

Jim Caviezel: Building Faith Through Film

CHARISMA: What drew you to this story?

CAVIEZEL: I love football more than I do basketball, even though basketball was my main sport in high school and college. In high school, we did very well one year. We were on our way, approaching the state tournament, and we had to play the No. 1 team in order to get in. That team was better than us on every level. We really didn't have a chance to beat them. By chance, we went and saw *Hoosiers* that day, about a major powerhouse basketball team playing this little Indiana school team, and that little Cinderella team won. We went out and played that night. We won. I tell you, by the fourth quarter, I wasn't focused on winning. One thing I felt was fearlessness.

I didn't want the moment to end. I didn't care where we were or anything, I didn't want to let my teammates down, because I felt love in my heart for my teammates.

I read this script and it reminded me of that. Take away basketball and put in football and it's the same story, Coach Ladouceur being able to take his players and do that on a daily basis. What we felt in one 24-hour period for each other and continued through the state tournament was what they felt all season long. He got his teams to do it on a day-to-day basis for 12 years and for many other years outside of that. He had multiple streaks. How does a coach do that? What is that process? If I were going to do a sporting movie, does this movie transcend sports?

Yes, it does. It has qualities in it, virtues of trust, honesty, to have courage, to have a brotherhood, to not focus on winning. ... The end result is the victories, but they do it

through love.

CHARISMA: Did you spend much time getting to know Bob Ladouceur?

CAVIEZEL: Yes, I did and I still do. He's become a very dear friend. One thing I remember when I watched the footage on him and watched him speak to his own team in the last game was the way they looked at him. Their eyes were glossy, and that happens before one cries and before their heart is burning. He talked about that. He said, "Whatever you gotta do to get your hearts burning, get to that place." You have all of these boys come in and a lot of them don't have fathers. Yet they come into this and he becomes a father to them.

They win because the players love each other. They're not afraid to say it. They're not afraid to embrace each other in the sign of that affection. To love someone, words are nice, but words are insufficient; actions speak volumes. That's not too easy. This translates into being responsible and that is learned. It's not inherited. And that's why those boys, 45 boys, that's why they go in and beat teams that are the best in the nation.

There's also a thing that he mentioned that, "It's not how hard you hit but how hard you're going to get hit and you choose to get back up." Champions are not made without adversity. Adversity will occur and you basically look adversity in the face and say, "Today, I will not be defeated."

CHARISMA: Speaking of the movie industry, there's been a surge of family- and faith-friendly films lately. Why do you think that is happening?

CAVIEZEL: It's very simple. The Truth. It's been here for thousands of years.

People can choose to be obedient and follow that way, or they

can choose to reject it. I do believe in choice. It's what kind of choice you're going to make. These movies, just like in every leader that has ever affected me, every coach that has ever affected me, the best coaches have been great teachers, and we know who the greatest Teacher of all time was. Those teachers have one thing in common—they are like their Father. Love is what breaks the heart. Love is what changes a man, turns the course and gives him a chance in his twilight that he still has a chance for redemption, and he chooses that. Faith is what you see—it's insurmountable: "We're not going to beat this. We are not going to beat the Philistines. We have no chance." But stay with love, and with love you can conquer anything. —*DeWayne Hamby*