

Faith in Troubled Times - Habakkuk finds Joy

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[0:00] I've been thinking lately of some of these kind of obscure books you could say of the Bible.! Books that I must confess I haven't really had much time in them myself really to fully grasp the meaning of them.

And so it's been quite a learning experience for me to kind of open these pages and try to gather the message and make some application of it.

So talking about the book of Habakkuk and really the theme is finding faith in troubled times.

Finding faith in times of trouble.

The book of Habakkuk is just three chapters long so it's quite a short one but it's jam-packed full of many spiritual gems. So we're going to go to Habakkuk chapter 1 verse 1 where it reads, The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.

Now the name Habakkuk it means embracer. To embrace or to wrestle. Habakkuk really did both. He embraced and he struggled.

[1:07] He wrestled. It's like as an embracer he's a comforter and he's struggling as he's burdened here. Burdened by God with this heavy burden. Burdened by God and yet embraced by God.

He embraces God and his promises. About two-thirds of the book of Habakkuk is a conversation between the writer and God.

As I say it's an overlooked book. It's something people don't readily turn to. I don't know if you had to look in your index to find where it was but it's kind of that kind of book that you don't really go to very often.

But it's full of deep truths. Full of deep truths that we can take to heart. And it was written in a time of great distress and uncertainty. So I put to you we're in such a time as this aren't we?

A time of distress and uncertainty. We see the need of our world. The need of timeless wisdom. And these insights we can gather from this book are put to you.

[2:08] They're very relevant and meaningful today. So Habakkuk wrestles with the problem of evil. He tells of this issue of evil and injustice in the world.

And he questions God as to why God allows wickedness to go unpunished. And we can all struggle with those very questions, can't we?

The question, the problem of evil. To understand the presence of evil in our lives and the world around us. What's going on? So we can see Habakkuk can relate to us when we feel like that.

And so the book starts off chapter one. In chapter one you can see essentially Habakkuk complains. Habakkuk complains. He cries out to God.

The prophet here is confused and he's troubled by the state of the world around him. And it's an honest, a raw cry for justice.

[3:07] Verse two. O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear, even cry out unto thee of violence and thou wilt not save.

He's saying, he's complaining, he's questioning, he's crying out. And when it says even cry out, it's got the literal sense of scream out.

It's like he's crying and literally screaming out. Shouting out. Why? Why aren't you listening? And he says, he's concerned of the violence that is going on.

It's interesting this word violence is hamas. And we know the word hamas today is the name of the Palestinian terrorist group.

That's very active. Violence is the name of it. Hamas. And Habakkuk is crying out because of the violence that is going on. It's still going on today in Israel, isn't it?

[4:14] He felt like God wasn't listening. God wasn't listening. So he's complaining here. Verse three. It reads on. Why dost thou show me

iniquity and cause me to behold grievance for spoiling and violence are before me?

And there are that. Raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth. For the wicked doth compass about the righteous.

Therefore wrong judgment proceeded. He's saying about this violence, about this strife and contention. He's saying about the law.

He's saying the law is slacked. And there's a lack of judgment here. We can think about that of our world, can't we? Lawlessness. Lawlessness. I was relating lately.

It was just a few days ago. I had a ladder here and I was on the roof. And just an hour or two and I just glanced and the ladder had gone. I was still on the roof.

[5:12] Lawlessness. You know, people stealing things. You think they have respect. There's actually someone on the roof who's got to get down. But no, a ladder is worth something. It's metal value. So lawlessness.

It's something in our world today, isn't it? There's a bit of lawlessness about. The law is slacked. Even if you were to catch them, what would they do to them? You know, the law is slacked.

And there's so much injustice. There's lawlessness. There's violence. There's wrongdoing. And of course, we know in the context of the end times, our Lord says that there'll be this lawlessness, this lawless generation.

And so Habakkuk here, he questions God. In this chapter, we see Habakkuk grappling with difficult questions. Struggling to understand what's going on. Understand God's ways.

It reminds us when we read Habakkuk that it is okay to bring our honest doubts and concerns to God. To cry out when we don't understand.

[6:11] To ask God to help us understand. Even when we don't have all the answers, we can go to prayer. We can seek God. That's what Habakkuk did. And it encourages us here to trust in God's wisdom and trust in God's justice, even when we can't see the bigger picture.

So in the context here, evil prevails. Habakkuk's frustrated. He sees the wicked people prospering while the righteous suffer. And friends, that's true today too, isn't it?

