

Christmas at the Movies: Rekindling the Joy in Believing

Dr. John Carmichael

[Rom 15:13 NASB95] 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Luk 2:10 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;

- Before we open the Word tonight, I want to show you a short moment from Elf. It's a scene where everything seems to be falling apart: the sleigh won't fly, the crowd has lost its joy, and nobody believes anymore. But all it takes is one person choosing to believe, and everything begins to change. Clip from Elf.
 - In the scene we just watched, Buddy believes with a simplicity and sincerity that begins to change the whole atmosphere around him. A weary, discouraged crowd starts to lift their voices, and something impossible begins to move again. That moment reminds us of a deeper spiritual truth: joy and hope return when someone chooses to believe. And that is exactly what Paul is teaching us in Romans 15:13.
- Romans 15:13, where Paul shows us that joy doesn't come from circumstances, it comes from believing. Joy isn't childish, it's supernatural.
- It's what happens when a believer chooses to trust God. And it's what the Holy Spirit fills us with.
- As in the angels' announcement to the shepherds, this Christmas, we're going back to the well, to the God of hope, to rekindle the joy in believing.

How can I rekindle the joy of believing in my life?

Here are four truths from Romans 15:13 about rekindling joy in believing.

I. JOY BEGINS WITH KNOWING THE SOURCE: "THE GOD OF HOPE"

- a. Paul doesn't call Him "the God of judgment," "the God of distance," or "the God of disappointment." He calls Him "the God of hope." The God who: always has a future for you, always writes redemption into your story, always works for good even when you don't see it.
- b. Hope is not IN an emotion. Hope is IN a Person. Hope and joy are in His Presence.
 - i. [Psa 16:11 NASB95] 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- c. Hope is in what He has declared over you. [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.'
- d. Hope is not passive. Hope is prophetic. Hope declares, "God is not finished. There is more. My story is not over."
- e. Hope creates a landing strip for joy!
- f. Application: Declare out loud: "God is the God of my hope and I will walk in joy because of Him." "My future is secure in Him." Seek His Presence through worship and being alone with Him. Replace hopeless thoughts with Scripture-based declarations. Start praying with expectation instead of resignation.

II. JOY IS RELEASED "IN BELIEVING," NOT IN FEELING

- a. Paul says God fills us with joy and peace in believing, not: in perfect circumstances, in emotional highs, in holidays or sentiment.
- b. Joy comes when you choose to trust God again.

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- c. "Believing" is a present tense participle: a continual action. Joy is not a one-time touch; it flows through ongoing trust.
- d. [Isa 26:3 NASB95] 3 "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You.
- e. The natural result in believing is joy. [1Pe 1:8 NASB95] 8 ... but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.
- f. Faith is the doorway. Joy is the atmosphere on the other side. When faith rises, joy follows. When you say, "Yes, I choose to believe God again", you open yourself up to receiving the joy of the Holy Spirit again.
- g. Application: Ask yourself: "Where did I stop believing?" Bring God one area where disappointment shut you down. Pray: "Lord, I choose to believe again. Fill me with joy."

III. JOY AND PEACE COME AS A PACKAGE: "FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE"

- a. Paul uses the word "fill" (plēroō) — meaning: saturate, overflow, flood, to the brim
- b. "All joy and peace" means the full range: emotional joy, spiritual joy, relational peace, internal calm, Holy Spirit gladness
- c. This is more than happiness; it's Spirit-infused well-being.
- d. Joy is a result, a naturally occurring outcome, of the Holy Spirit in your life. [Gal 5:22 NASB95] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- e. When the Spirit fills you, He pushes out anxiety, heaviness, gloom, and despair.
- f. Joy is not the absence of problems. It is the presence of the Spirit.
- g. Application: Surrender any area of inner turmoil. Pray daily: "Holy Spirit, fill me with all joy and peace today."

IV. JOY OVERFLOWS WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS YOU

- a. "Abound" (perisseuō) means: to overflow, to exceed, to spill over, to have more than enough. Not are progressing in more. Gaining more.
- b. You don't just have a joyful hope, you overflow with it. This isn't emotional hype; it's Holy Spirit power.
- c. [Act 13:52 NASB95] 52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
- d. Joy and the Spirit always go together.
- e. When the Spirit fills you: your spirit lifts, your faith rises, your worship deepens, your perspective shifts
- f. A Spirit-empowered joyful hope becomes your atmosphere.
- g. Application: Seek a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Pray in the Spirit until heaviness breaks. Speak hope into every area that feels dead or delayed.

- **Joy is the supernatural overflow of a believer who trusts God, yields to the Spirit, and chooses to believe again.**
- Buddy the Elf believed, and his joy became contagious. In a childlike way, he reminds us of a spiritual truth: When believers choose to believe again, joy returns. And when joy returns, atmospheres shift.
- Romans 15:13 is your promise: God is the God of hope. Joy and peace flow through believing. The Holy Spirit fills you to overflowing.
- Tonight, God wants to rekindle "the joy and peace in believing" in you.