

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Honest With God

PART

4

TITLE

Yet I Will Rejoice

SCRIPTURE

Habakkuk 3:1-19



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Here we are. Hey, Providence family. Hope that you had a great weekend, and it's still the weekend, and so thank God for Sunday afternoon, and it is good to see your faces. It's always great to sing with you. If you're new here, we're thrilled that you're here. And I know that it's our honor. And so we hope that you are really encouraged while you are here. It has been a great week, and I hope it was for you. My prayer for us as a family of faith is that God would help us to not only feel grateful, but to be thankful, which are two really different things.

Sometimes, it's time to give thanks and we don't feel like it. Sometimes we are grateful, and yet we don't actually point it back to him. We're not thankful, we're not giving thanks. And so I hope that it was an amazing weekend for you. And if you're burned down and beat down by the world or what's happening in your life or your family, I pray that you have been able to still give thanks because God has been good to you. He's been good to all of us. I also know that in our family of faith here, there's just many, many families right now that are really beat down. And this book that we have been studying is so pertinent because many of us feel like we're encircled by something that is scary, whether it's cancer or whether it's sin or guilt, or whether it's injustice, or whether it's evil.

And so what I want to do first is just to pray for us as a family of faith. So if you would, let's bow and let's pray. Father, thank you for this amazing man. Thank you for Habakkuk. God, the man with a funny name whose book is buried in the end of the Old Testament that so few people actually take time to read their entire life here on the earth. And yet, it is such a treasure for us. It's such a gold mine. And we recognize it. As a family of faith, we recognize it. And God, I pray that its lessons, that its truths, Lord, that what it shows us about who you are and who we are and how we're supposed to live in your world, God, I pray that these truths would be etched deep within our heart, that they would be engraved deep within our heart, and that even for those right now who don't feel encircled by pain or injustice, God, that they are, would you help them to remember?

Remember Habakkuk. To pull it back out and to be encouraged by what he said, what he wrote, what he did, his example to us. But I do pray for the families here at Providence, for those individuals, for the singles, for the marrieds, for children, for parents that are burdened with sickness, that are burdened with sick children, in particular for the two families who have little ones in the hospital now. We pray, God, for your grace upon them. Would you protect and provide healing for their little bodies? Would you give grace to their families, for their parents? Give them wisdom.

We also pray, father, for those that are bereaved. Father, for those in our family of faith who recently lost family members. Know one this weekend. But I know many that this was the first Thanksgiving without a loved one, because they died this year. And I pray, God, that you would give a comfort to people that as they look for somebody to lean upon, I pray that you would prove yourself strong on their behalf. I pray, father, for those who feel trapped under a mountain of debt, financial debt. I pray, God, that you would liberate them this year, that you would help them to take the necessary steps towards freedom.

I pray, Father, for those that are under that mountain of guilt, that you would help us to see, God, that there is forgiveness in Jesus Christ. And God, I also pray for those whose families is just simply not a warm place, it's not a safe place. That maybe even Thanksgiving itself was just full of strife and maybe some people who are here right now in this building don't want to go home because of what awaits them at home, that relationship, that child, that wife or husband or parent. And God, I pray for your grace. Would you do the miracle in our heart and help us to see that we have been forgiven much? And would you help us to be able to extend that forgiveness to each other?

And in doing so, that we would be able to experience peace, peace within our homes, peace within marriages, peace within our children and our parents. So God, we look to you in faith in all of these areas, and for every other burden that I didn't mention, I pray, God, that you would satisfy us with your steadfast love. As we read this final chapter, God, would you use this man's experiences, would you use his words, would you use what he wrote for us and what you have preserved for 25 hundred years to be able to encourage us today? Thank you for Habakkuk. I pray that you would speak through weakness now as we read and study what you wrote through him. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So we're in chapter three. So if you want to head there, there's lots of Bibles in all the seats near you, so if you don't have one, you can turn ... I know it's not the easiest book to find in the Old Testament, so if you need help, there's actually a little page at the very front of the Bible, and it actually tells you the very page number that it will be on. But it's a gold mine. And it's a gold mine because it teaches us something that everyone of us needs to learn while we're here on the earth, and that is how do we survive and possibly thrive when we feel encircled by either unfairness or injustice or evil or guilt or sin or something that's simply not right? What do you do? What are we supposed to do when we're seeking to walk with the Lord, and we look around, and everywhere around us, it just seems like that we're surrounded?

