

"Mighty Warrior"

A prominent neurosurgeon finds greater purpose when he becomes the student of a little boy with a pure heart and love for Jesus.

18-DE03-W15

FADE IN:

View from outside a medical transportation van window that is traveling down the city streets of Columbus, Ohio. Focus is on Dr. Clark Zenetti as he stares blankly out the window. His appearance is somewhat unkept for a man who used to be meticulously well groomed. The passing city landscape is reflected on the window where he peers out. He notices a commuter on a bicycle and experiences a flashback:

CUT TO:

Flashback: Dr. Z, ATHLETIC AND STRONG, riding his bicycle with friends in the Peletonia OSU cancer research fundraising event. He is wearing his team uniform and is riding effortlessly, enjoying the friendly competition and physical activity.

BACK TO:

Dr. Z is jarred back to reality when Mr. Don, the driver, stops the van and exits where he walks to the back of the van to lower the wheelchair lift at the rear. Dr. Z continues to stare out his window, making an attempt to ignore the action around him.

MR. DON: (OS)

Good morning, Caleb! How's my favorite passenger and his beautiful mom today?
(The reply is garbled from inside the van.)

Mr. Don moves Caleb and his wheelchair into place to the right of Dr. Z and straps it in. Dr. Z places both hands protectively around his braced right leg and winces slightly as he moves it manually out of Caleb's space. A set of elbow crutches leans against his left side. Caleb's mother, Sarah, enters the van from the right sliding door and sits in the seat to the right of Caleb.

Mr. Don enters the van and slams the driver's side door with a thud, which causes another flashback for Dr. Z.

CUT TO:

Flashback: Impact of a car smashing into Dr. Z during the Pelotonia ride, emergency lights, and friends and medical personnel working on him.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

News anchor sits behind a desk with one photo of a badly mangled bicycle and another one of Dr. Z smiling, looking fit, trim and healthy, flanked by senior medical professionals as he receives an award in front of the press.

NEWS ANCHOR:

Tragic news tonight. Prominent young neurosurgeon and researcher, Dr. Clark Zenetti is fighting for his life this evening after being struck by a car while riding for the Peletonia cancer research fund-raiser. Dr. Zenetti was life flighted from the scene and transported to OSU Wexner Medical Center, where he has been instrumental in cutting edge research that has saved many lives. This horrific tragedy leaves many in our community shaking their heads and wondering how and why this would happen.

He is jolted back to reality when Caleb speaks.

CALEB:

Hi, my name is Caleb and I'm six years old.

Dr. Z tries to ignore him but is quick to notice the boy's bald head and bruises on his arms from intravenous treatments. This response is involuntary, based on several years of medical experience, but is the first sign of life from the doctor.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

I'm named after a mighty warrior in the Bible. He was like a super hero, ya know.

Mr. Don peers from the rearview mirror at the passengers. Dr. Z doesn't respond but withdraws into himself again and looks out the window. Caleb's mom notices that Dr. Z doesn't want to be bothered and gives Caleb a "mom" look:

MOM:

Caleb.

CALEB

(To Dr. Z) I'm glad to meet you, sir.

The van comes to a gentle stop in front of the expansive therapy center.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mr. Don exits the van and opens the sliding door to assist Dr. Z. The passengers watch as Dr. Z struggles to swing his legs outside and onto the sidewalk and puts on his elbow crutches.

MR. DON:

We'll see you in a couple of days, Dr. Zenetti.

He doesn't seem to hear Mr. Don and walks awkwardly toward the BUILDING ENTRANCE. Mr. Don closes the sliding door and gets into the van where Caleb makes an observation.

CALEB:

I think that man is sad, Mommy.

The passengers watch as Dr. Z moves painstakingly through the sliding doors that open for him.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

We should ask Jesus to help him.

Mr. Don hears this and exchanges glances through the rear view mirror with Mom.

MOM:

(To Caleb) That's a good idea son.

The van moves on to its next destination.

FADE OUT.

Days later as the van pulls up to load Caleb and Mom aboard; everybody is seated as before. Dr. Z appears to be having a not so horrendous day as the last. He appears to be more "present" as Mr. Don gets back into the van and pulls away from the curb.

CALEB:

Good morning everybody. I brought presents!

Mr. Don acknowledge Caleb with surprise and curiosity as Caleb pulls suckers out of his pocket and gives one to Mr. Don.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

(To Mr. Don) This one is yummy chocolate.

MR. DON:

Thank you, Caleb. I love chocolate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CALEB:(TO DR. Z)
I saved this one special for you. Its
a grape one.

He hands Dr. Z a grape sucker.

CALEB: (CONT'D)
(Whispers to Dr. Z) Ya wanna hear a
secret?

DR. Z
Sure.

CALEB:
Know why I gave you the grape sucker?

DR.Z
No, why?

CALEB:
Whenever I hurt and I feel like crying,
especially at night, a grape sucker
always makes things better. I thought
you might be able to use one.

