

CHOOSING JOY

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Habacuc 3:17-19

“Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! ¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer able to tread upon the heights.”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Without a doubt we are all experiencing some kind of loss. Some have seen the most severe situations such as family and loved ones who have suffered from the disease; others the loss of his/her job, his/her business, his/her dreams; including their relationships, it is said that there has been an increase in the number of divorces during this season; others just missed going out to entertain themselves more, and are more bored than normal; The fact is that for many of us it has not been easy managing these losses and we already realized that we are not prepared to deal with the loss; and regain our peace or our joy.

II. HABAKKUK'S STORY

- A. After a revival time in the nation, the prophet had to receive very harsh news from God that implied terrible suffering for the people of God. An evil empire would come to conquer the city and put it in ruins, taking almost all families to Babylon for 70 years. The reality was so harsh that Habakkuk begins his book with a very logical question.

v.1:3 “¿Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight?”

- B. Even when God answers that He is behind all this with a good purpose, Habakkuk complains again and God explains more fully what He is going to do. To begin with, He was going to judge Nebuchadnezzar (**2:8-10**) and was going to do something surprising that included the story not only of that time but also the story of the end of the age.
- C. **A basic principle to overcome a loss is to recognize the pain we feel and give ourselves permission to express it and feel it.** God did not make us like robots without the capacity to feel, on the contrary, He created us with emotions that have their place in the process of recovery. **Grief is also part of the restoration.**

III. HABAKKUK'S CONCLUSION

- A. At the end of the book the prophet ends with this famous song of victory over loss; in a few words he says: *“it doesn't matter how difficult life is; if the food*

supplement is cut or my finances are at the bottom; I am going to rejoice in God because He is the God of my salvation."

- B. **Habakkuk has just had a vision of God that surpassed all his religious concepts before to the point that led him to choose to rejoice himself in the Lord, and that is when he sees God; it doesn't matter what the devil does, or Babylon; or the coronavirus. When we see God and are able to hold fast to faith.**

v.2:4 " Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God."

- C. This psalm of Habakkuk is in the context of a devastating devastation of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonian invasion. **The economy was going to be absolutely destroyed. There was to be no food, no agriculture, there was to be no cattle, no food, and in the face of this great desolation Habakkuk stands in faith and says I can rejoice in God.**
- D. **I want to tell you on this day that there is a place that even when you feel out of control, desperate; you can trust because you see your heavenly Father as the God of your salvation; all together loving, wise, who cares for you and is tender to you.** And knowing that He has good purposes. He is going to get something good out of this. **The coronavirus will pass but you will finish corrected, purified, on fire with more love and you will continue forever because you live by faith, that is, you trust in the love of God.**

IV. GOD IS TRAINING US

v.3:19 "The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.."

- A. One thing Habakkuk claims is that God uses the valley to train our feet so that we can walk on the heights of the kingdom of God. If we do not have valleys to train our feet for the heights there are precipices there and we cannot fall in the heights of the kingdom of God. **In fact it is the mercy of God to bring you into desolation where He can train your feet like the feet of a deer so that you can go to the high places in the kingdom of God and not fall.**
- B. Solomon went up and wrote tremendous books yet had a horrible fall in idolatry. Solomon did not have a cave of Adullam like David. So God takes you through the valley and through desolation because He is training you.

V. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- A. God renews His People through glory or through problems and of course we love it when God does it through the outpouring of His Spirit but the other way is when problems come and **this second way is more effective.**
- B. **This is a time of correction. God is correcting His people. This is a time for you to ask yourself a very important question: God, what are you trying to correct or strengthen in my life? You have my attention.** You must tell Him: 'Lord, you just closed the door of my church. What are you trying to tell us?'

- C. If you ask me, **what is God saying?** I would tell you: I don't know and even if I did, I'm not sure if God gave me permission to say it. You don't need me to tell you what God is saying in this hour. You need to have a personal conversation with God and personally hear from the Spirit what He is going to say to you about your life. Listen for yourself, that's an essential part of the process.
- D. God wants your character to grow to the point where it becomes strong and while you recognize your emotions and vent them, you also go to that place of total trust in Him in such a way that you choose joy over bitterness; the doubt; the complaint; the claim, etc.
- E. **You live by faith when you cling to the Word of God and are more powerful than the emperors of the world.** We are in a season where God wants you to grow in faith; It is time to open the Bible and hold fast to His promises. God wants us to cultivate a faith that is purer and more precious than gold.

1 Ped. 1:6-7 " So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold— though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. According to this passage, why can you still rejoice in the Lord despite experiencing some loss?
2. Explain why it is appropriate to recognize our pain when we suffer a loss.
3. Share with the members of your Friendship Group how you feel about everything that is happening and what you are going to do to respond better.