It's an interesting thing, this man, he felt ... He felt this way. He felt encircled by great injustice, great evil. And so what he did was he joined a whole chorus of faithful remnant people, faithful people to God, and they began to pray. And they began to pray for some kind of spiritual ... Almost like, "God, would you just visit us? Would you lead us to repentance?" And amazing thing happens is that's exactly what took place. For a brief time, they experienced this spiritual awakening where people began to literally part with their idols and part with their sin.

And he was so encouraged by this, and then the bottom dropped out. And they went back to their idols and they went back to their sin at a pace that was even quicker, more passionate than before. And he simply erupts. In the very beginning in the book, he looks and he goes, "God, I don't know what to do, so I'm coming to you." And he says, "I'm preaching and I'm praying, and all around I see injustice everywhere. Why are you idol? Why are you just sitting there? Why won't you get up and help us? The whole culture is in absolutely rebellion to you. It's in decay. Even the justice system is paralyzed because people and the justices are so lawless."

And God responds to him in an amazing way, and he says, “You know what? I am doing something. I’m not idol. But what I’m about to tell you, you’re probably not even going to believe, and you’re not going to want to believe it. You think I’m idol. I’m not idol. This is what I’m doing. I’m raising up the Babylonian empire. You know the ones, the blood-thirsty, evil, ruthless, violent Babylonians. And I’m going to have them come. I’m raising them up with my hand and I’m going to bring them to your people that you’re praying for, that you’re so torn up about their evil, and I’m going to strengthen them to conquer my people, to exile my people, and to discipline my people to teach them that their hope cannot be in idols anymore.”

And Habakkuk is like, “All right, is there a plan B? Is there something else we could go with here?” He’s absolutely shocked, he’s dumbfounded. And the reason is he says, “Wait a minute, how is it even possible? Your hands are so holy. You can’t even be near evil. Your eyes are so pure, you can’t even look upon evil. You’re so different, and you, with your hand, how can you utilize world-renowned evil in order to sort out our evil?” And God responds to him again.

And he says, “Listen, Habakkuk, I know that it’s so hard for you to understand, and I know you’re praying, I know you’re seeking, I get it. I know it’s hard. It’s so hard. And the reason it’s so hard is because my ways are so far superior to your ways. You simply don’t understand what’s happening, but what I’m telling you right now is this. Do not sit in judgment of me. Trust me. Wait on me. Because when I finish utilizing this evil people Babylon in order to sort out the evil in my people, I promise you, on the basis of my wrath, righteousness, and justice, I will sort out theirs.”

And this is what we looked at last week, we get to Habakkuk three, and he does something that, frankly, even to me, I look at it and I’m like, “That’s …” It’s so odd, there must be a purpose behind it. And you say, “What’s so odd?” Well, he starts singing. Chapter three is a song. I don’t know if you like musicals. I’m okay with musicals. But every now and then, it just strikes me with, “This is just not real life,” right? You have two people, they fall in love, their five inches away, their talking, and all the sudden, one of them, without any warning at all, just starts belting out a song. You think, “What are you doing right now? Why?”

But that’s not what’s happening here. You see, for two chapters, he’s described hopelessness in his heart, and the reality is this, is that people who are hopeless within their heart can never finish a song. So what it indicates is that he’s no longer hopeless. Oh, he’s burdened, and he’s heavy-hearted, but he’s not hopeless. His heart is not cold, it’s not numb anymore, God has done something in his life, and now what he wants to do is write it down, and you notice what it says in verse one. It says, “A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigionoth.” That word that we really don’t know what it is. Nobody knows what it is, but we do know it’s a musical term. We’re not sure if it’s stringed instruments or if it’s a kind of music, but then if you notice the very end of this chapter, he says to the choir master, “With stringed instruments.”

