

## Christmas at the Movies: Believe Again

Dr. John Carmichael

[Luk 1:37-38, 45 NASB95] 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. ... 45 "And blessed [is] she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

[Mar 9:17-27 NASB95] 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him [to the ground] and he foams [at the mouth,] and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not [do it.]" 19 And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he [began] rolling around and foaming [at the mouth.] 21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 "It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23 And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." 26 After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and [the boy] became so much like a corpse that most [of them] said, "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

- At Christmas, Heaven declared what Jesus would later preach: Nothing is impossible with God, and all things are possible to those who believe. God didn't ask Mary to understand; He asked her to believe. And when she believed, the impossible entered the world. That same God is still asking His people to believe again.
- Play Polar Express clip: the moment when the boy finally hears the bell after choosing to believe.
  - In the story, belief didn't change the bell — it changed the boy.
  - The sound was always there, but faith opened his ears.
- Jesus teaches the same truth in Mark 9:23.
  - Mark 9:23 is spoken in a moment of desperation; a father crying out for his child, unsure if Jesus can help.
  - The issue is not whether God is able; the issue is whether we will believe again.
  - Jesus shifts the focus from God's ability to human belief.
- God is calling His people back to faith; not childish faith, but Biblical, obedient, Spirit-filled believing.

**From these two stories, what can we learn about how to believe again?**

**Here are four powerful truths about learning to believe again.**

### **I. THE QUESTION IS NOT GOD'S POWER, BUT OUR BELIEF**

- a. Jesus responds, "If You can?" correcting the father's doubt.
- b. The Greek construction emphasizes certainty: God's power is never in question.
- c. Faith is not convincing God to act. It is positioning ourselves to receive.
- d. [Jer 32:17 NASB95] 17 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,

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- e. [Luk 1:37 NASB95] 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."
- f. Application: Stop questioning God's ability; examine your expectancy. Speak aloud: "God is able, and I choose to believe." Bring areas of doubt to Jesus honestly; faith grows where truth is spoken.

### **II. BELIEF IS A CHOICE MADE IN THE MIDST OF STRUGGLE**

- a. The father later cries, "I believe; help my unbelief!"
- b. This reveals a powerful truth: Faith and weakness can exist at the same time.
- c. Belief is not the absence of struggle. It is the decision to trust anyway.
- d. [Heb 11:6 NASB95] 6 And without faith it is impossible to please [Him,] for he who comes to God must believe that He is and [that] He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
- e. [2Co 5:7 NASB95] 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight
- f. Application: Faith is not a feeling. It is a decision. Choose to believe even when emotions lag behind truth. Pray: "Lord, help my unbelief; strengthen my faith."

### **III. FAITH OPENS YOUR EARS TO HEAR GOD AGAIN**

- a. In Scripture, hearing and believing are often linked. When faith rises, spiritual perception sharpens.
- b. Mary's faith believed what she heard from God.
- c. Just as the boy heard the bell after believing, faith opens the ear of the heart.
- d. [Isa 55:3 NASB95] 3 "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [According to] the faithful mercies shown to David.
- e. [Jhn 10:27 NASB95] 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;
- f. Application: Silence fear and doubt so faith can hear clearly. Expect God to speak through His Word, His Spirit, and His peace. Declare: "I hear the voice of the Lord."

### **IV. BELIEVING MAKES ROOM FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE**

- a. "All things are possible" does not mean all things are automatic.
- b. It means faith creates access to God's miraculous power.
- c. Faith does not limit God, however unbelief limits what we receive.
- d. [Mat 17:20 NASB95] 20 And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.
- e. [Mar 11:24 NASB95] 24 "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be [granted] you.
- f. Application: Identify what seems impossible in your life right now. Present it to God with expectancy, not resignation. Thank God in advance — faith praises before it sees.

- **Faith awakens the heart, opens the ears to God's voice, and makes room for the impossible.**
- **The bell was always ringing. Belief allowed it to be heard.**
- **He is asking His people a question: Will you believe again?**
- **Faith makes room for miracles.**