

E.T. – RETURNING HOME

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Well, everybody, welcome to “Metaphysical Movies of Summer!” It's a two-week series, and it's where we take a metaphysical look at some of our favorite movies that we've watched over our lifetimes. I started this series four years ago at my previous church, and it was inspired by somebody all of you might know: Rev. Richard Maraj [congregants laugh] and his “Songs of Summer,” which is now the “Songs of Life” series. And I loved the idea so much that I thought, *“Why not do it with movies, especially in the summertime when we're all going to the movies?”*

So here's how this works. I will recap the movie for us, because some of you may not have seen some of these movies since they came out in the 80s, right? So, I'll recap the movie, and we're going to look at some of the themes, the characters or both, and what they represent and how they show up in our lives. And then I'll summarize my takeaways with ideas of how we can apply these spiritual lessons from these movies to our lives.

So are you ready to get started? Okay. Sorry we don't have popcorn for you this morning! [Congregants laugh] Shoot; next year; next week.

So our first movie together: there's the poster! It's the classic 1982 movie, “E.T. The Extraterrestrial,” directed by Steven Spielberg. Now, what's so interesting is that, originally, Stephen Spielberg was going to call this movie “Growing Up,” because it was about his parents. It was inspired by his parents' divorce when he was 15, and growing up in a very Christian neighborhood as a Jewish boy, actually out here in Arizona. So he decided to tell the story -- his own story -- through E.T. And it's a story about feeling alienated; wanting to go home; wanting to have a place where you're loved and cared for and safe.

And he didn't think his own personal story told through E.T. would resonate with audiences, but wow, Did it ever?!? Right? And I think some of us may have even switched from M&M's to Reese's Pieces candy. [Congregants laugh]

Do you all remember the film critic, Roger Ebert? Yeah, remember Siskel and Ebert? Thumbs up, thumbs down? Well, at the time, Roger Ebert said, *“This movie made my heart glad. It is filled with innocence, hope and good cheer. It tells a story about friendship and love. Some people are a little baffled when they hear it described. It's about a relationship between a little boy and a creature from outer space that becomes his best friend. It works as science fiction; is sometimes as scary as a monster movie; and at the end, when the lights go up, there's not a dry eye in the house.”*

Well, that was my experience, because I saw it with my seven-year-old brother, and he was crying the entire ending in the movie and all the way home ... which is like a 15-minute drive of him crying. So definitely my experience as well.

But who can forget E.T.? This wonderful character! You know, he's the alien with the big head and big eyes, and a short body. He waddles, and he has a chest that glows. And we see his heart light up throughout the movie. He accidentally gets left behind by his fellow extraterrestrials. They were picking fauna -- I think they're scientists -- and he gets left behind. And he gets befriended by a boy by the name of Elliot, who finds E.T. in his own backyard.

And so, you know, that introduces us to all these other wonderful unforgettable characters, as well. So we have E.T. and then Elliot, the main character. Here he is on this slide. He's got the overalls on. He's the younger son of a family who lives in the suburbs. He finds E.T. in the backyard. He does his best to get him out of the bushes with those Reese's Pieces candy.

We have the older brother, Michael. Now Michael, apparently, was modeled after Steven Spielberg. He said Michael really represents him as a teenager. And then we have the youngest sister, Gertie, played by an adorable Drew Barrymore. Isn't she so cute? And then, of course, we also see in the movie the recently divorced single mother played by Dee Wallace.

And so, there's a lot of change going on in this family. Also who show up, or friends of Michael, the older brother, who tease Elliot and don't believe in E.T. until they see it with their own eyes. Do you know anyone like that? [Congregants murmur] They don't believe it until they see it?

So here's how the story goes. E.T. and Elliot both are feeling alienated from their families, right? Elliot's feeling alienated from this weird new dynamic of being with his single, divorced mom and no dad around. E.T., of course, from being far away from a different planet. So they befriend and become family to one another. And they have this telepathic, telekinetic connection that makes the relationship all the more intensely special.

Now, the goal becomes to get E.T. back to his home planet. And there's a famous line throughout the movie with E.T. often saying -- do you remember it? [With congregants]: *"E.T. phone home."* That's right! So there's one failed attempt to get E.T. home during Halloween, because that seems like a good way to get him home, right? Because he dresses up like a ghost -- right? -- in the sheet but, unfortunately, they don't get him back home. And as time goes on, E.T. is starting to fall sick.

Now the government, of course, is now secretly tracking him, and then suddenly they descend on the home. And all seems lost because, at this point in time, E.T. -- it looks like -- has died. And Elliott even says to the adults that E.T. must be dead because he, Elliot, doesn't feel anything anymore.