Now, what's he doing here? He's saying this, "Look, I've learned something in the process. God has done something in the process. And now, not only am I putting that into practice, but I'm putting it to music so that the choir master can teach the people so that they too can practice it." And Providence, it's been recorded and preserved for 25 hundred years so that you and I can practice what Habakkuk has learned. And that is that we can rejoice in the Lord, we can sing to the Lord, even when we are in the pit.

And so look what he says, starting in verse two. He says, "Oh, Lord, I've heard the report of you and your work. Oh 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. God came from Teman, the holy one from Mount Paran." Let me just pause and say that's Mount Sinai, okay? "His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light, raised, flashed from his hand. And there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence and plague followed at his heels. He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. And the eternal mountains were scattered. The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways."

"I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble." Let me tell you about these two places. These were nations on the border of the Red Sea, and when the people, when the water parted and the people crossed the Red Sea, they trembled. He's remembering historical events. Let's keep reading, verse eight, "Was your wrath against the rivers, oh Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea? When you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation, you stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers. The mountains you saw and writhed. The raging waters swept on. The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high, the sun and moon stood still on their place. The light of your arrows as they sped at the flash of your glittering spear."

"You marched through the earth in fury. You thrashed the nations in anger. You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bear from thigh to neck. You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You trampled the sea with your horses. The surging of mighty waters, 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, though fruit ... Nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, 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." In 1851, a english missionary named Allan Gardener, along with a team of people, were shipwrecked off the southern tip of South America. And there, one by one, each person on his team, and then eventually he himself, though he was last, died of starvation.

A horrible reality, a horrible way to die. We know this because he kept a journal. Every day, he would write, even until the end. It's interesting that his journal was found near his body when they found all of them, and in the journal, near the end, he quotes Psalm 34:10 that says, "Young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." Here's a man who's starving to death. He recognizes and remembers a verse about how lions, how when they're hungry, is that they are relentless. They just have that want and so they're going to find it. But he says this, "But those who seek the Lord, they lack no good thing."

Now imagine for a second a man, he's literally buried everybody in his party. He's alone. He's starving to death. He's uncomfortable, and he has no hope of rescue. And the very last entry in his journal, what he did with his body was he actually placed himself near his boat. That's where they found him, near the boat so that his body could be recovered. He had buried everyone else, but he would not be buried. And so he tucked himself under the front of the boat, and he wrote one last journal entry, and in that entry, this is what he said. "Let my loved ones rest assured that I was happy beyond expression the night I wrote these lines. I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God."

How is it possible for us to be able to experience the soothing goodness of God at times like this? And what's interesting is that the secrets that Allan learned are the secrets that Habakkuk learned and recorded for us, and they're kept here for us. So I want to show you two things that God does, and I want to show you three things that we're supposed to do in response to what God does. The first is this, is that God enables us to rejoice in him when life is in the pits. You may be in the pit right now, and your pit may be deep, and it may be wide. But what we find here is that God enables us to rejoice in him, even during that place.

Now, how I'm going to teach this is from the last verse, and then we're going to go backwards, all the way through the chapter. And the reason I want to do that is because I want to show you first and foremost how does God's work culminate in Habakkuk's life. And so look at verse 19. He says, "God, the Lord, is my strength. He makes my feet like a deer." So this is a metaphor. "He makes me like a deer, and then he tells me what he enables me to do now that he's made my feet like a deer." He says, "He makes me tread on my high places." Now, you've seen TV. You've seen these mountain goats and deer-like animals, and they'll be on the side of mountain, just like this one. Sometimes they can just stand on what looks like a vertical edge.

They get up so high, and they get to places that are so dangerous and perhaps so frightening, and yet God has given them feet and the ability to tread on those places. And this is what he says. He goes, "Let me tell you the secret that I learned, and that is that God actually enables me and he enables you to be like a deer. You see, the heights are frightening places. They're dangerous places. One misstep and you fall off the edge and you die. But if our feet are made sure-footed," that's what he says, "He makes my feet like a deer, he makes my feet sure-footed on those heights." Well, if that's the case then, then heights actually offer us a vantage point, a perspective.