It's still true that sometimes the wicked prosper. You see some of the big names and you think they're godless people and the righteous suffer. Sometimes they don't seem to manage that well. And he wonders why it seems that God isn't acting. He's wondering why will thou not hear? Verse 2. He's crying out. It seems like God's not listening and God's not acting.

So he questions God's inaction. He wonders how long this injustice will go on. And he longs for righteousness to prevail. Now the Lord hears and understands our struggles.

[7:16] When we pray, we can bring him our concerns, our doubts, our questions. And God answers Habakkuk here. God responds to Habakkuk. He tells him he's aware of the evil.

Of course he is. He knows what's going on. And he's planning to bring judgment upon the wicked. Verse 5. It says, Behold ye among the heathen in regard and wonder marvelously.

For I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you. So the Lord responds to Habakkuk here. He's saying he's going to work a work.

And it's going to be a marvelous thing. It's going to be something that's amazing. It's going to be something that's quite promising. This is the hope here. The promise of God.

He's going to work a work. And it's going to be an amazing work. Now, an important point here that we can note in Habakkuk's story.

[8:13] An important point is that God does not always answer our prayers in the way that we would like. So it goes on, verse 6, to say, God says, So what it's saying here is that the Lord reveals to Habakkuk, he's going to raise up the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, same thing.

He's going to raise up this nation, the Babylonians, this ruthless and powerful nation as his instrument of judgment. Now, that wasn't the answer that Habakkuk was looking for.

He thought there would be something less painful. But no, God's judgment is that the Babylonians were going to come. And the revelation shocks and confuses Habakkuk even more as he questions how could a nation even more wicked than his own be used of God.

And so Habakkuk's in this confusion and struggle. So he knows Israel, Judah, is in this state of confusion and sin. And now God's saying he's going to send the Babylonians, this wicked nation. And so it causes him confusion and struggle because he really is looking at it from his limited perspective rather than God's larger plan. What was going to happen was the Babylonians were going to come and it was representing God's judgment.

[9:41] The Babylonians, they were a heartless, ruthless people. God told Habakkuk he was going to bring judgment on the land. Now, we could think of it in our days.

Don't we see judgment today? I put to you, the leaders of the nation are godless, aren't they not? Largely, both sides, every side, all three, four, you name them, a whole lot are godless largely. By and large, our leaders are godless. Isn't it a judgment on our nation? The LGB, garbage, we see the Ichabod written over many churches, the glory has departed.

We see churches flying rainbow flags and preaching a gospel-less gospel. There's nothing to it, it's empty and vain. We see paganism promoted, Christianity mocked.

Australia's under judgment. We see evils in the classrooms. We see evils in the children's books down at the libraries. We've seen some shocking things. Shocking things.

[10:46] It's not just in America, it's in our local library, I'm told. There's a local parent, lives just streets away from here. She found some children's books and she went and talked to the local council, to the city of Playford.

And she presented a session and she outlined the horrific content of children's books. These are books to children. These are books for kiddies that have got some very gross things in, very blatant, graphic stuff that's gross and shocking and evil.

And I've put to you that we're under judgment. God's judgment is falling on our nation. And so we see in Habakkuk's story that the Babylonians are coming and it reads, they are terrible and dreadful.

Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. So the Babylonians, they were a feared people and they were afraid of no one. They were just ruthless, vicious, violent.

And it tells of them that their horses also are swifter than the leopards and are more fierce than the evening wolves. And their horsemen shall spread themselves and their horsemen shall come from far.

[11:56] They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. So they're like vultures. And they shall come all for violence and their faces shall sup up as the east wind. And they shall gather as the captivity as the sand.

And they shall scoff at the kings and the princes shall be a scorn unto them. They shall deride every stronghold for they shall heap dust and take it. And then shall his mind change and he shall pass over and offend, imputing this his power unto his God.

So what it's saying here is of the Babylonians and just trying to unpack it and understand it myself really as I kind of translate it to you, that the Babylonians were like this ferocious army.

And I'm told that the Babylonians, when they captured a king, they would put him in a cage and exhibit him like an animal. They were ruthless, cruel people. And they would capture fortified cities with these siege ramps.

That's what it's talking about there in verse 10. They put these siege ramps on these fortress walls and they would just go and take these fortress cities that seemed to be impregnable.

[12:58] And they were such a ferocious army. An arrogant and a godless people. And friends, Habakkuk, when he heard of the Babylonians coming, he was shocked.

He was confused. This wasn't the answer that he wanted. The prophet had thought that God was inactive, but no, God is active. God is active. God is not asleep.

