



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

July 31, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

The Gospel According to Broadway: A Chorus Line (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

In 1974 Broadway was struggling. Ticket sales were near an all-time low. Broadway was seen as old-fashioned, out-of-touch, and generally un-cool. New York City itself was struggling. Considered dirty and dangerous, Time Square itself was dubbed “Slime Square.”

According to New York Post reporter Michael Reidel, ‘A Chorus Line’ opened at the Public on April 15, 1975, and quickly transferred to the Shubert Theatre. Broadway was falling apart back then. Most of the theaters were dark, Times Square was packed with hustlers and peep shows, the city was veering toward insolvency. The year before ‘Chorus Line’ opened, Broadway attendance dipped to a near all-time low of 6.6 million. The year after it opened, attendance shot up to 8.8 million.”

A Chorus Line was different for so many reasons. It was not a narrative in the traditional sense. It was stripped down. It had little costuming, little scenery, and none of the “trappings” that usually make Broadway shows spectacular. Instead, it was just a line of actors telling their stories of struggle. Some heartbreaking, some sexy, some funny, some tragic, all of the stories were relatable. *A Chorus Line* was the definitive show of the 1970s and its popularity lasted well into the 1980s.

A Chorus Line, the movie however, wasn’t as popular. Made in 1985, it received middling reviews (it has a 40% score on Rotten Tomatoes, which isn’t very good). There are a lot of theories as to why, but I have one. It changed the heart of the show, especially when it shifted the place of the song “What I Did for Love.”

In the musical, “What I Did for Love,” is the penultimate song. It is the last soliloquy before the grand finale, and it answers the most important question of the show. After one of the dancers falls and is helped off the stage with an apparent career-threatening injury, the director asks, “If you could never dance again, what would you do?”

Pondering this question to life’s purpose and fate, one of the dancers sings “What I Did For Love,” as a love-song to dance. It was a love song to the art. It was the kind of old-

fashioned ballad that modern audiences should have hated. It should have been too syrupy. Instead, it was a testament to purpose, mission, and no regrets.

The movie however, makes it the centerpiece of a broken romantic relationship. Instead of being about the passion of an artist and their craft, it becomes a song about someone giving up their dreams for romance. It fell flat and the movie suffered.

Paul’s second letter to Timothy has been thought of as coming at the end of Paul’s life (1 and 2 Timothy are both disputed authorship, but they are framed as coming near the end of Paul’s life). In this passage, which is nearly the end of the letter, Paul states that he has no regrets. There is still tension in the Church. There are still false teachers. After years of pastoring, planting churches, writing letters, and teaching, Paul can see that he hasn’t solved any of the problems. He is coming to the end of his life, but what he did for Christ is all that matters.

Like Diana, who may never be a star but toiled for the sake of love, Paul knows that his work for Christ was never in vain. He can look back and not regret a thing because he knows that what he did, he did for Christ. He did it for love.

It is natural to ask questions about permanence and purpose. We all want to leave our mark. What we do for Christ is eternal. What we do for love will never die. What is past is past. What we do tomorrow is what matters. We can start right now. Live for love and there is nothing to regret. Live for Christ, and nothing we do will ever be done in vain.



A Chorus Line had a run of 6,137 performances on Broadway, making it the longest running show in history (until *Cats* broke the record in 1997)