Dr. Z is visibly moved by this interaction.

DR.Z
Thank you. I appreciate the advice.

CALEB:
We have a bunch of 'em at home. I
highly recommend grape.

DR. Z
Thank you, Caleb. My name is Clark
Zenetti.

Caleb reaches out to shake Dr. Z's hand.

CALEB:
I'm happy to know you. My mom says
you're a doctor.

DR. Z

(Looks a bit uncomfortable)
I was.

Caleb seems to have missed Dr. Z's comment but it wasn't
missed by the adults in the van.

CALEB:
My mom says that Jesus was the great
physician. That means doctor, ya know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DR. Z

Hmmm

CALEB:

I just know that Jesus will help you be a doctor again. I've been praying and he hears our prayers.

Dr. Z listens quietly.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

Do you know that Jesus loved children? Even when older people told the kids to go away Jesus told them to let them come to him, because he loves us.

DR. Z

Is that right?

CALEB:

Yeah. He told the big guys that they needed to be like children so they could see Heaven. Like a bunch of transformers, I guess. Can you believe that? A bunch of big guys needed to be like me.

Caleb chuckles as he considers the thought of what he just said.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

Would you like to be a kid again?

DR Z

I would love to be a kid again.

CALEB:

Jesus can help you, ya know. Would you like for me to pray for you?

DR Z

If you want to.

Caleb bows his head to pray.

CALEB:

Jesus, please help my friend, Dr. Spaghetti, not to hurt anymore and turn him into a transformer so he can see Heaven..

Caleb looks up from his prayer:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CALEB: (CONT'D)

That would be sooooo cool! I'll keep praying for that!

Dr. Z. Wipes tears from his eyes.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

I'm glad Jesus loves us. Aren't you, Dr. Spaghetti?

MOM:

Honey, I believe he said his name is Dr. Zenetti.

CALEB:

Yeah, Dr. Spaghetti.

DR. Z

(Glances at Mom and nods his head):
It's okay.

CALEB:

Hey, I just thought of something. No wonder you're my favorite friend. Spaghetti is my favorite food!

DR. Z

(To Caleb) I need a favorite friend, too, Caleb.

The van pulls up in front of Dr. Z's therapy facility. Mr. Don opens the door to assist him. Dr. Z still struggles with his legs but this time he acknowledges the driver.

DR.Z

Thank you, Mr. Don.

He holds up the sucker and acknowledges Caleb.

DR. Z (CONT'D)

And thank you, Caleb.

Mr. Don closes the door behind Dr. Z as the passengers watch Dr. Z make his way through the sliding doors and into the lobby. Mr. Don gets back into the van and he begins to drive.

MOM:

That was very thoughtful of you son.

CALEB:

Yeah. Jesus and Grape suckers always make things better.

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Time Passes. VIEW FROM OUTSIDE the MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION VAN as it moves to the curb to pick up Caleb and Mom. Dr. Z is clean-shaven and looks healthier.

INT. Of the van

DR. Z.

Don, I'm beginning to think a chauffeur is a lot like a therapist.

MR. DON;

I guess so. Except we're a lot cheaper.

DR. Z.

I wouldn't have believed it possible but these van rides have become the highlight of my week.

MR. DON:

Well, I don't think that has anything to do with me. Little Caleb sure is a bright spot in a dismal world, that's for sure.

The van stops gently to pick up Caleb and Mom. They load up as before but this time Caleb looks like he isn't feeling well and he is more quiet than usual. Mom looks exhausted. Mr. Don enters the van and begins to drive.

DR. Z

(Gently and with concern) How ya doing today, Caleb?

Mom looks worried.

CALEB:

I'm okay. I'm just tired.

DR. Z

You gave me some very good advice the other day.

CALEB:

I did?

DR. Z

Yes you did. Those grape suckers were the best medicine I've ever had.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

CALEB:

I knew you would like 'em. I needed a couple last night but Mom said I could only have one. We prayed and Jesus helped me.

Caleb drifts off to sleep.

DR. Z (TO MOM)

How has he been?

MOM:

Well, things are progressing and the doctors felt it was time to increase the treatments. It's been a tough week.

Suddenly, Caleb's body begins to jerk and seize. His mom is helpless in the situation but Dr. Z goes to work immediately with the skills of his profession.

DR. Z

Don, drive to the Children's Hospital emergency room as carefully as you can. We're only a couple of miles away.

DR. Z (CONT'D) (TO CALEB)

Caleb, can you hear me?

This is repeated a few times until he gets a response from Caleb. Caleb mumbles incoherently.

DR. Z (CONT'D)

Caleb, can you hear me?

CALEB:

Huh, yeah.

DR. Z

Do you know who I am?

CALEB:

(Focusing on Dr. Z's face) You're my best friend.

DR. Z

Yes I am, buddy. Do you know where you are?

