

Christmas at the Movies: It's A Wonderful Life – I Want to Live Again

Dr. John Carmichael

[Jer 29:11 NASB95] 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

- We begin with a scene that captures the raw cry of the human heart, George Bailey on the bridge. He was overwhelmed and exhausted. Yet, though he had gotten his wish not to be born, he was shown just how important his life was. His prayer was simple and honest: "Lord... I want to live again."
 - Play "I want to live" clip.
 - Just as George cried out, 'I want to live again,' someone in this room is about to say the same, and Jesus is ready to respond.
- Many believers never say that prayer out loud, but their soul whispers it: "I'm tired." "I feel forgotten." "I don't see a future." "I've lost my strength."
- "In the United States, someone dies by *taking their life* approximately every 11 minutes." CDC, National Center for Health Statistics (2023)
 - Today, God is stepping into someone's story with hope, with purpose, and with life.
- Into that place, God speaks Jeremiah 29:11. Originally written to people who felt trapped, abandoned, and stuck in a future they didn't want. Yet, we see Apostle Paul and King David speaking to us about the importance of how to deal with overcoming despair of life.

What does God's Word speak to us about overcoming despair of life?

Here are three important instances of overcoming despair of life.

I. WHEN LIFE FEELS TOO HEAVY, GOD'S PROMISE STILL STANDS

- a. [Jer 29:11 NASB95] 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'
- b. Jeremiah spoke this to people in exile, people who wondered: "Is God done with me?" "Is this my new normal?" "Have I missed my chance?"
- c. The message was simple: Your situation is not the end of God's plan.
- d. [Isa 46:10 NASB95] 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';
- e. God says: "I have not changed My mind about your life."
- f. God's plan is not fragile; it does not crumble under pressure.
- g. Declare over yourself: "My story is not over. God's plan for me is still alive."
- h. Lay your disappointment before God—but hold tightly to His promise.

II. WHEN YOU FEEL CRUSHED, GOD IS STILL DELIVERING YOU

- a. [2Co 1:8-10 NASB95] 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came [to us] in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a [peril of] death, and will deliver [us,] He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us,
- b. Paul says he was "burdened beyond strength... despairing even of life itself," but then declares: "But God delivered us... and He will deliver us again."
- c. Paul, God's apostle, reached a moment like George Bailey. He felt he had no more strength. But that moment became a doorway for God's power.
- d. [Psa 34:19 NASB95] 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

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- e. Deliverance is not something God used to do; it's something He's about to do again.
- f. When you have no strength left, you're not disqualified; you're positioned.
- g. Pray: "God, deliver me again, restore me again, lift me again."
- h. God is not just delivering your situation; He is delivering you.

III. WHEN HOPE FEELS LOST, GOD WILL RENEW YOUR FAITH TO SEE AGAIN

- a. [Psa 27:13 NASB95] 13 [I would have despaired] unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.
 - b. The psalmist admits that without the hope of seeing God's goodness again, he would have quit.
 - c. This isn't about Heaven someday. It's about God's goodness in your lifetime.
 - d. [Lam 3:21-23 NASB95] 21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 [They] are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.
 - e. God is renewing your ability to believe again.
 - f. Hope does not deny reality. Hope declares a greater reality.
 - g. Speak by faith: "I will see the goodness of God again."
 - h. Hope is coming alive in places where you've stopped expecting anything to change.
- When life pushes you to the edge, God's promise, God's presence, and God's power still call you back into hope, purpose, and life.
 - George Bailey cried out: "I want to live again." And Heaven responded.
 - Maybe you're not on a bridge, but in your heart you've said: "I can't take much more." "I feel empty inside." "I don't know my purpose anymore."
 - God is saying: "I still have plans for you." "I am delivering you again." "You will see My goodness in your lifetime."
 - Heaven is not finished. Your story is not over. Life is still possible. Hope is still possible. Joy is still possible.
 - God is calling you back to life.