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[0 : 00] The Lord wants to speak to us today where we are. I believe that, and I hope you believe that as well.! Thank you, Evelyn, for serving us. Here is Habakkuk chapter 3, starting at verse number 16 and all the way down through verse number 19.

I hear, and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit beyond 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. To the choir master with stringed instruments.

Thank you. When the going gets tough, how does it end? The tough get going.

[1 : 06] When the going gets tough, the tough get going. And some of us are very good at this. We know how to grit our teeth, power through, and just keep moving forward.

And if we're not careful, success at surviving can quietly train us to believe a false gospel.

A gospel that says, I've got this. We subtly start to trust our own ability to hold life together more than we trust God.

But maybe the going gets tough, and you're not tough enough to get going.

Maybe you hit a wall, but you look around, and everyone else seems successful. Everyone else seems to be, you know, finding the gumption to keep moving forward.

[2 : 22] Everyone is handling all of the hard things life throws at them better than you are.

They're making it happen. Somehow continuing to find success. But you're barely breathing. And then discouragement whispers in your ear, something is wrong with you.

And shame leans in and says, I told you so. And if you listen long enough, discouragement hardens into despair.

Pride says, I've got this. Despair says, I give up. But both of these are answering the same wrong question.

Am I enough? They're both answering the same wrong question. Habakkuk shows us a better way.

[3 : 33] And I love this about the book of Habakkuk. He shows us this better way, but not at all from a place of security, a place of safety, from a safe distance, you know, like an omniscient observer just telling us what we should do.

But who hasn't actually walked the road? No, no. His circumstances are bad already. Habakkuk does not pretend to be strong.

And he does not give up when he feels weak. Instead, he clings to God in joyful hope. He trusts God.

Not just to bless the broken road, but to walk with his people along that road. And how his trembling turns into walking with God.

How joyful hope defies sorrow. This becomes the surprise of this ending portion of the book of Habakkuk. If we follow one repeated word through the whole book, we can watch the change happen inside of Habakkuk.

[4 : 58] The word is hear. The one that ends in E-A-R. How not ironic. It's the one that ends in ear. That one.

The word hear. In chapter one, Habakkuk cries out this way in frustration. Chapter one, verse two. Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear?

This is the voice of a man who feels ignored. This is the cry of a prophet waiting for God to speak.

In chapter two, after objecting that Babylon is more wicked than his own people, how could you ever use them to discipline us?

Habakkuk resolutely resolves to wait on God's response. Chapter two and verse number one. I will look out to see what he will say to me.

[6 : 04] I'm going to wait to hear from him. But then, after hearing from God that Babylon will be judged, that the Lord is reigning right now in his holy temple, something changes inside of him.

Habakkuk moves from objection to worship. And we see this in chapter three and verse two. Oh Lord, I have heard the report of you.

After Habakkuk turns to God in prayer, the first portion of chapter three, after he vividly recalls God's prior acts of judgment and deliverance for his people, we see this word one final time in verse number 16.

I hear. And my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound.

Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Seeing the Lord marching to destroy wickedness and to deliver his people has a dramatic physiological effect on Habakkuk.

[7 : 38] This is not weakness. This is what you would expect to happen when a finite human being enters into the presence of the infinitely holy God.

His body trembles. This word body refers to his inner organs. We might say something like, my heart is pounding. Or my stomach is in knots.

His lips quiver. It's the kind of trembling that happens when words feel far too small for what you have just seen.

Habakkuk is God's prophet. He's going to need to share this vision that he has just seen and he is overwhelmed by it.

Rottenness enters his bones. Bones keep us upright. They give our bodies structure and stability. But seeing God makes Habakkuk feel like his strength is collapsing from the inside out.

[8 : 58] His legs tremble. His knees, we might say, knock together. Every part of who he is is now destabilized. He is undone in the presence of God.

His circumstances have not changed. God's plan to discipline his people has not changed.

God's intention to judge wickedness has not changed. But this vision of the Lord changed Habakkuk. The revelation did not remove his fear.

It reordered his fear. And we see this in the second half of verse 16. Yet, yet, I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

This is crucial. Because back in chapter 2, you'll recall, God told Habakkuk to wait. It's chapter 2, and it's verse 3.

[10 : 15] Chapter 2, verse 3. In the middle of the verse, if it seems slow, wait for it. If it seems like Babylon hasn't come yet, wait for it.

It will surely come. It will not delay. What is he waiting for? God tells him, you wait for Babylon to come.

It's written in stone. They're coming. But now in verse 16, what does Habakkuk say that he's waiting for? What does he testify to?

Is he waiting for Babylon to come? No, no. He's looking past Babylon coming to God's judgment on wickedness.

Do you see that there in verse 16? He's waiting for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. He knows that the people of Judah will be invaded.

[11 : 26] Yet he is confident that God will deal with those invaders one day. And that's what he's waiting for.

Habakkuk grabs hold of God's promise about the future. Future judgment on those who invade and crush and destroy his people.