As we read in Psalm 121 verses 3 to 4, it says, He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

You know, we might think God's asleep. God's forgotten about me. God's not listening. But no, God is very active. God is alert. He's awake. He's listening. And he's not slumbering or sleeping.

But Habakkuk got the answer that he did not want. Judgment. Judgment was coming. And God is sending this terribly wicked nation to chastise God's children.

[13:58] Yet, despite not fully understanding, Habakkuk decides to trust. Okay, God's revealed his plan, which wasn't what Habakkuk wanted, but Habakkuk decides to trust.

He decides to have faith. God knows what he's doing, trusting in his righteousness. It says that he acknowledges God's eternal nature and that God is just and trustworthy, even when the circumstances seem unjust and confusing.

So it reads on verse 12. Habakkuk speaks to God again. Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my unholy one? We shall not die, O Lord.

Thou hast ordained them for judgment. And, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. So he's realising it. God is the holy one. If God's ordained judgment, then so be it.

Verse 13, it says. Thou art of pure eyes, then, to behold evil, and cast not look on iniquity.

Wherefore, lookest thou upon them that they deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he.

[15:08] So he's acknowledging God is pure. He's holy. He cannot behold evil. He's not going to overlook it. How can God remain silent in the face of evil is the question, and even use wicked instruments as his tools to discipline his own people.

It was a confusing situation. The prophet wanted to see Judah delivered, but now God responds with the promise of judgment with the wicked Babylonians.

So it's a little bit of a confusing situation. Habakkuk wanted deliverance. God said, judgment's coming. Now, I guess we could think of ourselves, too.

We want God to deliver us. We want the Lord to come. We look forward to the second coming, but there's a sense where judgment's going to come. Judgment's going to come first. We're going to see some severe judgment coming.

We could relate more on that, but just the essential thought that judgment is coming, then deliverance. We see Habakkuk listens. We're going to jump to chapter 2, and we see that Habakkuk listens here, and he expresses his concerns, his questions, and now Habakkuk's waiting for God to respond.

[16:21] And it says, Habakkuk says, I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

So Habakkuk here, he's cried out to God. God said, I'm being in judgment. Habakkuk's just waiting now. He's got that readiness. What's God going to bring next?

And he's ready to receive God's direction. And God tells Habakkuk to write down the vision that he's about to reveal. The Lord answered me and said, write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry. Wait for it, because it will surely come. It will not tarry. So what it's saying here is that God's saying, write this down.

Take a note of this. This is important. Write down what I'm telling you. God's message is that even though the fulfillment of his promises may take time, it will surely come to pass.

[17:20] Now we see the promises, the prophecies of the word of God. Many of them have come to pass, including prophecies in this book, but there's still some prophecies yet to come. There's prophecies yet to come.

Of course, we know in the word of God, really it's a book full of prophecies. Many that have been fulfilled, but many yet to be fulfilled. There's a sense here where what God is saying, what he's writing down, which is written down for us now in our Bibles in black and white and red, we can see that really that is, again, that which shall come to pass.

It's that which shall come to pass. And so for the meantime, like Habakkuk, we've got to be patient and wait for the appointed time. As I related this morning, really, it's about trusting God's timing in situations.

And it can be the hardest thing to do when we really want something and we know we've got to be patient. Sometimes God puts us in a holding pattern for a little time, doesn't he? It gives us that time of waiting because we've got to be patient, wait patiently for God to act.

And really, this is really one of the most central verses of the word of God is the next verse here, where it says, Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.

[18:38] God's giving here a promise to the righteous. He's saying that the just shall live by faith. He's contrasting the proud and self-censored Babylonians, the wicked Babylonians, with the righteous.

And he's saying for the just, the righteous, that we can live by faith. We can trust in God and his guidance. God promises for you and me that live in faith, that trust him, our saviour.

Faith is what matters. Faith will see us through. All the storms and troubles, that faith, that trust in God's control will see us through. The next section of the book outlines five different woes.

Five different woes. And it tells us here God's judgment on the wicked. It says, He's talking about the woes of the wicked in the sense that there's pride there.

They're like this hellish, deathly, dissatisfying kind of state. And he's saying here, Woe to the various evils of the wicked.

[20:02] And so it tells about woe to the selfish. Woe to the selfish. You know, we see a characteristic of the ungodly is that they're selfish.

It says that they increase by that which is not his. It talks about this selfishness there. And the Bible says, Woe to the selfish.

