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"A Not-So-Happy New Year"

By
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What A new year is supposed to bring fresh starts and renewed joy, but for three people facing grief, illness, and uncertainty, the usual celebrations feel hollow. As their cheerful facades crack, they wrestle with the tension between faith and struggle, discovering that true hope isn't found in pretending everything is okay, but in trusting God through the hard moments. A raw, honest, and ultimately uplifting reflection on what it means to carry faith into the new year.

Themes: New Year, Holidays, Faith, Hope, Grief, Struggle, Trust, Resolutions, Renewal

Who Person 1
Person 2
Person 3

When Present Day

Costumes Casual clothes

Props None

Why Psalm 46:1, James 4:8

How A simple, direct-address piece that relies on strong delivery and genuine emotion rather than elaborate staging. The tone shifts from exaggerated cheerfulness to deep sincerity. Optional lighting changes can reinforce this shift. The actors can be memorized, or can read from a script/stand.

Time 3 minutes

Three actors stand downstage, spread apart evenly - **Person 1** is downstage right, **Person 2** downstage center, **Person 3** downstage left. They address the audience directly.

In this beginning part, the actors should be enthusiastic and over the top - think Old Navy holiday commercial happy.

Person 1: Happy New Year!

Person 2: Joy to the world!

Person 3: Cheers to new beginnings!

Person 1: New year, new me.

Person 3: This is going to be my best year yet.

After a beat, **Person 2** can't muster up their previous enthusiasm, and drops the cheerful facade. You could add a lighting change if that's possible for your set up.

Person 2: Guys, I can't do this. I'm sorry.

Person 1 and **Person 3** look at **Person 2**, shocked. Trying with all their might to keep their smiles plastered on.

Person 1: (between the gritted teeth of a forced smile) You're supposed to say "It's the most wonderful time of the year..."

Person 2: I know. I just can't. It's supposed to be a "Happy New Year," but my "new" this year isn't very happy. I don't want to pretend anymore.

Persons 1 and 3 process for a beat, then drop the facade as well. [Possible lighting change?]

From here on, the pace slows way down.

Person 1: Yeah, I know what you mean.

Person 3: Me too.

Person 2: I lost my mom *[or another family member]* a few months ago, so this season hasn't exactly been cheery. The only "new" thing in my life is a gaping hole and a sense of loss.

Person 1: My "new" is a healthy dose of chemotherapy and radiation.

Person 3: I got laid off and haven't been able to find a new job. I don't know how I'm going to pay my rent.

Person 2: Instead of going to holiday parties this year, I've been staying in and watching home videos of Christmases growing up. I miss my mom so much, and I wonder if I'll ever have another happy holiday.

Person 1: This year I was so sick, I didn't even have the energy to pick out a Christmas tree with my kids. It broke my heart. I keep thinking, "What if this was my last chance? What if I don't get another Christmas with my kids?"

Person 3: I try to put on a happy face for my family. I know I'm supposed to be strong for them, but I've just been running on empty.

Person 2: Sometimes I feel like in order to have real faith, I have to pretend like I'm okay all the time.

Person 1: But real faith is acknowledging the truth of what I'm going through, and acknowledging the truth of who God is.

Person 2: I know that God is strong enough to handle the weight of my pain - even when it's complicated. Even when it's messy.

Person 3: "God is our refuge and strength."

Person 1: "An ever-present help in trouble."

Person 2: My grief is heavy, but God is my refuge.

Person 1: My body is weak, but God is my strength.

Person 3: I am uncertain about my future, but God is my ever-present help in trouble.

Person 1: Come near to God, and he will come near to you.

Person 2: If you're carrying pain in this new year, like so many of us are, let God into your hurt through prayer and ask him for help in the difficult moments.

Person 3: So even if your new year isn't exactly happy...

Person 1: You can still experience a year of joy in the Lord.

Person 2: So anyway... I hope you have a... "New Year!"

Lights out.