

# “Epiphany with a Capital ‘E’”

*Luke 4:21-30*

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Last week I told you that you would have to come back next week to find out how this story ends. Many of you joked that it was a real ‘cliff hanger’ and I get that. But you didn’t have to go and collapse Fern Hollow bridge to make your point.

Lori Wagner says, At first the crowd would begin raving about Jesus, impressed by his words. He’s prophesying Jubilee. This is awesome! It’s time to party! No more foreigners. No more Rome. Listen to our boy. This is Joseph’s son, our guy! He’s going to make things good for us! Yay Jesus.

If last week Jesus had a Mic Drop. This week Jesus drops a bomb.

I can just imagine the sudden silence that must have filled the room. One moment, people are laughing, smiling, praising, joyful. The next, their eyes widen in shock. **“What did he just say?”** Their anger rose to the surface...and quickly bubbled over!

Did he just diss us? His own people? His own family? So God isn’t blessing us, his chosen ones, but blessing gentiles? He’s not going to spend his time healing us? Blessing us? Ministering to us? Taking care of us? We’re to be cast aside, so he can spend his time with Syrians, and Phoenicians, and Romans, and foreigners? Sinners and oppressors and outsiders and non-Jews? How could he do this to us! He’s betrayed us! He’s dishonored, disrespected, and downright just insulted us! Did he just say he doesn’t feel welcome here after all we’ve done? Did he just imply that we aren’t worthy of God’s blessings....and others are? We’re not good enough for him? We’re not worthy enough for God? What an ungrateful, arrogant comment. And to think we were praising him and supporting him all this time! Who does he think he is anyway! He’s one of us, and he’s betrayed his own people. <sup>1</sup>

So how does this happen to us? How do we go from waving palms and shouting **“Hosanna!”** in celebration on palm Sunday and within a week we’re nailing him to a cross and shouting **“Crucify him!”**

### “Snack Attack” <sup>2</sup>



“***Snack Attack***” is very short, less than 5 minutes, animated film we enjoyed in worship. In it we meet a short old lady getting a snack out of a vending machine inside a train station. It gets stuck, she finally manages to get it out, satisfied with herself she goes outside to sit on the bench and wait for the train while eating the 4 cookies inside the snack pack.

Sitting on the bench was a spike-haired young man with a smart phone in his hands and ear buds in his ears playing hard rock so loud you could hear it 10 feet away. The old lady sits anyway, determined to make the best of a trying situation.

The snack package is on the bench between them, she opens the package and takes a cookie. Then the young man reaches over and takes a cookie. The old lady gets visibly upset, pulls the remaining cookies onto her lap, but he reaches over and pulls the package back to the bench between them. A very interesting development, how rude can this young man get?

There is no actual dialog in this short, just grunting and gestures. **Don't read past the spoilers below if you haven't seen it yet but plan to, it is better to be surprised.**

**SPOILERS:** They keep sharing the package of cookies, the old lady gets increasingly upset but the young man remains happy as a lark. The train arrives, she gets on, looks out the window, sees the young man who sort of smiles and waves at her, but she scowls. Then she opens her purse, finds her unopened package of cookies. In a flashback we see that she had them in her purse the whole time, the identical package on the bench belonged to the young man, she had actually opened his cookies, and he was kind enough to share them with her without fuss. Then she observed him pick up the trash and deposit it into a trash can. She had wrongly judged the young man and now was smug by still having her cookies.

Richard Rohr says, “*You can tell a lot about someone by what they do with their pain...do they transform it, or do they transmit it.*”

You see much like this sweet lady in “***Snack Attack***” (pun intended), much like to bridge at Fern Hollow, everything we know biblically, theologically, psychologically says that the collapse doesn't really happen in an instant, it happened slowly but surely over time, there are a million little things that added up to this big thing.

Listen, we're all good. We have a pretty good handle on things. But I'm concerned that we're lying to ourselves. I'm concerned that slowly but surely over the 2 years of this pandemic we're corroding away and if we aren't intentional and diligent and prayerful about countering it, if we don't fortify ourselves, if we don't rebuild the Calvin community, we're heading for collapse.

So here's what we're going to do to avoid collapse. We're going to double down. We're going to double our efforts to be grounded, to be centered, to be prayerful, to be in fellowship with each other, to be the Body of Christ, to love God and love each other as we love ourselves.

I know this is painting with a broad brush. We will get more specific. We will cross out T's and dot out I's. But for now, let us all go from this place and this time with the resolve to fortify ourselves so that our pain is not transmitted, so that God can do what God does, so that God can transform our pain and be a part of building up the body of Christ.



Friends, that’s how we fortify ourselves. That’s how we fortify what others. That’s how we fortify this communion of saints that we love and call Calvin. That is Epiphany with a capital E!

Amen?!

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<sup>1</sup> Wagner, Lori. *Provoked*. (ChristianGlobe Network, Inc. 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Metanoia Films. *Snack Attack*. [www.snackattackmovie.com](http://www.snackattackmovie.com)