So Elliot tells E.T., *"I love you."* He walks away and, as he turns away, he sees these flowers that were dying at the same rate as E.T. all of a sudden come back to life. So he runs back to where E.T. is, he finds him alive, and E.T. is communicating with him, saying his people are going to be there in the forest to get him.

So Elliot manages to hide that E.T. is now alive. He hatches a plan with Michael. They all, you know, start taking off towards the forest. Of course, the government is after them. There's this whole chase. Then there's that magical scene where E.T. makes all of their bikes fly through the sky. Do you remember this? And we have the big moon in the background and the magic of the boys flying on their bikes.

And they land in the forest at night. And, sure enough, E.T.'s friends -- his family from another planet; the spaceship's there. And so, first we have Gertie and Michael get to say their goodbyes before it's Elliot's turn to say goodbye. And Elliot asks E.T. to stay. And E.T. gives his new friend a hug. And he has his finger light up magically. And he points to Elliot's head and his heart, and he says to Elliot, *"I'll be right here."* And it's a beautiful moment. It's a heartwarming movie, and there are so many great spiritual lessons -- little gems -- that we can get from this movie.

So here it goes. Three. I whittled it down to three, because there's probably even more than three. but I whittled it down to three. The first one: the importance of returning home, meaning to the home within us: our divine self. Two: Feelings of alienation and separations are reminders that you have forgotten that you're part of the allness of God -- the allness of the universe. Which then leads us to number three, which is we are all connected; we're all one. And, really, our purpose is love.

So let's get to the first one. That famous line: *"E.T. phone home"* ... Has anybody asked yourself lately, *"What planet am I on?"* [Congregation laughs] Can I call a spaceship to take me off of this one? There's moments in life where we can feel like we've just been stranded on another planet. And that can make us feel alone, separate ... and not just from those around us, but also from our own self. We feel spiritually lost. There may be times that we feel disconnected from the home within us. That part of us

that's divine, that whole of us that is divine. And we forget that we are Christ essence, divine essence. And sometimes we forget that we can return home to that place within ourselves that is really the truth of our being. We forget and we get lost.

Just recently, I'd been really holding on to feelings of betrayal and anger towards a friend. And I kept thinking like, *"No; I've forgiven this person. I've let this go"* ... only for those feelings of anger and betrayal to come up anytime that person was mentioned. And finally -- and it was just this last week, of course, while I was writing this talk, right? -- that my husband so calmly and sweetly looked at me and said, *"Stacy, you've got to let it go."*

And the next morning, I woke up. And suddenly I had this feeling come over me, and I thought, *"Yeah, that's not who I am. I'm not anger and betrayal."* It was a real feeling of returning home to who I really am: loving, kind, forgiving. It was asking the question: *"Who do I want to be in the world? What energy do I want to express in this world?"* Because I'm a divine expression of the one Power and Presence of the universe: Love itself. And so are all of you! It's true for all of us.

And, of course, this piggybacks on my first talk I gave here in February on forgiveness. And it's that part of forgiveness that's about returning home to your true self and making your inner life as comfortable as possible so that you can express beauty on the outside of life, also.

Our home in California that we were in for over 18 years ... you know, we put so much love into our relationship as a family, our relationship with one another. And when people would come over to our house, they would say, *"Wow, this home feels so happy; it feels so warm. It feels so inviting and comfortable."* And that's because the feeling radiating from the people inside of it spilled out into the home, itself. Literally spilled out into the backyard and the walls.

And yet, we forget from time to time that we are Christ expressing -- the Divine expressing -- and we get lost in the wilderness. Thinking about this particular time in history, this is what it seems is happening in our world right now. We're a bit lost in the forest. And like E.T., we end up sick, and there's a death of spirit and soul. We've forgotten who we are and why we're here and -- spoiler alert! -- it's not to argue with one another or yell at each other or call each other names but, instead, to focus on the goal: returning home to that place of peace and love within us.

So I ask you: As a great creator -- as the allness of God that you are -- what kind of home will you create for yourself? Within your body -- the home that houses your soul -- what kind of home will you create for yourself? In your living space -- the home you spend time in -- what kind of home will you create for yourself? Where you volunteer? Where you work? The larger home community ... what kind of home will you create for yourself and everyone that is there?

And do we need friends to help us? Absolutely! Like E.T., we need friends to help us get back home to our true selves. While ultimately, it's up to us -- it's our job to do that work -- we also need friends, or a kind husband in my case, turning us to the light of our existence: that inner glowing light within. To say, as Elliot says to E.T. when he thinks he's dead, *"I love you,"* and let that love bring us back to life.

What if we whispered that to ourselves? *"I love you."*

Go ahead and try it now: *"I love you."*

Yeah. So when you're struggling and you're feeling like you've lost yourself in life -- you've lost yourself in a challenge or anxiety or grief -- we can be like E.T. and we can phone home. *"Stacy, phone it home,"* meaning, *"Stacy, return to that place within you where your Christ self resides."*

So the first lesson from this movie: **RETURN HOME TO THE CHRIST WITHIN YOU**; to that divine within you.