He grabs hold of that promise of future judgment and he pulls that promise into the present and he commits to living as though that promise is already true.

What is this? This is faith. This is faith. Faith treats future certainty as present reality.

Even though I am trembling from the inside out, even though I am quivering from head down to my toes, even though I am completely undone, yet I will quietly wait.

[12 : 50] Do you see the paradox here? A trembling body and a settled soul.

Both can be true. True. quietly waiting is not the absence of activity. It is the presence of security. Is Habakkuk afraid? Well, of course he's afraid. But his fear knows who it bows to.

faith. And that's faith. And then, in these next two verses, Habakkuk sings, sings, one of the strongest affirmations of faith in all of Scripture.

Look at verse 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.

[14:27] Verse 17 describes a total collapse, a total collapse for an economy that is based on agriculture and livestock.

Nothing could be worse than this. Fig trees, fig trees that don't blossom. It's not that they're not producing fruit.

they're not even producing the blossoms that would allow the fruit to come. Fig trees that don't blossom, vines that don't produce fruit, an olive crop that has failed.

This is not some kind of scarcity. This is systemic failure. No figs, no fruit, no olives, no grain.

The entire food supply disappears. The flocks are cut off from the fold. They are destroyed in the very place where they would have seemed to be most safe.

[15:26] The stalls are empty. There is no livestock. Food, gone. Economy, gone. Security, gone. This is not a bad season.

This is catastrophic devastation. This is the worst life could ever get. which is why verse 18 should shock us.

Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

Do you see why I say this is one of the strongest affirmations of faith in all of scripture? Habakkuk responds to the certainty of suffering by rejoicing.

Based on his circumstances, this is humanly impossible. but his joy is not anchored to his circumstances.

[16:42] His joy is in the God of his salvation. And this is a full circle moment because at the very beginning of the book, chapter 1 and verse 2, Habakkuk cried this way, O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not save.

And now, full circle, now he rejoices in God. God who does what? God who saves.

Judah is still wicked. Babylon is still coming. His circumstances have not changed, but he has.

The miracle is not around him to change his circumstances. The miracle is what happens inside of him.

He rejoices when it makes no sense to do so. And the reason for his joy is not a better situation. The reason for his joy is an unshakable source.

[18:00] God himself is the source of his joy. And when joy is anchored to God instead of to circumstances, the result is strength and stability.

Look in verse 19. God, notice in your Bible, this is just kind of a freebie. I think it's sort of interesting. Your translation probably has God, but if you look real closely, it has it in all caps.

This is God's covenant name, the way we normally see, sometimes see Lord in all caps. This is Yahweh, Yahweh the Lord, Yahweh Adonai, God, the Lord is my strength.

He makes my feet like the deers. He makes me tread on my high places. And then Habakkuk says, we should sing about this.

To the choir master with stringed instruments. Do this one on the strings. Accompany this one with strings. If God promised peace peace and prosperity.

[19:30] Trusting him when life is hard would be easy. But Habakkuk accepts that he may never see peace or prosperity again.

and yet he sings that the Lord is enough for him. And notice it is not because the Lord gives him strength.

Do you see that in your Bible? He sings that the Lord is enough because the Lord is his strength. strength. This is a different kind of strength. Remember this confession follows immediately after the collapse of everything that supports life.

No figs, no fruit, no grain, no sheep, no livestock, no economy, no security. Everything is gone and yet Habakkuk is singing because his strength comes from God not from within himself.

[20:45] God is his strength. When God is your strength, there is no room for pride.

You don't have to grit your teeth and power through and get going with all of the other tough people.

Not when God is your strength. strength. You don't have to manufacture strength.

Your strength is God. Your circumstances may be truly awful.

Perhaps the worst circumstances you can imagine. your heart may pound. Your stomach may ache. Your lips may quiver. Your knees might knock together. You may feel like your stability is collapsing from the inside out. You may be tempted to surrender to despair.

[21 : 54] Don't. God is your strength. Cling to this unshakable hope.

God's salvation is not merely rescue from danger. Not merely rescue out of danger. It's not primarily deliverance from the hardship of this life.

God's salvation includes preservation right on through that suffering. Do you see that? Do you believe that?

That God's salvation is there to take you right on through the suffering? God may not make the road less broken.

But he will give you feet that are able to walk that broken road. And he will walk that road with you.

[23 : 18] This world can feel like a very dark very hopeless place. Sin has corrupted everything.

We feel it, don't we? We feel that. Wickedness is pervasive. You read the news, you scroll social media, you go down that rabbit hole, that rabbit trail that you should not go down, but you go down it anyway, and you begin to think, this is truly awful.

It can't possibly get any worse than this, and then it does. Habakkuk knows that feeling.

Jesus did too. In the garden, he prays for deliverance.

If there is another way, then let's do it that way. But if not, then your will be done.

