

**YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD****Habakkuk 3****(Read Habakkuk 3)**

**Intro:** She hurried to the pharmacy to get medication, got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys inside. The woman found an old rusty coat hanger left on the ground. She looked at it and said, "I don't know how to use this."

She bowed her head and asked God to send her some help.

Within 5 minutes a beat up old motorcycle pulled up, driven by a bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull rag. He got off of his cycle and asked, if she needed help? She said: "Yes, my daughter is sick. I've locked my keys in the car. I must get home. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?"

He said, "Sure." And walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the car was open.

She hugged the man and through tears said, "Thank You God, for sending me such a very nice man."

The biker heard her little prayer and replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison yesterday; I was in prison for car theft."

The woman hugged the man again, sobbing, "Oh, thank you, God! You even sent me a Professional!"

How God answers prayer is varied and our perception of it can be driven by faith or it can be driven by doubt. I'm sure the story I just related to you about a lady who locked her keys in her car is apocryphal, but it is an example of a woman of faith. She prayed with expectation she was rewarded with a professional.

Habakkuk prayed. He lifted his cry to God and God responded with a perfect solution. But Habakkuk responded with, "Now wait a minute Lord!" because he was concerned with God's solution. In fact he didn't think it was very perfect. And then God explained a few things and Habakkuk saw the perfection and we see his rebooting in progress.

Today as we reflect on what I just read from Habakkuk 3, we see that he has realized how perfect God's plan is and he erupts into a prayer song of faith and praise that proclaims that no matter what happens, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. In the process Habakkuk is rebooted. Let's look at it a bit. . .

**'Course he isn't safe. But he's good (v. 2)**

- One of Fiona's favorite movies is THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE. It's amazingly close to the book of the same title by C. S. Lewis. In the book Mr. Beaver is discussing Aslan with the Pevensie children who have stumbled into the land of Narnia through the old professor's wardrobe. If you are familiar with the book, you know that Aslan the Lion is the Christ figure in the story. One of the most powerful messages in the book is this short interchange where Mr. Beaver says:

*"Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion."*

*"Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he-quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"...*

*"Safe?" said Mr Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."*

- I thought of this interchange as I read the opening words of Habakkuk's song. Listen to it again,

*O Lord, I have heard the report of you,  
and your work, O Lord, do I fear.*

*In the midst of the years revive it;  
in the midst of the years make it known;  
in wrath remember mercy. (v.2)*

Here is what Habakkuk is saying, "I've heard about you Lord, and I'm scared to death. I've seen your work and it's fearsome. So, I'm frightened. BUT I KNOW YOU'RE GOOD! Please revive us!"

- David Guzik points out this great truth: *"The prayer of Habakkuk shows us that revival is a work of God, not the achievement of man. Notice the prayer: revive Your work. Often, my prayer is really "revive my work," but I must have a heart and mind for God's work, far bigger than my portion of it."* Spurgeon wrote, *"Shake off all the bitterness of everything that has to do with self, or with party, and now pray, 'Lord, revive thy work, and if thy work happen to be more in one branch of the church than in another, Lord, give that the most reviving. Give us all the blessing, but do let thine own purposes be accomplished, and thine own glory come of it, and we shall be well content, though we should be forgotten and unknown'"*

- Habakkuk’s prayer is also a personalized prayer we need to apply to ourselves. “LORD, revive me.” Do we pray that? Guzik makes a great point:

*“We too often blame the church for sin, corruption, laziness, prayerlessness, lack of spiritual power, or whatever – and we forget that we are the church. Pray for personal revival and diligently search yourself: Check your conduct – does your walk glorify the LORD as it should? How about your private conduct, which only the LORD sees?”*

*Check your conversation – is your speech profane or impure? Do you talk about Jesus with others?*

*Check your communion – are you living a growing, abiding life with Jesus?”*

That is how revival happens.

