

Why This Modern-Day Resurrection Is Pointing Hollywood Back to God

Over four years ago, John Smith's miraculous story of dying and coming back to life took the news media by storm. Many called it a modern-day resurrection. This year, that miracle became a movie, and I had the opportunity to interview Smith and his mother, Joyce, whose prayers brought him back to life. I was so impacted by their story that I wrote my "Perspective" column about it in our June/July issue of *Charisma* magazine.

I want to share that column with you today. I believe it will reignite the faith of some who may be walking in deep discouragement at this time. (I also talked about the column on my "Strang Report" podcast, which you can listen to by clicking [here](#) or on the podcast icon in this article.)

Read my full column below:

Several years ago, a young man came back to life after being dead for an hour—all because his mother cried out to God in desperate faith. John Smith had been underwater for about 15 minutes, and doctors couldn't get a pulse for another 45 minutes. But as soon as his mother, Joyce, prayed over him, his heart started beating again. Many call it a modern-day resurrection.

That miracle went viral on the news, and John's story was recently made into a major motion picture called *Breakthrough*, which at one point held the No. 2 spot at the box office, right after *Avengers: Endgame*.

There's an untold story here that should inspire every Spirit-filled believer. It's a miracle at many levels—a mom calls out in prayer, and her lifeless son comes back to life. The young

teenager says he wasn't right with God, so God gave him a second chance. The story at the time was covered respectfully by the news media. And a prophetic word to Sam Rodriguez led him to become the executive producer of a movie about it. It's an affirming portrayal of charismatic Christianity. Plus, not only is it a good story, but it's had success at the box office.

Joyce and her husband, Brian Smith, are longtime Assemblies of God members in the St. Louis, Missouri, area. They believe what most Spirit-filled Christians believe—that God is a God of miracles, and He answers prayers. Sadly, we see too little of that in this country. It's well-known these things happen often overseas but rarely in America. And when we testify to it happening, it's ridiculed both by nonbelievers and sometimes even by Christians who say miracles ended with the apostles.

Charisma covered the story at the time. But even before that, Sam had seen the newspaper reports and talked about it in sermons and on interviews for TBN. The Smith family heard about it and contacted Sam on Facebook to tell him even more of the story. Later, Sam invited them to tell the story on TBN, where they met Devon Franklin, the producer of *Heaven Is for Real* and *Miracles From Heaven*, who said he wanted to turn their story into a major motion picture.

A few years before, Cindy Jacobs had preached at Sam's church in Sacramento and gave him a word. Because they badly needed new facilities, Sam told me he was hoping the word was about much-needed finances. Instead, Cindy prophesied this: "Hollywood." Sam was stunned. He had no connection with Hollywood and doesn't approve of most of its movies. Yet the prophetic word came true.

I tracked down young John Smith and interviewed him on my "Strang Report" podcast, and it was one of the biggest episodes on the Charisma Podcast Network this year. Then I

contacted his mother for my other show, "In Depth With Stephen Strang." Listen to it to hear details about how the dramatic prayer happened, and how close the movie was to what really happened. (You can hear both by going to [and .](#))

Joyce described the events leading up to the moment she saw John lying dead on the hospital bed. She says she had a strange sense of peace as she approached her lifeless son.

"I thought I was being very quiet and demure," Joyce told me. "But according to (others), everyone in the ER could hear me when I prayed. And I did walk up to the end of my son's bed, and they said I very boldly and very loudly called out to God and the Holy Spirit that He would come and please bring me back my son.

Joyce told me that after John's heart started beating, she sat down, stunned, and thought, *This is surreal. I just watched God bring my son back to life.*

And it certainly was a miracle. After all, John was underwater for 15 to 16 minutes, according to official reports. And then he had no discernible heartbeat for the next 45 minutes.

"We have 310 pages of medical records and police reports to back up everything that we have put in and told in our story in the book, *Breakthrough*," Joyce says. "We wanted to make sure that people knew this was the truth. God did such an awesome job. It doesn't need to be embellished."

I highly recommend reading the book or watching the movie. I believe it will inspire your faith.

And remember, God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is no respecter of persons. You may be next to see a supernatural miracle when you need it most if only, like Joyce Smith, you have faith to believe.

[Click here](#) or scroll up to hear my podcast on this incredible

story!