Caleb moves his eyes around weakly to take in his surroundings.

CALEB:

With Mommy and Mr. Don.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

Mom holds Caleb's hand and fights back the instinct to panic.

MOM:

I'm here honey. We're on our way to the hospital. Dr. Zenetti is helping us.

DR. Z: (TO MOM)

His vitals are good. We just need to ride this out for a few minutes and we'll be at the hospital. Who is his doctor?

In hospital waiting area near emergency room. Dr. Z is seated at a table with a cup of coffee where he dials his cell phone. He shows frustration as the call goes to voice mail.

DR. Z

Hello Jim, this is Clark Zenetti. I have a favor to ask. We both know my specialty is not pediatrics and you know that I've always made it a point not to interfere with specialty protocols. But I have some ideas that may help with your patient, Caleb Mathews. He's being treated in the Children's Hospital emergency room right now and I'm here with his mother. I know how busy you are, believe me, I know. But I would be most grateful if you would call me as quickly as possible. You've got my number. And Jim. Caleb Mathews is my best friend.

Dr. Z turns off cell phone. He wraps his hands around his cup of coffee and bows his head as if in thought or in prayer. He rubs his eyes then struggles to get up from the table when his phone rings.

DR. Z (CONT'D)

Hello, Jim. Thank God you called.

FADE OUT

The van is moving down the street with Mr. Don and Dr. Z inside. They pull up to the curb to Caleb's stop as before. The enthusiasm is high as Caleb is back after one month away due to different therapies. Dr. Z can hear garbled conversation outside the van, but this time he is looking on and waves to Caleb and Mom. Everyone boards as before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

CALEB:

Well, here we are at last!

MR. DON:

We sure did miss your bright smile,
Caleb.

CALEB:

Mr. Don, did you know that Dr.
Spaghetti has a really cool doctor
outfit? It's kind of like he did a
super hero quick change or something.

MR. DON:

Is that so.

CALEB:

It really is true! Just ask my mom,
she'll tell ya.

MOM:

Yes, that's absolutely true. Caleb
hasn't felt this well since the therapy
started over a year ago. And he's
actually sleeping through the night.
And he's able to eat again.

(TO DR. Z)

Thank you Dr. Zenetti.

CALEB: (INTERRUPTS)

My doctor says Dr. Spaghetti is really
smart, that's why he let him hang out
around the hospital.

There is a chuckle from the adults in the van.

CALEB: (TO DR. Z.) (CONT'D)

And we're both feeling better, huh?

Dr. Z nods

CALEB: (CONT'D)

See, I told you Jesus hears our
prayers!

DR. Z

Yes, you did. Oh, I almost forgot
something. See, I'm not that smart
after all!

Dr. Z pulls a children's gift bag out of his book bag and
hands it to Caleb. Caleb opens it excitedly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

CALEB:

Wow! Look Mom, it's "Awesomest" Prime,
the greatest transformer of all time!

Caleb plays with the transformer as Dr. Z helps him figure it out.

CALEB: (CONT'D)

Thank you, Dr. Spaghetti! One day I'm
gonna transform into a super hero.

Caleb gives Dr. Z the biggest hug that he possibly can while sitting in the van.

DR. Z (WITH EMOTION)

You already are one, Buddy. You
already are.

FADE OUT:

Time has elapsed. View of the exterior of the Van as it pulls up outside Dr. Z's therapy building.

CUT TO:

View interior van where only Mr. Don and Dr. Z ride quietly. Mr. Don exits the van to assist Dr. Z. Dr. Z's crutches have been replaced with one cane. He moves more easily with little to no assistance from Mr. Don. They shake hands somberly as if comforting each other. Dr. Z walks through the sliding doors, as before.

CUT TO:

Int: expansive lobby of the medical building where hundreds of patients and medical personnel are moving about. Patients are in various levels of rehab, from mild to severe. We see Dr. Z coming through the entrance.

Dr. Z pauses and looks around the lobby as if with a new set of eyes. For the first time he sees the human suffering. He spots a wheel chair bound man sitting alone in a corner. The man is about 70 years old, with a defeated demeanor and extremely worn physical appearance with military tatoos on his arms and a Vietnam Military Service ball cap on his head. He is using an oxygen tank. Dr. Z takes a seat by the man.

DR. Z (CONT'D)

I want to thank you for your service.
I'm Clark Zenetti.

A beat

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

DR. Z (CONT'D)

Would you like a sucker? I have it on good authority that grape suckers are the best medicine when things get tough. That and a heartfelt prayer.

Dr. Z holds out a bag of suckers. The veteran eyes the candy and takes one.

VETERAN:

I'm Bill.

DR. Z

I'm glad to meet you, Bill. May I pray for you?

Bill considers the grape sucker that he holds between his worn fingers and looks at Dr. Z with a grateful weariness.

VETERAN:

Yes. Thank you.

They pray together.

END