Secondly, it says, Woe to the covetous. In verse 9, it says, Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness. So those that are kind of greedy grasping, the covetous, the greedy.

Woe to the covetous. Then it says, Woe to the exploiters. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity. So it's talking about the arrogance of the Babylonians, the wickedness of them.

So they were selfish. They were covetous. They were exploiters. They were oppressing others. And their violence and greed and injustice was going to face God's judgment too.

[21:03] So another big lesson from the book of Habakkuk is we can trust God is in control, that he is superintending, overseeing the world. Even though for a time we might lack that understanding of it from a human standpoint, we can trust God's ultimate plan.

And that Christ is coming. Verse 14, it says, For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. So you can see that is ultimately an end time promise.

That's a yet to be fulfilled promise, that the earth shall be filled. This is verse 14. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Another woe is woe to the drunkards. Woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink and putteth thy bottle to him. It's talking about, it reads on about nakedness. It reads about shameful spewing.

It's pretty gross kind of language, isn't it? The shame of the drunkard. And then another one, it says, Woe to the idolaters too. So all of these features, this selfishness, this violence, this covetousness, this exploiting, this drunkenness of idolatry, these are all features of the Babylonians.

[22:18] And God's saying woe to them. And of course we can think of the prophets of old when they saw these idols, they cast them down. They broke up the idols and they cast them down, smashed them into the dust.

And so the molten images, the wooden images that are overlaid with gold and silver, there's no breath in them. They're just dumb idols, it's saying here.

But in contrast to all of that, the idolatry of the godless says, The Lord is in his holy temple, that all the earth keeps silence before him. So we've seen Habakkuk puts forward these five woes and then he says, In contrast to the idolaters, the Lord is in his holy temple.

We've got a god who's not some dumb idol who cannot speak, who cannot minister to us. We've got the holy god that is in his holy temple and he is almighty.

God is still on the throne. And God assures Habakkuk that although the wicked may seem to prosper for a time, their actions will have consequences. They'll face judgment. Woe to them. Woe to them.

[23:23] Five times. So God encourages Habakkuk to have faith, to trust in God's timing and justice. And so we can see really God's goodness even in the worst of situations.

And we know God is in his holy temple and one day the earth shall be filled with his glory as the waters cover the sea. So, and then we move to really the last chapter, chapter three, where it covers a prayer of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk prayed a prayer. He acknowledges God's power. Now, he remembers his mighty acts, what he's done in the past, how he's revealed his glory, leading God's people through the passing of the Red Sea, defeating powerful enemies.

He's remembering God's faithfulness and he's recalling that as he prays. He's remembering God's faithfulness through time. And it reads there, chapter three, verse one, a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.

Now, we don't know what that is. It's some kind of musical term we understand. So, there's an element of praise to his prayer. It says, O Lord, I've heard thy speech and was afraid.

[24:32] O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy. So, the context here, judgment's falling on Judah, the people of God, and the prophets crying out, in wrath, remember mercy.

Judgment's falling, God's wrath is falling, and he's pleading, Lord, be merciful, show mercy to us. The people of God need revival too. It says, Lord, revive thy work.

Don't we need revival? We need revival. O Lord, revive thy work. You know, the wonders and faithfulness of God through his leading and guiding through his faithfulness, the people of God, yet still fail and go astray.

Habakkuk prays, Lord, revive thy work. You know, what we did have. Let's return to our first love. Let's revive and restore and refresh our faith. Revive thy work, O Lord.

And it's true still for today, isn't it? We see there's a need for us to cry out like Habakkuk, O Lord, revive thy work. Habakkuk expresses his fear, his reverence for God.

[25:44] He declares his trust in God's strength and ability, and he wants to worship. And it says, as he prays, as he prays, God came from Timon and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah, his glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

This word, Selah, it means stop, look, listen, think about this. Now, this is something to think about, the glory of God. Think about the Holy One.

Think about how the earth was full of his praise. The glory of God, God's power. He gives glory and praise. He acknowledges that. And it says, And his brightness was as the light.

He had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power. The sense of these kind of rays of light, as it were, like horns coming out of his hand. Then verse 5, Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.

He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered. The perpetual hills did bow. His ways are everlasting.

[26:49] He's acknowledging here in his prayer, God's sovereignty, God's wonders, God's mastery, God's ways. They're everlasting. He recognises God's control and oversight of nature.

How the mountains tremble, and the rivers overflow in awe of him. And he recounts God's judgment of the nations, and how he brings salvation to his people. There's much more we could say, but we're going to jump ahead.

