

Christmas at the Movies: How the Grinch Got His Heart Back

Dr. John Carmichael

[Eze 36:26 NASB95] 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

- **Grinch 1 video.**
- Grinch Recap: The Grinch lives bitter and isolated on the mountain above Whoville. His heart is "two sizes too small." He's irritated by the joy, singing, and celebration of Christmas. He decides to steal Christmas: the gifts, decorations, food. Only to discover that even without the stuff, the Whos still have joy. In that moment, his heart changes: "grew three sizes that day."
- This is more than a kid's story. It's a picture of what sin, pain, and disappointment can do to our hearts, and what Jesus came to heal.
- Many people come into the Christmas season: Hurt, cynical, disappointed, grieving, resentful. They smile on the outside but are closed off on the inside.
- But the God of the Bible specializes in heart surgery (Ezek 36:26).
- "Holy Spirit, tonight grow our hearts; soften what's hard, heal what's broken, and fill us with the joy of Jesus again."

What it involved when God changes our hearts?

Here are four powerful truths about God changing our hearts.

I. A SHRUNKEN HEART: HOW HURT AND SIN TURN US INTO GRINCHES

- a. The Grinch isn't just a character out there; he's a condition in here.
 - i. A Heart that's Been Hurt
 - ii. The Grinch is bitter, isolated, and angry, but underneath is pain and rejection.
 - iii. Many people: Have been betrayed, rejected, abused, overlooked. Start to say, "I'll never trust again," "I'll never love like that again."
 - iv. [Pro 4:23 NASB95] 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it [flow] the springs of life.
 - v. [Heb 12:15 NASB95] 15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;
- b. Sin and Self-Protection Shrink Our Hearts
 - i. When we respond to hurt with: Resentment, unforgiveness, self-protection, pride...
 - ii. Our heart gets tough and small.
 - iii. The Grinch is suspicious of joy, just like some people are suspicious of church, worship, and love.
- c. Ask heart-level questions: "Where did your heart start to shrink?" "What moment, what disappointment, what betrayal made you say, 'Never again'?"
- d. Admit to God where you've hardened your heart. Stop justifying your bitterness, bring it into the light.
- e. Tonight, Jesus wants to start enlarging your heart again.

II. THE SOUND HE COULDN'T STAND: JOYFUL PRAISE EXPOSES THE HEART

- a. The Grinch hated the sound of Whoville's singing, but that sound was actually his invitation to healing.
 - i. The "Noise" of Joy. The Grinch isn't first mad about presents; he's mad about the singing and joy.
 - ii. Likewise, people who are hurt or bound by sin often: Get irritated by praise and worship. Roll their eyes at joy, testimonies, or Spirit-filled celebration.

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- iii. [Psa 100:1-2 NASB95] 1 A Psalm for Thanksgiving. Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.
- iv. [Act 16:25-26 NASB95] 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.
- b. Worship as Holy Confrontation
 - i. Spirit-filled praise does at least two things:
 - 1. Reveals what's in the heart.
 - 2. Releases God's presence and power.
 - ii. The devil hates worship; so does the Grinch-heart.
 - iii. That irritation some feel in the presence of God is often conviction, not just "preference."
- c. Instead of shutting down in worship, lean in. Open your mouth. Lift your hands. Sing even if you don't 'feel' it."
- d. When we worship, we're not just singing songs, we're letting God expand our hearts.

III. YOU CAN'T STEAL REAL CHRISTMAS: JOY THAT SURVIVES LOSS

- a. The Grinch stole the stuff, but he couldn't steal their song. That's the difference between holiday cheer and Christ-centered joy.
 - i. When the Stuff is Gone. The Grinch takes: Gifts, trees, decorations, food, everything. But on Christmas morning, he hears singing: They still have joy, because their Christmas isn't in the stuff; it's in their shared love and celebration.
 - ii. [Hab 3:17-18 NASB95] 17 Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, [Though] the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls, 18 Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
 - iii. [Luk 2:10-11 NASB95] 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- b. Jesus Offers a Joy the Devil Can't Steal
 - i. The enemy may touch: Your money, your job, your plans, your traditions.
 - ii. But he cannot steal: The presence of the Holy Spirit, the finished work of Jesus, the hope of eternal life.
 - iii. [Jhn 10:10 NASB95] 10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have [it] abundantly.
- c. If all the extras of life were stripped away, would you still have something to sing about?
- d. Put your joy in Jesus, not in schedules, gifts, or family perfection.
- e. Too many have had things "stolen" in this season: loss, grief, divorce, financial difficulty, I declare over you: "The enemy can't have your song."

IV. WHEN GRACE BREAKS THROUGH: A HEART THAT GROWS THREE SIZES – Grinch 2 video.

- a. The turning point is when the Grinch witnesses joy, he can't explain, and his heart changes. That's what grace does.

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- i. The Moment of Revelation. The Grinch watches Whoville rejoicing with nothing. He realizes: “Maybe Christmas... doesn’t come from a store.” That realization melts his defenses; his heart grows.
 - b. God’s Promise: A New Heart and a New Spirit
 - i. [Eze 36:26-27 NASB95] 26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.
 - ii. [2Co 5:17 NASB95] 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, [he is] a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
 1. New creation language; not a behavior tweak but a heart transformation.
 - iii. That’s salvation and Spirit-baptism language: Not just “try harder to be nice,” but “be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
 - c. From Stealing to Serving, From Taking to Giving
 - i. After his heart change, the Grinch: Returns what he stole. Joins the community. Carves the roast beast. He becomes a participant, not a saboteur.
 - ii. That’s what Jesus does: Turns takers into givers, isolators into family, and bitter hearts into burning hearts of love.
 - d. Salvation – “Let Jesus give you a new heart.” Forgiveness – “Release the people who hurt you.” Reconciliation – “Let God restore relationships.” Spirit-filled Transformation – “Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and grow your heart for God and for people.”
- **Jesus came at Christmas not just to change our season, but to change our heart—to turn cold, wounded, Grinch-like hearts into hearts overflowing with His love, joy, and generosity.**
 - **Tonight, the Holy Spirit wants your heart to grow, not physically, but spiritually; to love God more, love people more, forgive more, and live with joy.**