

"Gospel of George"

WGA 1428255

FADE IN:

White titles dissolve in and out on a black background.
(Musical cue - Adagio, Mahler's 5th)

FADE OUT:
CREDITS

FADE IN:

SUPER:

"Who hath believed our report? and
to whom is the arm of the LORD
revealed?" - Isaiah, 53:01

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVESIDE -DAY

It's an idyllic Summer morning, with sun shining and birds chirping. PAUL, a mid-thirties guy who has just placed flowers on his wife's grave, stands looking at the headstone, which reads, "Rachel Duffy, Beloved Wife, 1983-2011." He turns and slowly walks away, head hanging low.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -DAY

Paul drives slowly, lost in thought, depressed. He pulls up to a coffee shop and parks on the street in front. He turns off the engine and sits a moment before opening the door.

EXT. STREET -DAY

GEORGE, an old man struggles to walk with a cane down a suburban sidewalk.

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DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINER -DAY

Paul sits at the counter of the little blue-collar diner eating his poached eggs, fruit and toast. He stops in to see BRANDI every chance he gets. Brandi, the pretty, young waitress refills his coffee when her attention turns to the old man walking in the door.

BRANDI
Hey you! We were wondering where
you were.

She puts her coffee pot back on the hotplate. George is a frail old man, looking much older than his 72 years. He walks with his cane to the first booth and struggles to sit down. Brandi brings a menu and bends down to give him a hug.

GEORGE

Oh, thank you... It's good to be back.

George is choked up.

BRANDI

Where've ya been, George? We've been worried about you.

CLARISE, the other waitress, brings George a cup of coffee. She's older than Brandi, a veteran of the coffee shop world with a bit of an edge.

CLARISE

Yeah, George, where ya been? You havin' the usual?

GEORGE

Oh, I don't know. I've had a bit of a shock.

George's hand shakes as he tries to pour cream from the little silver pitcher into his coffee. Brandi gives his old hand a squeeze.

BRANDI

You take your time, George. I'll be back.

CLOSE-UP GEORGE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN FRONT YARD -DAY

The house is a little white stucco job with a well-kept, if amateurishly done, flower bed. George is sitting on the front stoop petting BOBO, his black cat.

GEORGE

Well Bobo, we should do some work.

George gets up, picks up his hoe and starts in on the weeds in the flower bed. Bobo jumps in, playing with the weeds and rubbing up against George, demanding attention. He tries to ignore the beast, but the cat will not be denied. Finally, George stomps his foot and chases the cat away.

George continues his weeding work for a few moments until he is startled by a car horn and a tire squeal in front of the house next door. George has an uneasy feeling. He looks to the open gate at the side of the house.

GEORGE

Bobo kitty... Bobo!.. Here
kitty...

He puts down his hoe and slowly walks (without a cane) to the general area where the car slammed on the brakes. He sees a black lump lying in the road with blood splattered around, mouth agape. George can't move for a long time, then he begins to cry. He takes off his gardening gloves stuffing them in his back pocket and kneels down to pick up the corpse. He lifts the limp body gently and holds it close.

GEORGE

(softly) Oh, Gladys... Our boy...
Why?..

George carries the body back home, through the chain-link gate on the side of the house into the back yard.

GEORGE

I'm sorry Bobo... I'm sorry...
Daddy's sorry...

He lays the body down in the grass and goes to the garage, returning with a shovel, an old shoebox and some neatly folded white terry-cloth rags. He kneels down and wipes his tear-filled eyes with his bloody hand. He sees the blood he's gotten on one of the rags and picks it up, using it to clean his hands before preparing for the burial. He places a terry-cloth shroud over the small, broken body and carefully places it in the casket. He uses the shovel to raise himself to begin the grave. He stops several times slumping over his shovel in exhaustion. He finishes the digging with great difficulty, and kneels back down for the interment. He picks up the shoebox and pets it tenderly.

GEORGE

Bobo... I'm sorry, I love you.

He places the coffin in the grave and begins covering it with dirt. He finally breaks down and begins sobbing. He covers his face with his dirty hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD -DAY

A car pulls up to the curb and the driver SARA, his daughter, a woman in her early 40's gets out. She's dressed for the office. She sees the gardening tools and the work in progress. She heads for the front door, but then notices the gate is open. She goes to the gate and sees George in the dirt.

SARA

Daddy?

She sees George's shoulders undulating and smiles thinking he's laughing. She walks over and puts a hand on his shoulder.