Verse 13, it says, They went us forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed. They wound us the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.

Selah. So it's saying here, he acknowledges salvation, God's deliverance, God's rescue. And he's saying how the wicked are going to be wounded. It says that faith is going to be triumphant over apparent difficulties.

Of course we know, in the word of God, in the New Testament, it tells us that this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. It reads on how the prophet trembles.

[27:54] He says, When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, at the voice. Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

Habakkuk's realising here, he's standing before the Holy One. He's standing before the One, and his glory is going to cover the earth. He's standing before the One that the mountains bow down to, and his ways are everlasting.

And he says, I trembled in myself. It's getting that right perspective, isn't it, of the everlasting. When our little human concerns are really just transitory, but we can think the everlasting one is in charge, and we can trust him.

Another big lesson we can learn from Habakkuk is how we can find our joy in God. Despite all these troubling times, and this was a time of great trouble and stress, Judah was in strife and godlessness, sin was prevailing, judgment was falling, Habakkuk chose to rejoice in the Lord. And it's telling for us too, in those moments of our lives when we might find times of trouble and distress and confusion, that we can too find true joy and strength from God alone.

[29:08] We can find our joy in him, not in the circumstance. I like to think how it's been put to me, really, you know, some might think, well, God's going to make you happy.

It's not really the way it goes. It's not, God hasn't come to make us happy. Because the word happy is related to what happens to us, or happenstance.

You know, it's the sense where our circumstance, our happenstance, if we're having things that are nice and easy, we get happy. By happenstance, what happens to us. But no, in the Bible, it's not being made happy, but it's having joy.

It's having joy. Because joy is beyond the circumstance. Joy is beyond the happenstance, what happens to us. It's not that we're having happiness as such, per se, but we've got joy, which is beyond circumstance.

It's a joy that's deep down within. And the Bible talks about the joy that we have. It's a joy that comes, a joy that's unspeakable, and it's full of glory. It's saying there's a joy that we can know that is in Christ.

[30:15] A joy that not the world gives, but the joy that he gives. And so, Habakkuk responds with joy, even in the circumstance, which is woeful, woeful circumstance, he finds joy and praise in his God, regardless of the tough times.

And he confesses his faith. He faces this fact that his nation is being invaded now by this merciless enemy. Many of his people are going to go into exile and be slain.

The land's going to be ruined. Jerusalem and the temple are going to be destroyed. Yet, yet I will, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

Verse 17, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat.

The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation.

[31:17] We can find our joy in God. And that's true for you, for me, for now, for where we're at. Despite troubling times, despite at times the confusing things and the, it seems, the rampant godlessness and lawlessness and the evil that prevails every which way, we can choose to rejoice in the Lord, can't we?

We can choose like Habakkuk did to find our strength and joy in him. Not in our circumstance, our joy and our contentment is in Christ. It's in his saving, his relationship with us.

It's interesting, the book starts off with complaining, but it ends up with rejoicing. Amen? It starts off with Habakkuk complaining, oh, Lord, you're not listening, everything's terrible, yet I will.

Yet I will rejoice. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Starts out with complaining, ends with rejoicing in the Lord. And these verses show Habakkuk's resolve.

It doesn't matter that the fig tree is not going to blossom, that there's going to be no food on the field and no flock. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. Regardless, regardless of the tough times, I'm going to trust him no matter what happens.

[32:39] And that might be your situation, whatever it be. it's counterintuitive, isn't it, that actually what's happening to me, that's one thing, but my joy is not going to be stopped.

The circumstance isn't going to stop my joy. Amen? I will rejoice. And it's a determination he made. I will. I will. I will trust him no matter what happens.

So he declares his trust, his joy. He finds that gratitude, that joy, that strength in the midst of trials and hardships. We can have that same heart that Habakkuk had, that same faith and trust, because the righteous, the just, shall live by faith.

It's faith that we live by, not by circumstance. And he finds that rest, that reassurance, as he remembers the faithfulness of God, as he recounted in his prayer, the faithfulness of God, even when there's adversity, he found God's strength.

He relied on that. In God's protection, yet, I will. Yet, I will. Rejoice. It's interesting, there's a difference between praising God in the good times and praising him in the bad times, isn't it?

[33:55] Very easy to praise God when we've got the blessings as the world would reckon things are going easy and breezy. But what about when they're not? Yet, I will rejoice, even in the tough things, even in the tough phases and stages of my life.