You can get on the edge of a mountain, at the very, very top, and two things take place. Number one, is you receive, if you feel like your feet are steady and safe and sure-footed, you receive an amazing perspective of everything that's around you. You can see a long way. But the other thing that you find is that when you get to that place, even though it's so perilous, and so frightening, and so high, when your feet are secure, you can actually feel this euphoric peace as if this is not normal. This is so big that it provides this peace that passes understanding.

Even in scary places, even in frightening places, and this is what God does. You see, God steadies our feet as he pushes our heart above our circumstances. This is what he's saying that he does. He takes our feet, he says, "I'm going to lift you vertical. I'm going to lift you up high above, to where it's frightening for you. It's even dangerous for you. But you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to steady your feet so that when you feel steady, even in high places, you're going to have perspective and you're going to have peace. You may even call it a pleasure."

Euphoric pleasure of standing in such a high place and yet having safety in that world. And this is what he says that God does. Now, the question is, "Wow, this is amazing. But when does this happen?" You see, most of us, we attribute the goodness of God to when our life feels good. We even talk about it that way. "You know, God's just been so good to me." And what he's saying here though is this. Is that all of this is happening in the midst of the anguish and not after the anguish. And this is the most amazing thing about the Lord, is he actually has the power to provide you a sense of his goodness at its highest levels of experience, not after anguish is over, but actually during it. And this is what we find here.

You see, Habakkuk has just learned that Babylon is going to come and conquer them, exile them. And he knows what happens to countries when that happens. And what he does is he's able to foresee, and the reason he's able to foresee is because he's seen it before. And then he's able to describe what he knows is a starvation-level social collapse, similar to what we saw in Europe after World War II. It's interesting that I looked yesterday, and I was all over online just ... I'm not sure the exact numbers, but in one place I saw that there was some 40 million people that actually died in the midst of the battle. And after the very last bullet was fired, an additional in between 10 and 20 million people died of starvation because they ruined Europe.

The fields were demolished. The graineries were demolished. The factories were demolished. Food sources were demolished. And you had all these people, now they enjoy peace but they have no food. And this is what he's seeing. When he talks about figs and grapes and olives and grain and flocks and herds, you have to understand, this was the food source. But it's not only the food source, it was the proof that there would be future food source. You notice the very first one in verse 17, he says, "Though the fig tree should not blossom." You guys know when a fig tree bears fruit? After the blossom.

What's he saying here? He's saying, "Not only do we not see any fruit, I don't see any fruit as I think about what's going to take place, but you know what? I also don't see the blossom." What does that mean? It means it's bad today, and it doesn't get any better tomorrow. You see, you and I, we get our food from a store. And if they run out of food, we just go, "Oh, the truck will be here tomorrow." So let me put in our terms. The grocery store is empty and the truck is not coming tomorrow, or the next day, or next week, or next month, because all the trucks have been ruined.

This is what he's talking about. This is an absolute social collapse, but it's also the investment portfolio. You see, they had money, they had dollars, but their money and dollars were not invested for gain. No, they invested their money into animals and grain because when they planted it, and when the animals liked each other, it created more grain and more animals. This was their economic system, and so what he foresees in the future, he's looking and he's saying, "I see a starvation level thing happening in our own culture after the war is over, and not only do I see that, but I see a total financial collapse."

And verse 16 tells us that he really felt this deep. Really deep. Here's what he says, he goes, "Look, I hear. I hear. I get it. I know it's happening. Now let me tell you how I feel." He says, "My body trembles." The word body right there actually is translated bowels. The English translation just isn't quite ... Well, it's a little bit more modest. But have you ever been so scared and you just, you got to go to the bathroom? That's what he's saying. He's saying, "My insides are ... " the word is womb. They're churning from the inside. He says, "My lips quiver." What's happening there? He's crying. He says "Rottenness enters my bones." It's like a tree that looks great on the outside, but on the inside it's rotten, so you only need to push it just a little bit and it falls over.

