GIVING THANKS AMIDST TROUBLE

Sunday, November 22, 2026 -- THANKSGIVING SUNDAY – GYM -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

HABAKKUK 3:17–19 English Standard Version (ESV)

> **17** *Though the fig tree should not blossom,*
> *nor fruit be on the vines,*
> *the produce of the olive fail*
> *and the fields yield no food,*
> *the flock be cut off from the fold*
> *and there be no herd in the stalls,*
> **18** *yet I will rejoice in the Lord;*
> *I will take joy in the God of my salvation.*
> **19** *God, the Lord, is my strength;*
> *He makes my feet like the deer's;*
> *He makes me tread on my high places."*

CONTEXT:

Who was HABAKKUK?

- An OT prophet of God who preached in **Judah** (the Southern Kingdom)
- Late 7th century BC (722-605 BC)
- During the Assyrian invasion and exile for **Israel** (the Northern Kingdom)
- Just before the Babylonian invasions and exile of Judah.
- A contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah; perhaps Daniel and Ezekiel

HABAKKUK'S spiritual setting:

- He preached to a nation (Judah) that was blinded by sin.
- They had false prophets that said God would not punish His chosen people.
- At first Habakkuk (like Job) questions God's justice.
- But by the end he is a changed person and learns to wait and trust in God.
- He comes to understand that God works all things out for **His glory**.
- He comes to trust in God's sovereignty and justice.
- Habakkuk comes to praise and thank God amidst His judgments.

Chapter 1 -- Habakkuk is troubled by what God is allowing. 1:2-4

- He sees worldliness, injustice and wickedness among his people.
- Then he sees God is raising up the Babylonians to spank Judah.
- He is alarmed! *Why let MORE wicked people judge God's people?!*

Chapter 2 -- God teaches Habakkuk to trust Him.

- He waits for God's answer. (2:1)
- God assures Habakkuk that He will fulfill His purposes and the wicked will be punished.
- God's answer includes one of the most impt statements in the entire Bible:
  Habakkuk 2:4 -- "*The righteous shall live by faith.*"

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Chapter 3 -- Habakkuk responds in WORSHIP!

- Notice that chapter 3 is poetry or a psalm/song.
- He remembers God's mighty works, deliverance and judgment in the past.
- He trembles at the coming calamity. (3:16)
- His circumstances haven't changed, but his understanding of God has deepened.
- Now Habakkuk makes one of the most remarkable statements of faith.

HELP FOR US FROM GOD'S WORK THROUGH HABAKKUK:

I. FAITH FACES THE REALITY OF TROUBLE. vs 17

Notice the progression… no figs/grapes, olives, grain, sheep/cattle.
Total devastation, hunger, starvation, life is lost.

Key Point: Biblical faith does not deny the reality of suffering.
Biblical faith recognizes the curse of the Fall.
(sin, sorrow, sickness, sadness, injustice, calamity, death)

II. FAITH CHOOSES TO REJOICE IN THE LORD. vs 18

Notice the ***Yet*** ! → *despite it all*
This is mind over matter. This is fact over feeling.
This is choosing joy over despair.
"***You have a choice to rejoice***."

HEBREWS 12:1-2

1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,* 2 ***looking to Jesus****, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who* ***for the joy that was set before him endured the cross****, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

GOD becomes the reward – not our circumstances.

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What was Christ's motivation to go to the Cross?

That He might <u>bring us to God</u> – for the <u>glory of God</u>.

1 PETER 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might <u>bring us to God</u>, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Mature faith learns to praise God in the midst of the trouble as an act of faith and an offering of praise and thanksgiving.

Powerful Examples from the New Testament:

- 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18 — *Rejoice always; give thanks in all circumstances.*
- ACTS 16:22–25 — Paul and Silas singing hymns while imprisoned.
- JAMES 1:2–4 — *Consider it all joy when experiencing trials of every kind…*

III. FAITH FINDS ITS <u>STRENGTH</u> IN GOD. vs 19

Again, GOD is <u>the reward</u>. Not better circumstances, ease or '<u>blessings</u>'.
Sometimes God **<u>delivers</u>** us *from* difficult circumstances.
At other times, He **<u>sustains</u>** us *through* difficult circumstances.

See the imagery of deer/hind!
A sure-footed animal on <u>dangerous terrain</u>.

So the LORD is our <u>strength</u> and <u>peace</u> in times of trouble.

We <u>REJOICE</u> and <u>GIVE THANKS</u> to God in every step
because Christ has made the way for us to life!