

“Chocolat” starring Juliette Binoche, Johnny Depp, & Judi Dench, 2000, PG-13, 121 minutes

Major Themes:

- Hospitality (welcoming the stranger)
- Community
- Change
- True religion
- Law vs. grace

Interesting info:

- The character of “chocolate” was actually played mostly by plastic molds, because when they tried to use real chocolate in the window and counter displays, it melted under the lighting! But there was enough of the delicious temptation around that some of the cast even got sick from gorging on chocolate during the filming.
- Although Johnny Depp lives in France, he doesn't appear in any of the scenes shot in France. All of his scenes were filmed on set or on location in England. Some of the filming in Chocolat took place at a small farm in Bruton, Somerset, UK for its "French rural feel."
- As the camera is zooming out on the village at the end during the credits, you can see a man walk through the lower half of the square. The director wanted to be able to prove that it was the actual village and not a miniature.
- Anouk's imaginary kangaroo's name is spelled “Pantoufle,” which means "slipper" in French. When we finally see him hopping away, Anouk's imaginary kangaroo is played by a wallaby. Three trainers were on set trying to make the creature hop a certain way.

Scriptures:

Leviticus 19:33 – 34 (NLT) – *“Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”*

Deuteronomy 10:19 (NLT) – *“So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.”*

Matthew 25:34 – 36 (The Message) – *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:*

*I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.”*

Luke 4:18 – 19 (NLT) – *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.”*

Galatians 5:1 (The Message) – *“Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.”*

Galatians 5:13 – 15 (NIV) – *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”*

James 2:14 – 24 (NLT) – *“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. Now someone may argue, ‘Some people have faith; others have good deeds.’ But I say, ‘How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.’ You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless? Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: ‘Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.’ He was even called the friend of God. So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.”*

Matthew 7:1 – 5 (The Message) – *“Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.”*

James 1:27 (NLT) – *“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.”*

Major Characters:

- Vianne Rocher (w/ daughter Anouk)
- Armande Voizin (w/ daughter Caroline Clairmont, grandson Luc)
- Comte de Reynaud
- Josephine Muscat
- Pere Henri
- Roux

Discussion Points:

1. What did you think of Lansquenet (the town) when you first saw it? Is this a place you would want to change? How can change be both good and bad? How has our community and our church regarded and dealt with change?
2. What can we learn from this film about befriending those who are marginalized, who might have been hurt by or are suspicious of the church?
3. What happens to a church or church leader when the gospel is reduced to morals, or when its leaders give way to the views of its members rather than the teachings of its Scriptures?
4. Consider this statement – *“Chocolate’s essential purpose is the creation of community, of joint experiences of joy, of celebrating the goodness of creation.”*
5. Discuss how each of these characters are imprisoned, and how liberation comes to them: Comte de Reynaud, Armande, Caroline Clairmont, Jean Marc Drou (the neglected wife), Josephine Muscat (the abused wife), Pere Henri, Roux
6. In what ways do you see yourself and the Church as agents of liberation?
7. When Vianne asks Roux, “Don’t you ever think about belonging somewhere?” Roux replies, “The price is too high.” What price do we pay for belonging to a community? And what do we gain?

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way;
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.

From sorrow, toil and pain,
And sin, we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.