And he says, "My legs, they feel numb. The shock of what is about to take place, it causes me to feel numb." And yet, notice what he says. "And yet I will quietly wait." Now, we looked at this same word four weeks ago. And the word quietly wait actually means I feel this deep peace. I feel this deep sense of poise. Here he is, he's feeling the heights of being pushed up vertically, and yet his feet are absolutely firm, sure-footed, and all this is happening not after the anguish, but during it.

Recently I was on the phone with a friend who has a cancer situation. It's real, for sure. And it was interesting to hear him. And I thought about it yesterday as I was working on this. And this is what he said. He goes, "You know what I find is it's really scary and I cry a lot. And I don't know what's going to happen." He goes, "But I found something that's really interesting and that is that it this cancer, it has driven me to God. And oddly, as I've been driven to God, even though I don't know what's going to happen, I feel secure, near him, and I see things differently."

It's interesting what he said. He goes, "You know what? I taste food like I don't ever taste food. Now when I eat, I taste what ... I pause, I slow down. I recognize relationship. I see things differently. And I don't know what's going to happen." You see, our pain is supposed to drive us to God, where he then steadies our feet and pushes our heart vertically to be able to enjoy his goodness. Now, what I want you to know is that's possible for you. You may need it right now, you may need it a year from now. Whenever you need it, when you feel encircled by pain, or disease, or cancer, or injustice, or evil, you need to understand God has the power and he desires to steady your feet as he lifts you vertical. It's there for the taking.

The second thing that he does in this text is he reveals how we rejoice in him when life is in the pits. In other words, he shows Habakkuk how to do it, and then inspires him to write it down in records it within the scriptures, preserves it 25 hundred years so that we know how we are to rejoice in the Lord. And what we find here is this word rejoicing, it is not a feeling, it is a spiritual discipline that Habakkuk has practiced and now he's recorded to help us practice it. And what I want to do is I want to walk from the backward to ... From verse 18 to verse one. And I want to show you what he learned and what he recorded for us.

The first is this, is that we rejoice in the Lord by repeating our adoration. This is how we do it. We rejoice in the Lord during our anguish, and how we do it first is by repeating our adoration. Look at verse 18. He says, "I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation." Now why say something twice when you can say it once? He says the same thing, essentially, two different times. And the reason you say it twice is because the word, "Re," or the prefix, "Re," before the word rejoice, it means again. When I go play golf with Dave Owen, and I miss the ball, or I hit it straight off to the woods, he says, "Reload."

Just reload, what does that mean? Load again. Put another ball down and try it again. Re. This is what he's saying to us. He's saying to rejoice, it means to take joy again, to adore again, to treasure again, to sing again, to say again, to tell our heart again our joy in who God is. That's what he says. Yesterday ... Not yesterday, Thursday, Thanksgiving, we ate at 2:00 o'clock. So we had some time. And I sat down that morning, and I started to just type out and write things over the last year that I've seen God do. Just to record them for myself and for just for my joy, share with the family, but then just to have it for years to come when I forget all of these things.

And it was interesting what took place. It was a re-adoration of things that had already taken place. I found joy again in things that one time, this year, I found joy. I was rejoicing. Like there was one thing, and I started smiling, and my wife Tabatha, she looks over and she goes, "What is it?" She noticed joy, which was actually recycled joy. It was rejoicing again. And what I was thinking about is two of our sons, they went out and bought their brother a really, really nice birthday gift. Each one of them bought a gift. And that's not what I was rejoicing at. What I was rejoicing at is when their brother was opening the gifts, to look at their faces and to see such joy and pleasure in knowing that their brother was going to be pleased.