I will join the God of my salvation. He's above and beyond what's going on for me, even the difficult circumstances. His faith held him steady and you can find that same trust in him today.

Even in the bad times, yes, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. And he says, the Lord God is my strength and he will make my feet like hinds feet and he will make me to walk upon my high places.

So the chief singer on my stringed instruments, so he's praying and he's playing, it sounds like he's praying and he's praising and he's playing his stringed instruments here.

The Lord God is my strength. He's going to make my feet like these hinds feet. I can climb every mountain as it were. I'm going to be climbing those high places because God is my strength.

[35:05] He's going to make me walk in high places. Think of, I know where we used to live out back in outback Queensland and there were some friends of ours that had a bit of a hilly property and they had some goats that you could climb like shears cliff faces.

They could climb the most unclimbable mountains. because they had just that neck. It's like the picture there I suppose that we can climb the highest, steepest cliff and he's going to make me walk upon high places.

Amen. So we can trust him. We can know God's guidance like Habakkuk did. We can find our hope in God and like Habakkuk we can cultivate trust and faith and patience in the times of trouble.

Knowing God's timing is the best timing and patiently waiting for his plans to unfold. And we can find our peace and strength in him. The Lord God is my strength.

It's not me. I'm weak as water but he is strong in me. Amen. He is strong in me. And we can find God's plans will unfold.

[36:15] Our peace and our strength is not from ourselves. It's from him. The Lord God is my strength. And we can joy and rejoice in him. Even in difficult situations.

And we can persevere in prayer. That's what Habakkuk did. He cried out, yes, he was screaming out, crying out loud, help. He came to that place of rest.

Yet I will rejoice. I will rejoice. I'm going to trust God's timing. I'm going to trust and rest in his promises. And for us, we've got the whole word of God to rest in.

We've got the very promises of God in our hand, in our language today, to read, to take to heart, to read and reread, to apply those promises that they can shape our lives and our circumstance through times of confusion.

We can trust God's plans and we can deepen our faith and find joy, choose joy. So friends, today Habakkuk is a bit of an obscure book. I had to kind of grapple with it and try to get my head around some of the main features and facts of it.

[37:22] And it's an intriguing thought really that in this time of confusion and despair, as the prophet prayed, God says, yes, I'm going to answer your prayer, but it's not the way you want it.

It's got to be judgment. Think of our land today. We can pray for Australia. We can pray for ourselves, our community, our families, pray that God will work, but we know judgment is falling.

And really, it's almost inevitable that judgment is going to fall because we know ultimately the world is going to be in the control of the godless one, the man of sin.

Thank God he's going to save his people from that situation. By faith we can know God's working as judgment looms. We can know God's keeping and care for us.

We can find hope and courage like Habakkuk did. We can know God's faithfulness and entrust ourselves to God's care. And like Habakkuk, we can learn to trust and learn to rejoice.

[38:18] Friends, as we face whatever we're going to face Monday morning, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we can trust and Lord, your word tells us the just shall live by faith.

Lord, we pray each one today might have that soul-saving faith that says, Lord, I'm a sinner and I need a saviour and you're the only saviour that I can know and trust.

And I want your saving today. Lord, we can trust you to save us for time and for eternity. That once we're saved, we're forever saved by virtue of your great keeping power.

Lord, we pray that we can know that today, each one. And have that trust that whatever the circumstances of life, we know that we're not trusting in some kind of worldly generated happiness, but we're finding that joy, we're choosing joy, even in the situation where even like Habakkuk, struggled as his name suggests, he was a struggler, he was an embracer, yet he embraced your promises in that struggle that he was in, in that conflict of his soul, as he didn't really know what was happening yet.

Lord, he learnt to trust you, he learnt to have patience, he learnt to rest in you and to find that joy that was beyond the situation. Lord, help us to, that we might even count it all joy when we have such testing things happen, that we'll find that joy that is beyond what goes on for us.

[39:48] We know that you are our strength and we can say, even though the fig tree doesn't blossom and even though this and that that we'd like to see, we can yet rejoice that you are our salvation, you are our strength.

And Lord, help us to take heart and perhaps delve a bit more deeply into this book and other of your promises, Lord, to find that anchor, that foundation that is your promises, your word, that we can stand upon its truth that's real for us today.

Even in this 21st century, we can know these words are very true and you're still seated on your throne, you're still there in your holy temple, you're everlasting to everlasting.

Lord, we know that you're above time and space and you're the one who can see our lives from the context of eternity. Lord, help us to have that trust in you that you call us to.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.