

“A Song in the Storm”
Habakkuk 3:1-19

Introduction: Thank Evan, Connect Card, NEXT, Thanksgiving Meals - 95! Great work!, Pg. ____

This morning we are going to wrap up our series through a little book that the story of a man who faced a big dilemma, a storm of a massive scale. Habakkuk was one of God's prophets (which meant he spoke for God to the people). His problem was not just personal. He was surrounded by injustice from his own people who had lost their regard for God, which led him to cry out: “God, what’s going on here?”

Then to make matters MUCH worse, God says, as a consequence for the total disregard of the people, I am going allow the wicked Babylonians to come in, ransack your land, and carry you off into exile.

What would Habakkuk do? He didn't flee the country and seek asylum. He didn't freak out and check himself into a mental health facility. He waited. He waited for God to respond, and as we saw last week, God gave him a vision of his justice and a vision of himself that changed everything for Habakkuk.

It was that vision that leads us to the most unexpected twist in chapter 3. We discover that

The Point: When the storm rages, you can rise and sing.

- I know you're thinking: “HOLD UP! How could Habakkuk *be singing* when he was overwhelmed by suffering? Suffering is *not* a time for Song.
- It might lead us to question God, as we saw in chapter one, but not sing to God!”

Are you sure about that? I am going to give you two reasons why he could sing and why you can sing in the midst of the storm.

I. Sing in the Storm because God is our salvation (3:1-15).

One of the first observations we see at the outset is that *Songs are almost always prayers in the Bible.*

- They express praise and gratitude. They make confession and present requests.
- There are three requests in verse 2. After Habakkuk says: “I have heard the report of you (another translation says, “your fame”), and your work, O Lord, do I fear,” he asks God to: 1) Revive his work. 2) Make it known. 3) In judgment remember mercy. This is going hard after God in prayer, bold, audacious prayer. We should pray this for our city: Revive your work. Make it known.
- “God, I know you must punish sin, but would you ‘Temper [your] wrath with mercy.’”

But this prayer is in the form of a song. Why?

Sing for the sake of your soul. After all,

God commands us to sing.

Over 50 times in the Bible we're instructed to sing praise to God.

- **“Sing to the Lord a new song.” (Psalm 96:1)**

**“I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.
For you have been to me a fortress” (Psalm 59:16)**

“[For the Lord takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with salvation.]

**Let the godly exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their beds.” (Psalm 149:4-5)**

God commands us to sing AND

God made us to sing.

- That’s why he commands it!
- Our impulse to sing is woven into the fabric of creation. Job 38 says when God created the stars, they sang.
- We enjoy keys and strings and beats because we are image bearers of the Singing God

**“The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17)**

What?! Are you serious? Couldn’t understand it. Until I realized it’s the most natural thing for God to do... LOVE.

And listen to this one:

**“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”
(Hebrews 2:12)**

Who said that? Jesus! The ultimate worship leader.

That’s where we’re going. We will sing and we will be led by Jesus in song.

Don’t talk to me about Chris Tomlin this and Hillsong that. JESUS. We have a singing God...

- God made us to sing, as those made in his image, AND we sing because as those made to sing, we can’t help but sing.
 - **C.S. Lewis**, who once found God’s demands for praise repulsive (like “a vain woman demanding compliments”), finally realized that **“all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise** [we praise what we enjoy: beauty, ballgames, movies good food, conversation, relationships]. . . . **My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can’t help doing, about everything else we value. . . .”**

And then Lewis added this.

- **I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.”**

Song is designed to express and motivate God-glorifying emotion.

- **“The duty of singing praises to God seems to be given wholly to excite and express religious affections. There is no other reason why we should express ourselves to God in verse rather than in prose and with music, except that these things have a tendency to move our affections.” - Jonathan Edwards**
- But we are not chasing emotionalism or sensationalism, which is excitement with no substance.

T: We sing because of who God is and what he’s done. The focus for Habakkuk was on God’s past work.

Sing because of God’s past work.

In the midst of the storm, what we need most is a vision of God: who he is and what he’s done.

- Without a vision of God, we will stumble through life blindfolded. What Habakkuk saw of God’s worth, in his character and work, took the blindfold off and gave him a sense of direction as the storm intensified around him.
- He’s essentially saying: “God, I don’t know what you’re up to in this storm, but I know who you are and I’ve seen your work in the past, so I’m not going to hold back my trust or my song.”
- As we saw last week, he was confronted with **The God-ness of God:**
 - **God is Glorious: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14)**
 - **God is Holy: “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” (Habakkuk 2:20)**

But verses 3-15 are all about the work of God. They recount the events of God leading his people out of oppression in Egypt, to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and many other instructions on how they were to live, and then the subsequent Exodus journey into the Promised land. Zoom in on some of these descriptions in *verses 3-15*.

Sing because of God’s past work.

- *Verses 3-4*
 - Glory Show. “Splendor covered the heavens”
 - “His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and *there he veiled his power.*” (HA! Only whispers... He’s that great)
- *Verses 6-7*
 - “He stood and measured the earth.” Which indicates it belongs to God and he can do with it whatever he pleases.” (Wiersbe) ha!
 - “He looked and shook the nations.” “His were the everlasting ways.” Wow.
- *Verses 8-15 (God marched in victory)*
 - Verse 11:
 - Joshua’s battles - The sun stood still and moon...
 - God conquers the wicked... “who came like a whirlwind..., rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.”
 - God is the good guy. He is the hero. He wins the day.
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Why is all this important? After all, that stuff happened a long time ago! Here's why.

