

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Expectation In The Hard Places

Habakkuk 3:17-19

January 15 & 22, 2017

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.

God doesn't always change our circumstances, but He can change us to meet our circumstances. That's what it means to live by faith.

"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.

Galatians 3:29

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." KJV

"And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children* of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you." NLT

By the way, do you realize that when Abraham willed the Promised Land to Isaac, and when Isaac willed the promised land to Jacob, none of them owned anything, except the field and cave where their families were buried?

This is expectation at its finest.

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.

EXPECTATION AND THE BIG PICTURE

Things were in bad shape when Habakkuk began to write this book. Destruction, violence, strife, conflict, injustice, and wickedness were all he could see. But he cried out and the Lord responded.

He did not only answer his complaint, but also gave him the confidence he needed to rise above the problems. Habakkuk's journey was not exactly an easy one, but it was more than worth it.

What caused this remarkable change? Why did Habakkuk begin with a complaint and end with a song of praise? The answer can be found in three verses in chapter 2.

- God declared to him, **"The just shall live by his faith" (v.4).**
- He also promised that someday the earth would **"be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (v.14).**
- He assured him that **"the LORD is in His holy temple" (v.20).**

These powerful truths were just what Habakkuk needed to lift him out of his deep discouragement. By fixing his eyes on God, he rose above his circumstances and found lasting joy in the Lord.

Conclusion

What can rescue you from tough times? God declares that the just, the upright, the happy, the contented, the victorious live by their faith. **Faith is the victory that overcomes the world! (1 John 5:4)**

God doesn't always change our circumstances, but He can change us to meet them!