- Back to Habakkuk, as he prayed for revival he began to praise the God who brings revival. By now he knows that “If God is so great and powerful, how come I am going through a hard time?” is the wrong question. He knows, as Susan Pevencie discovered, “*Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.*”. Habakkuk assumes the attitude that “*humanity has it coming so I'm going to be faithful and praise you, and even rejoice in you!*” His rebooting continues as we see that what had been complaint becomes . . .

### **Habakkuk’s amazing statement of faith (vv. 3-19)**

- He recites the history of God. As he, with fear and trembling, anticipates the work of God, he does a review of God’s work in the life of his people. These were the times when God, literally and visibly, showed up. Like when he brought the plagues on the Egyptians and parted the Red Sea, and drowned a pursuing army. He recites how God led the Children of Israel with cloud and fire, and defended them from enemies. He details how the sun and the moon stood still. Al Enns says, “*Remember the experiences in the wilderness? The glory and the brightness of God were tangible. It often helps to look back and remember how God was there when special grace and wisdom were needed.*”

- When you’re worried about the future, look back and anticipate what God will do in the future. This brings to mind some familiar words:

*O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:  
Under the shadow of your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,  
and our defense is sure.  
Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting you are God,  
to endless years the same.  
A thousand ages in your sight  
are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.  
Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
soon bears us all away;  
we fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the op'ning day.  
Sing with me . . .  
O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home!*

- With trembling legs and quivering lips, Habakkuk, with newly acquired faith, proclaims . . .

**Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble (vv. 16-19)**

- Don't hear this wrong – these aren't words of defeat, they are words of faith tinged with joy. Yes! Joy!
- And so we have one of the most beautiful confessions of faith anywhere in the Bible from Habakkuk,

*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,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
I will take joy in the God of my salvation.  
God, the Lord, is my strength;  
he makes my feet like the deer's;  
he makes me tread on my high places.*

Habakkuk 3:17-19

- When I was at Messiah College James Earl Massey came to be the renewal week speaker. He was a powerful and riveting African American preacher, musician and professor of homiletics (homiletics is a big name for “preaching”). I didn't miss a single one of his messages because I couldn't stand the thought of missing out on what he could teach me as a growing Christ follower and a budding preacher. I'll never forget his statement of faith, when in one of his sermons, he proclaimed that if he heard from God just once in all his life that would be enough. I was blown away then and I still am, and I've often thought of that statement and wondered if I had that kind of faith. Now, as I have extensively studied this short book that is mislabeled as written by a “Minor Prophet”, I realize it's the kind of determination Habakkuk had when he proclaimed . . . *yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.* and it is the attitude we all must have as well. Just a quick aside about Habakkuk's reference to “feet like a deer”. I'm sure the translation here is something to put a picture in our mind of a sure footed deer. The KJV refers to it as “hind's feet” which gives a word picture of the red deer prevalent in England. But what comes to mind is this guy – and ibex, which is a wild goat that lives all across the Middle East, Northern Africa and Asia. He showed up in the eating area at Masada just north of the Dead Sea in Israel. He was no doubt pan-handling for some food, and you see it was paying off, but you can also see – he was at home on this wall. This is because that's nothing compared to what an ibex can actually do. God doesn't just help us to stand, he makes us surefooted to not just hang on, but to thrive. Enough of that. Let's finish.

**Conclusion:** The prophet courageously confronted God and God did not disappoint him. God responded with his perfect plan. It's the beauty of what happens when we talk to God – it doesn't change him, it changes us. Look at what God's response did for Habakkuk – he was transformed from a terrified and frustrated outsider to a front row observer of the unfolding of God's perfect plan. His complaints and assumptions were gone. His fear turned to joy and he looked with anticipation to what God would do in the future. I love how Jay Taylor ends his expository commentary on Habakkuk. Listen,

*“Habakkuk was transformed when he listened to and accepted God's word. The fifty-six verses of the book that bears his name reminds us that we must stop assuming things about God and allow him to speak to us through his word. A great transformation will take place when that happens. Habakkuk teaches us that!”*

You know what Taylor is saying to us there? I mean it's what we've been talking about now for four Sundays: Habakkuk was rebooted. Amen.