

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Surefooted In The Hard Places

Habakkuk 3:17-19

January 8, 2017

As shoes place an important barrier between you and the ground, so the Lord promises to make us surefooted as we negotiate through rocky places this year.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

¹⁷Even 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, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation ¹⁹The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

HARD TERRAIN DOES NOT IMPEDE GOD

No doubt, you and I will have to face some, if not many, 'hard pathways' this year. It is part of life. But, the Psalmist says, "Even the hard pathways overflow with abundance". Remember that before the Promised Land could be conquered, the Jordan had to be crossed and the walls of Jericho had to be brought down.

Someone once asked, "Are we simply going to love God in the good times and not trust Him in the dark days?" **Job 2:10b - "Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.** NLT

This is the lesson of Job: **God does not exist for you. You exist for Him.**

"All things were made by Him and for Him." (see **Colossians 1:16**). God can use us any way He chooses. Therefore He can put us in situations that might seem uncomfortable or difficult for reasons we may not understand this side of eternity.

After setting them free from bondage in Egypt, God positioned His people with their backs to the Red Sea. In other words, they were boxed in with Pharaoh closing in on them. It seemed they were about to be wiped out, but God said, "I'm doing this for a reason. I'm putting you in a tough situation in order that Pharaoh and the Egyptians might see My glory" (see Exodus 14:4). The sea parted. Blessings came down upon the people of God. They would eventually reach the Land of Promise...but not immediately.

You and I have to remember as we go through life that the Lord may put us in situations from time to time that are uncomfortable or difficult to travel, in part that we might ultimately see how He will come through for us, but also that the people around us might see His glory and come to know Him personally.

Israel complained so much about the things that were wrong that they couldn't see clearly what God was doing. They could not see miracles that were unfolding right before their eyes every day for a generation.

Deuteronomy 8:4

For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell.

Can you praise God for all the things in your life that are not wrong?

A list of just a few of the things that have gone wrong with me:

Measles, Mumps, Chicken pox, Tonsillitis, Appendicitis, Glaucoma, Cataract, Bronchitis, Bladder, Broken bones, Rashes, Heartburn, Nausea, Cuts, abrasions, and lacerations, Pains of all kinds, Etc.

According to the World Health Organization, there are an estimated 30,000 human diseases known to medicine. And there are no effective treatments available for around three quarters of them.

If we don't remember this as we go through each day of our lives, we will be confused.

When we look at the life of the prophet Job, we see that it's purpose was to allow him to display the honor and integrity of God for all to see. But he didn't know it at the time.

Job 2:10b

Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.

"If God takes us on stony paths, He will dress us with strong shoes."

EXPECTATION IS AT ITS BEST IN THE ROCKY PLACES

Hope and expectations shine brightest when there is little hope.

Paraphrasing G. K. Chesterton, a great Christian thinker, "Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all. As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is not so necessary; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength.

Romans 4:16b-23

¹⁹...Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead-and so was Sarah's womb. ²⁰Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. ²¹He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. ²²And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. ²³And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded ²⁴for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

No doubt, you and I will have to face some, if not many 'hard pathways' in the coming year. It's part of life. But, the Psalmist says, "Even the hard pathways overflow with abundance". God's provision of good things is spoken of here, even in the most difficult moments or seasons.

The promise of God is that you can be surefooted in the times of greatest ease and favor, but even more so in the hardest of places.