- Because their God is my God. God, you showed up in the past, and I trust you will show up again!
- If you calmed that storm, why wouldn't I trust that you are bigger than this storm.
- "In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy." (3:2)

This [by the way] is **the Logic of the Gospel - Past Grace is the Greatest Reason for Confidence in Future Grace.**

- **"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32)**
- *Greater to Lesser...*
- Story: I told M. Harris what's up on these verses and then I cried...
- Listen to me here. What I'm about to say, I say with care and concern for any storm that you face this morning. But to bring us all some perspective: if God did nothing else for you but give you salvation through Christ, you would have reason to sing forever no matter how bad the storm may be around you.

T: He sings motivated by what he sees behind him, but the final verse of his song gazes ahead. It's one thing to sing of victory gone by (looking in the rearview mirror); it's another thing to sing of victory on the horizon (looking out the windshield). Habakkuk does both. [It is easier to sing in retrospect not prospect]

II. Sing in the Storm because God is our Joy (3:16-19).

Read 16-19

Song reveals the soul's faith

- Habakkuk *is not singing because he's seen it but because he sees it.* It is a song of faith. Remember Habakkuk 2:4? "The righteous shall live by his faith."
- We can wait and trust because we know the God of Habakkuk 3 is in perfect control, even when we cannot make sense of what is happening around us. He knows how things will turn out. Nothing is a mystery to Him.
- Your world, this world, though it may feel like it at times, is not spinning out of control, but we can trust that God moving all of history toward accomplishing his purposes.
- *Arg:* Always remember: Your faith is as good as the one you are putting your faith in. You catch that? Let me say that again, Your faith is as good as the one you are putting your faith in. This morning I am not asking you to exercise blind, irrational faith. I am not asking you to place yourself in another frail, finite human being's hands who will inevitably let you down. Put your faith in the God who never fails.
- Joshua 23:14 tells us that not one of his promises has ever failed, but they have all come to pass. 2 Corinthians 1:20 - "All the promises of God are "Yes" in Christ Jesus." They are sure.

Song reveals the soul's faith.

Song reveals the soul's freedom.

- **"A righteous man sings & rejoices." (Proverbs 29:6)**
- Song is one of the clearest indicators of the soul's freedom.
- I think this is why Lewis calls praise: "inner health made audible."

Habakkuk 3.1-17 - Song in the Storm

- We all want free souls. When your soul is weighed down, it's hard to sing.
- Listen storms can steal songs, but they don't have to.
- Why? Because songs are not dependent on the storms. To say it another way: songs are not dependent on our past, current or future circumstances.
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- We think we'll be free, that we will have joy, if our circumstances are the way we want them.
 - *That's false advertisement.*
 - If circumstances produced joy, Habakkuk would have been joyless.
 - Verse 17 describes a progression of six losses that move from bad to worse: a loss of fig blossoms, no fruit on the vines, a failed olive produce, barren fields, the flock being cut off from the fold, and ending with the desperate state of there being no herd in the stalls.
 - The situation could not get much worse. The economic rug has just been pulled out from under his feet.
 - However, it is here that Habakkuk sings and rejoices despite his circumstances.
- Our circumstances constantly change. Don't look for joy there unless you want to be severely disappointed.
- Look to the God who never changes.
- "yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (3:18)

T: But song not only reveals the soul's freedom.

Song brings the soul's freedom.

- I'm telling you, some of the darkest moments of my life, I needed to be reminded of the character of God and the work of God, and one of the best ways to be reminded is by "truth through song."
- If you feel like you can't sing, you might need a song the most. If you can't sing, listen to song.
 - Song lyrics...
 - Song lyrics...
- Songs lifts us and we all want to be uplifted.
 - When I'm down, when I'm a "little off" I have learned to push play. You feel me?
 - Push play!
 - Open up your iTunes, your spotify, your pandora, pull out your CDs, your mp3s, your cassette tapes if you have to, 8-track it, I'm just saying, push play, Why? Because **Songs Change Stories.**
- Songs help us gain perspective and refocus.
 - If you are struggling in the storm, remember the great works of God in the past and record the small evidences of his grace in the present.
 - Satan loves to discourage us. He has an uncanny ability to help us minimize the good things and maximize the bad things. Life is not usually as bad as it seems. We can get so focused on the mess that we miss the great things right in front of us.
- No matter how bad this gets, I'm singing. This storm can't steal my song.

TITLE SLIDE

Conclusion:

And listen: God will give you the STRENGTH to sing.

- There is a rhythm in this passage that is too important for us to miss this morning. Verse 16: "I hear..... YET I will" Verse 17: "Though the fig tree should not blossom..... YET I will..."
- Habakkuk is faced with incredibly difficult circumstances, but each time he makes the choice to fight back with faith saying, I will trust, I will rejoice, I will walk forward in what I know to be true of God.

The only way this is possible is through Verse 19

- "God, the Lord, is my strength." How's that? How will you make it through another day, another challenge, another trail? God is our strength!
- This is made clear in the final two lines of verse 19: "*He makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.*"
- We can move from the valley of despair to the heights of joy because God is ultimately the one who gets us there.
- Pic: When the weight you carry is too much to bear, allow God to strengthen you. Run to him in prayer. Open his Word. Soak it up. Be reminded of the character of God, the works of God, and the promises of God. AND SING!

What a surprising twist! What if your story did the same thing. Allow God to surprise people through your story.

When people see you going through a storm. They know you have questions, they're asking the same questions for you, and they assume that you're down for the count until the storm passes, but they don't see what you see. They are not ready for the twist!

Through a vision of God and your trust in him, you can not only make it through the storm, you can sing in the storm.

INVITE BAND - We're going to sing a song that is designed to reveal our faith and move us to greater faith in the midst of the storm. It's a classic that we often put on repeat in the midst of the storm. I want to invite you to sing it as the confession of your soul and as a prayer of faith to God!