

When Your Christmas Spirit is Crushed

[TRACIE MILES](#)

Lee en [español](#)

“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.’” [Luke 2:10-11](#) (NIV)

“Mom, it just doesn’t ‘feel’ like Christmas.”

These were the words my young daughter spoke as she looked at me with a discouraged expression on her face. We were in the midst of the busy holiday season, but in her heart, it didn’t “feel” like Christmas at all.

She was no longer a little girl excitedly awaiting the morning she could open her presents while whirling through a carefree season of twinkling lights, Christmas trees, baking and shopping.

The magic of childhood innocence was gone, and the wisdom of adolescence had kicked in. But worst of all, our lives had been turned upside down when my marriage of 26 years abruptly fell apart just a couple months before the holiday season. Not only did I understand her crushed Christmas spirit, I shared it.

As much as we tried to carry out our normal seasonal activities, Christmas just didn’t feel the same for me or my three children. Our family didn’t look the same as it always had. There were more tears than laughter. More aching sadness than holiday joy. More new problems to handle, and less enjoyment of the old traditions we had all grown to know and love. More fear and less hope.

I hugged my daughter tightly and reminded her, and myself, that even though life was messy and painful in the moment, we needed to try to intentionally redirect our thoughts from our problems to the manger and remember the hope Jesus’ birth brings.

Together, we decided to focus on the all the blessings we still had, not just the ones we had lost, and find joy in the little things through the strength of Christ alone. We committed to hang on to hope and remember that Christmas spirit must come from Christ, not our external circumstances.

In the Christmas story, we read about this promise of hope, *“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord’”* ([Luke 2:10-11](#)). Most believers know this popular passage well, but in the face of great pain, suffering and adversity, we often forget the meaning, even at Christmas. Heartache, grief, pain or anger can easily cause us to lose sight of the fact that this is the season we celebrate God sending His Son to step into the mess of our lives so we can have hope and joy, no matter what.

This year has certainly not been easy for anyone with all the difficult events happening in our world. But maybe this year has been even harder because of personal situations.

Maybe you have experienced separation and divorce too, and not only is your heart broken, but you fear not being with family or children during the holidays.

Perhaps you've endured the painful loss of a loved one, and your holiday looks much different this year too.

Maybe the kids have all grown up and moved on, and your Christmas feels lonely and unfamiliar.

Maybe you've lost a job this year, and the stress of trying to afford Christmas at all feels overwhelming.

Whatever the reason, if your Christmas spirit feels crushed, and you're lacking joy and feeling void of hope, remember that although life continually changes, Jesus and His love for us never does. Redirecting our thoughts to focus on the hope and joy available to us because of His holy birth can restore the most broken spirit.

It's been five years since our lives drastically changed and since I had that teary conversation with my daughter. What I learned during that first difficult holiday season, and in the years that have followed, is that hope and joy have to come from who Jesus is all the time, not from a month on the calendar. Our level of Christmas spirit will always depend on where we are looking for it.

Dear Lord, You know the heaviness of my heart this Christmas. Please help me refocus on You and the fact that You sent Your Son to this earth as a baby so I could live with hope despite my circumstances. Refresh my Christmas spirit, and infuse me with the joy I long to have. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

TRUTH FOR TODAY: [2 Corinthians 4:18](#), "So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever." (NLT)