SARA

Daddy?

He turns and she sees him covered in blood and dirt and recoils in horror.

SARA

Oh my God! Daddy! What's wrong?
What happened?

He can't answer her. She helps him into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -DAY

They enter the kitchen where she takes a towel out of a drawer and wets it. She puts him into a chair and starts to clean him up.

SARA

Are you hurt, Daddy? What
happened?

He struggles to speak.

GEORGE

Bobo...

Sara begins to cry.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -DAY

George is seated in a large recliner in his pajamas. Sara enters with a cup of coffee and hands it to him. He takes it without looking up.

SARA

I'm sorry, Daddy. I have to go get cleaned up and get to work. I finished... I made him a little marker... You should lie down for a while. I'll stop by later.

She kisses him on the head and goes out the front door, locking it. George looks at his coffee. We see a framed picture of a married couple from the 60's, a high-school picture of Sara and a picture of a black cat.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM -DAY

George is turning down the sheets and fixing the pillows to lie down. He gets into bed adjusting the covers over his legs, noticing the white towel at the foot of the other side of the bed. It's covered with black cat hair and has a cat-sized impression where Bobo always slept. He lies back, pulling the blanket up to his chest. He crosses himself and then crosses his hands over his chest. We see the crucifix above the bed.

CLOSE-UP PROFILE GEORGE

A tear falls.

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM CONTINUOUS -LATER

CLOSE-UP GEORGE SLEEPING

We see George react to something hitting the bed. We pull back to see Bobo sitting on the towel looking at George. Bobo is dirty. He reaches out to the cat who steps closer to let George pet him and dirt falls on the white bedspread. George takes Bobo in his arms and hugs him.

GEORGE

Bobo...

There is a pause, and George looks around the room and notices the strange quality of the light.

He gets out of bed and Bobo runs out the door. He walks cautiously towards the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM -DAY

George enters the room bathed in afternoon light. He slowly crosses to the center of the room as Bobo saunters to the kitchen. He is facing the kitchen door.

GEORGE
(softly) Gladys?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINER -DAY

Paul is turned around on his stool facing George's booth, Clarise is seated across from George and Brandi squatting next to him holding his hand.

GEORGE
I stood there a good 15 minutes before I got up the nerve to go in the kitchen and make a cup of coffee.

BRANDI
The Lord works in mysterious ways.

The waitresses get up to go back to work.

CLARISE
Don't he, though?

George notices Paul has been listening to his story.

PAUL
So, whose cat did you bury?

GEORGE
Pardon?

PAUL
Well, it must have been another cat that just looked like yours. Don't you think?

GEORGE
I've known that cat for seven years. I know my own cat... But, to tell you the truth, I never thought to check to see if the grave was empty. I guess I don't need to.

Paul turns around to the counter, drains his coffee cup, picks up the check and puts down three dollars. He gets up and goes to the cash register.

BRANDI

How was everything?

PAUL

Interesting... What did you think of that?

BRANDI

George? He's been coming in here longer than I've been here; that's two years. I remember when his wife passed; he stayed away for over a month. I think the Lord decided he couldn't bear losin' another loved one so soon. He loves that cat.

She studies him a second.

BRANDI (CONT'D)

You know, if you don't believe the Lord can save a cat, how're you ever gonna hope he'll save you?

Considering that, Paul turns to exit, nodding to George as he passes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -DAY

Paul walks to his small, white city vehicle marked, "Animal Control" and unlocks the door. He gets in, puts the key in the ignition and just sits there.

P.O.V. PAUL

We see George emerge from the diner and walk towards home. Paul sits there for a minute and then starts the car. He slowly drives the same direction George walked. We see George walking slowly as Paul slows to a stop well behind him. He watches as George reaches his house and enters. He wheels slowly past the house, seeing Bobo in the window. Paul drives on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN SIDE YARD -DAY

We see the mound of dirt and a cross made of paint stirring sticks tied with string. It says, "Bobo" written with a black marker.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT WINDOW GEORGE'S HOUSE

Bobo is sitting in the window.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -DAY

CLOSE-UP PAUL

Paul drives on with a tear welling in his eye, looking sternly ahead. Slowly, a smile starts to appear, turning to laughter. (Musical cue - Bittersweet Symphony by The Verve)

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER

"And when they heard of the
resurrection of the dead, some
mocked: and others said, We will
hear thee again of this matter."
- Acts, 17:32

FADE OUT.