[24 : 25] What response did Jesus receive? Silence. On the cross, in the dark, he suffers alone as a substitute for his people's sin.

And at the end of those three dark, lonely hours on the cross, he cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And again, brothers and sisters, heaven is silent. If there was ever a time you would expect the father to respond, this is it.

He has borne up under the judgment that our sin deserved. And yet heaven is silent.

But after calling out with a loud voice, it is finished. What does Jesus say?

[25 : 38] Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

That's faith. Silence in the garden. Silence at the end of the three dark hours. He is suffering alone. And yet, at the very end, to the last, he believed the father. He trusted the father. And he commits his spirit to the father.

Who he believes is still hearing him despite the silence that he receives back. Jesus knows that feeling of this is awful.

it can't get worse. And then it does. Jesus shows us that faith does not deny fear.

[26 : 48] Faith outlasts fear. Faith fear exists. But faith persists. And because the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is now at work in us, we can follow his example.

We can follow his example and discover joyful hope that defies sorrow. Let's follow Habakkuk's three practices for trembling faith.

First, name your fear. name your fear. This is what we saw at the beginning of Habakkuk. Ask God honest questions.

Pray without editing. Journal with this prompt. I am afraid that or I am scared because and then take that to God.

Faith is fear that knows who it bows to. So name your fear and then bring it to God. Second, claim God's promises.

[28 : 09] Write out a verse of scripture and put it where you can see it all the time. Put it on your phone lock screen. You will see it 50 times a day. Put it on your phone lock screen.

Put it on the windowsill in front of your sink. Some of you may see that a dozen times a day. Put it on your car dashboard if that's where you spend lots of time. Write it on a sticky note and put it next to your monitor.

Stick it to your monitor at the office. Read that verse often. Memorize it. Say it out loud. Replace mental emotional spirals with claimed promises.

Here are two of my favorites right now for this season of life from Isaiah chapter 40. But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not be weary. They will walk and not faint. And from Philippians chapter 4.

[29 : 19] Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything. But in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God.

And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Fear shouts at us. Fear shouts loudly. Fear shouts often. Faith responds to fear with God's word. Claim God's promises and finally take a step in God's strength. Faith doesn't mean waiting until you feel settled because you may never feel settled again.

Faith takes the next step. Make that phone call that feels impossible. Show up to the meeting that makes you feel anxious.

[30 : 31] Keep serving. Keep praying. Keep parenting. Keep loving your neighbors. Keep being bold with the gospel. Keep engaging in the good work of discipleship.

watch God transform you as you commit to walking step by step with him through circumstances that seem impossible.

Maybe it's an unexpected diagnosis. Maybe it's a broken relationship. Maybe it's a lost job. Maybe it's financial hardship. Maybe it's depression and loneliness.

Watch God transform you as you walk step by step with him. Friends, this is the weight room of faith. You know, this is the weight room of faith.

This is where our faith is being exercised and tested and strengthened. This is where faith is trained.

[31 : 41] what if instead of asking why is this happening to me, we asked instead what strength is God giving to me?

What strength is God working out in me? Maybe it's patience. Maybe humility. Maybe empathy. Maybe contentment. Maybe self-control is being worked out in you when suffering shows up. ask what muscle is God training?

Children, young people, if I could summarize the book of Habakkuk, I would offer you this. When life feels scary, remember that God is big.

And when you feel weak, remember that God is strong. And when you don't understand what is happening, remember that God knows what he's doing.

[32 : 49] So trust him. Trust him. Walk with him. Obey his word. And the God who held Habakkuk will hold you.

Habakkuk's prophetic burden anticipates an ultimate future day of distress and deliverance. Jesus, the coming one, as Hebrews tells us, will crush our adversary, the devil.

And he will eternally destroy the house of wickedness. And from that moment on, into days without end, we will be with the Lord, he will be our God, and we will be his people.

This was God's intention from the very beginning, that the earth would become a worldwide sanctuary filled with worshipers who walk with him.

And one day, as Habakkuk says, chapter two, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus will reign forever.

[34 : 07] His glory will fill the earth and every redeemed person in every place will know him. Friends, this is not wishful thinking.

This is God's certain promise. joy. But until that day, we live as those who are discovering joyful hope that defies sorrow.

And that means we will cry very real tears and yet we will rejoice in the Lord. It means that we will hear diagnoses that make us afraid and yet we will rejoice in the Lord.

It means we will see more and more and more wickedness, corruption, and deceit and yet we will rejoice in the Lord. We may be marginalized.

We may feel like outcasts even among other church goers and yet we will rejoice in the Lord. We will feel the effects of sin on our bodies, our minds, our emotions, our world, and yet we will rejoice in the Lord.

[35 : 27] While we wait, God calls for both your faith and your faithfulness. Name your fear. Claim God's promises.

Take the next trembling step. By God's grace, through the power of our resurrected Lord and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

May God make us those righteous ones who live by faith. May God make us those righteous by faith.

May God make us those righteous ones who live who live by faith.