Lesson number two is that feeling of being alienated: alienated from others; alienated from ourselves. And we can even betray ourselves with the way that we speak about ourselves, or with our actions or inactions toward ourselves.

You're not alone – especially right now – in feeling separate from the whole. But we can feel separate from our divine self sometimes. And then when that happens – when we all start to feel separate from our divine self – what happens is: there's this feeling of separation versus connection. But the connection starts from within. And we can feel more connected by remembering our purpose and our connection to the whole.

It's through telepathy and telekinesis that E.T. communicates to Elliot his thoughts and his feelings. It plays out in a really hilarious scene, if you all remember, with E.T. and Elliot. So Elliot's at school and E.T.'s exploring the house on his own, because everyone's out of the house. So he finds beer and a pet frog and a movie he's watching where the lead ends up kissing the leading lady in the movie -- but all of that starts playing out through Elliott at school. And it's chaos, right? And it's quite a funny moment where Elliot is feeling and experiencing everything that E.T. is.

And as funny as that is, the truth is that we are all connected by this energy of life. We are all creative expressions of the universe. And, therefore, an energy runs through each of us, to and from one another. It's this otherworldly connection with E.T. that allows Elliot to feel more connected to himself and to his family.

And this second lesson – **MOVING FROM SEPARATENESS TO CONNECTION** -- really bridges the other two spiritual lessons from this movie.

So, we have home is within us, and when we forget that, we feel alienated and lost. And so being reminded that we are connected in this web of life to one another. That we're all made of the same magical life energy. That **WE ARE ALL EXTENSIONS AND EXPRESSIONS OF GOD.**

Unity minister and author Rev. Eric Butterworth wrote this: *“The whole universe is within you. And its flow is ever the reality of you in a fundamental sense, no matter what the incidentals may be. Jesus said, ‘In the world you have tribulation, but I have overcome the world.’ When we really know that the life is lived from within out, then no matter what happens around us or to us, we can always get into the transcendent flow within us. And this is to overcome the world.”*

And so this is where we get the third spiritual lesson from this movie, bridging from, *“I’m alone; it’s only me; I’m separate”* to *“I am part of the whole.”* Our goal -- like Elliot and his siblings and friends -- is to work together. Our goal is connection and community; hope and good cheer; friendship; kindness; and love. That's our goal!

So we move from feeling alone in the world to remembering our oneness with it. Again, from Eric Butterworth: *“No matter what I think I am, I am the flowing forth of the One. There can be no other quite like me, and yet I have no existence outside of the whole. I can never be separated from the allness which is God.”*

The allness which is God! You cannot be separate from the allness that is God! We are all connected, including those who may not sound or look or act like you. Including those who sound or look or act alien to you. They, too, are connected.

And you can see how it's a loop, right? Because you're the flowing forth of the One. So what kind of home do you want to keep and create, which will then ripple out into the world that you live in? Like E.T. and Eliot's connection, you, too, are connected to all of it. Whatever you create and are in tune with, you get more of.

So now is the time to turn on our heart lights, especially now, when some of us have forgotten that we have a heart light. We let our heart light shine even brighter so we can raise the consciousness -- the energetic vibration -- of the whole. It's just like the boys flying on the bikes. We need to fly above and see with our higher consciousness, our spiritual eyes.

That's what our Unity wings represent: to look above in a spiritual, highly conscious way. A spiritual way versus our humanness material earthly ways. And in doing so, remembering that we are all connected.

It's at the end of the movie when E.T. is ready to finally go home and the spaceship is waiting. And Elliot says, "Stay." I know this feeling. If you have kids, you know this feeling, right? You want to say, "Stay!" If you've loved and lost, "Stay." And that's again, when E.T. responds -- pointing to Elliot's heart and his head -- and he says, "I'll be right here" ... meaning his heart, his memories within him.

And that's just it: we are always connected to those we love, whether they're still in their bodies or not; whether they're nearby or a continent away. We are connected through our hearts; we are connected through love. Because love is who we are.

And so the spaceship lifts, and a rainbow comes out. And a family -- and I think probably a community -- is more connected than ever before because of a very friendly and wise alien.

So we receive a lot of lessons from E.T. One: you can return to home -- which is that divine Christ consciousness within you -- at any time. We are connected to every living thing, because we are all made of that same magical, invisible energy of divine life. And you have a glow within you; it is your heart light. So let it and E.T. remind you that love is always present, and that love is right here, and that love always finds a way to do and overcome the impossible.

Let your heart light shine!

And that concludes our very first "Metaphysical Movie Sunday" here at Unity of Phoenix. Thank you and blessings, everyone!

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