And so what was I doing? I was rejoicing. I took joy again in the moment. And this is what he's saying. We're supposed to repeat our adoration of who God is. As often as pain reemerges, we're supposed to rejoice. Let me show this to you in Psalm 42 and 43. In Psalm 42 he starts and he talks about in verse three. He says, "You know what? My tears have been my food day and night." He's talking about his whole life feels encircled by evil, but what happens? Verse five, he says, "Why are you cast down on my soul and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him my salvation and my God." He goes right back into the pit. He starts talking about how he's alone and then in verse 11, he goes back to it again.

He goes, "Why are you cast down on my soul and why are you in turmoil with in me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him my salvation and my God." His the exact same thing in the next chapter. What's taking place each time he spiraled down? He took joy again. The point is this. Is when sickness, or when family, or when evil sends you spiraling, do not imprison yourself behind the hopeless heart. You see, a hopeless heart, just like this picture, makes up bars. We begin to imagine what's not there. If you actually look at the picture, it may be hard to see, but the person is actually just holding up their hands, and the bars are actually a shadow from the back.

And this is exactly what happens to our life is that we feel sometimes that we have to resign to the emotions of our hopeless heart because our own circumstances, and we imprison our entire day and our relationships and our family behind our hopelessness. And we say, "No one's going to enjoy this. I'm not going to enjoy this." What he's saying is, "No, its our responsibility to wrestle our heart to the ground to say, 'God you got to fix this thing.'" Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say it rejoice." This is an imperative. And he's not commanding happy emotions, he's commanding a discipline to tell our hearts again about our adoration of who God is.

And the reason he tells us to do this is because this is a discipline that commands emotions. And so we rejoice in the Lord by repeating our adoration. Second, we rejoice in the Lord by remembering his salvation. You notice that most of this chapter is actually a pretty flowery, very artistic retelling of the exodus in the Old Testament. Now, this is really important, because the exodus, prior to Jesus' coming, was the shadow of the gospel in the Old Testament. You had people that were enslaved. They had to make more bricks with no material or less material. They had no power in and of themselves to get out, and so God, with his power, came and rescued them.

And so he talks about Mount Sinai in verse three and where he had the law. And the plagues and pestilence which led them out, and the parting of the waters, and all of these historical events in the Old Testament Habakkuk is remembering and he's remembering them when he's in anguish. Not only is he remembering backwards though. You have to understand, he's hoping for the future. He knows that this is not the ultimate gospel, that there's another exodus that's about to take place, another salvation that is going to take place, that it's the reality, and it's the Christ, and he's waiting on the Christ, but the Christ hasn't come. So what is he doing? He's looking backwards.

He's looking back at what he can remember, what had been told to him of what God had done and how he leveraged his strength in order to intervene in the lives of his people. And he's looking back to this shadow until it colors his perspective. Now, this is what he's doing, imagine what it must mean for us who now live on the backside when the reality took place and the gospel is there in Jesus Christ. You see, Jesus Christ did come. He did live a righteous life. And one day, in Luke, chapter nine, we're told that he went up on a mountain with three of his disciples and suddenly his earth suit, his body was overwhelmed by his glory, and he lit up like a flashlight, actually like a sun. The sun.

He became overwhelmingly glorious, and then all the sudden, what we're told in Luke chapter nine is these words, watch this. He says, "Two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Now this is really interesting. You and I, when we use the word, "Departure," we mean, "Oh, when he leaves." So some people might look at this and go, "Oh, it's when he ascends back into heaven. It's when he leaves the earth." That's not what he's saying. What he's saying here is he's about to accomplish something in Jerusalem. What did he accomplish in Jerusalem?

He died on a cross, was buried, and he rose from the dead. Now, this is amazing. When he says that Moses and Elijah and Jesus were talking about his coming departure, the word departure can also be translated, it's the same word, his exodus. It's the gospel. When he's going to deliver, when people have no power whatsoever. So what's happening here is this, is that Moses is looking at Jesus and he says, "You know what? My exodus was pretty amazing, but it means nothing without yours. I risked my life to liberate Israel from slavery, but you're going to give your life to liberate all of us from sin and death. I killed a lamb to avert judgment. But you are the lamb who will absorb all of God's judgment."

