson: I can’t ask him. I’m supposed to tell *him* what to do. I ask him what he’s doing and I’m gonna look like an idiot.

Amelia: I’ve been waiting my whole life. I just don’t know what the hell for.

Amelia: I usually read history books, They are long and cheap and usually about men killing each other.

Salchak: It doesn’t look good, Frank.

Dixon: I was just following the rules.

Salchak: Sometimes you have to ignore the rules and concentrate on the people.

Amelia: I have to go.

Viktor: I have to stay.

Amelia: Story of my life

Viktor: Me too.

[last lines]

Cab driver: Where you wanna go?

Viktor: I am going home.