And this fact that God came in the person of Christ, it should color our perspective until he returns again. And so we're supposed to repeat our adoration, remember his salvation. Then third is we rejoice in the Lord by requesting his intervention. You see what he does in verse two? Of course his heart has been changed when he begins writing all of this. The very first thing that he does is he begins with a prayer. He says, "Oh Lord, I have heard the report of you and your work, do I fear in the midst of the years, revive it in the midst of your years, make it known."

What's he saying? He's saying, "God, I have heard these stories of how you showed up with unmitigated strength for the good of people. And I'm begging you, do it again. Do it again right now. I've heard about Sinai, I've heard about the mountain trembling with glory. I've heard about the plagues and the pestilence and the exodus and the parting of the Red Sea, how Joshua prayed and you caused the sun to stand still for a little bit of extra time. I've heard it all, I believe it all, and I'm asking that you do it again in my time." Now who can pray a prayer like this? Only those who remember that he is a saving God who has intervened before, and he's still the saving God who has the power to intervene again.

So what do we do with all of this? I'm not just talking about chapter three, I'm talking about all of Habakkuk. Let me give you just three things that I hope that we as a church family will do and remember and practice as we think about what we've studied here. The first is this, is let's believe in Jesus and be saved. For those of you who are looking to your own righteousness to get to heaven, I'm begging you to listen. There is a far greater threat over humanity and over your life than invading armies and cancer and financial collapse and political parties and any other significant thing that burdens our heart. And that is we have all fallen short of the glory of God by sinning against him, and the Bible says that he is offended.

His wrath is real. But verse two says so is his mercy. Even Habakkuk prays, "In your wrath, I get it. I know it's coming. But remember, mercy, this can only be found in Jesus Christ, who's the just and the justifier." You see, Jesus died to absorb God's wrath, and he does so for every single person who believes upon his accomplishments, and so I urge you today to admit that you cannot save yourself, to admit that you have sin in your life, to believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only rescue plan, and to confess in his Lord of your life. And the Bible says that you will avert, avert his wrath, and mercy will flow to you because of his forgiveness.

The second thing for us as a church family is let's rejoice in Jesus and be lifted up. And let's make sure that we understand that his rejoicing is not for after the tears, it's for during the tears. And let's also make sure as a church family that we do not categorize anguish as weak faith, as though when someone goes through challenges and if they don't stiffen their upper lip, then perhaps they don't believe everything that they sing and everything they say. Do you know why Jesus cried so much? It's because he was perfect. When a healthy heart looks at broken things, that heart breaks.

You see, pain is supposed to drive us to God, where he steadies our feet and pushes our heart up to know his goodness, and so each time you feel your heart beginning to spiral, I encourage you to repeat your adoration and to remember his salvation. And then the last thing is let's pray to Jesus and be hopeful. Only individuals who repeat their adoration and remember his salvation recall within their heart that he is a God who saves, and he is a God who intervenes, and he is a God that can actually reach down into relationships and into marriages and into financial collapses and into cultures and everything else and make right what is now wrong. And so I urge us as a people to be known as a people who call upon the name of the Lord.

Next week, we're going to start a series, an advent series. It's called What A Name. I'm excited about that, but I do pray that this series has been encouraging, and that you would consider some of the things that we've studied, and that you would learn to say before you see him face to face, "Yet I will rejoice." So let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you for your kindness to us that leads us to repentance. We thank you, father, for what you teach us in your word and pray now that as we sing to you, that you would help us to do just that, to rejoice in you, our Lord, the God of our salvation.

I pray, Father, that as we sing to you, that you would receive it as an offering, and as we give to you out of our resources, that you would receive that as an offering of faith, and that both, that they would represent, that they would resemble a heart that loves you more than life. And so I pray, Father, for those that are beaten down right now, or for those that you know will be in a month from now. God, that you would help us to rejoice in you and to experience our heart being lifted vertically, even as you steady our feet. We can experience what Allan Gardener said, and that is just this unbelievable goodness of God. So we look to you and we sing to you now, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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