

October 25, 2026 - Habakkuk 3:16-19 - "Yet, I Will Rejoice"

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Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0:00] Please start with me in your Bibles to Habakkuk 3, 16-19. I hear, and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound, rottenness enters into my bones, my legs tremble beneath me.

Yet I will quietly wait for the days of trouble to come upon the people who invade us. Through the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, produced to olive fail.

And the fields yield no food, the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herds in the stalls.

Yet I rejoice in the Lord, and I will take the joy of the Lord of my salvation.

God the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deers. He makes me trade on high places. To the choir master, with stringed instruments.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. I want to reinforce where we're at in the book of Habakkuk.

[1:24] We're obviously at the end. But as we saw last week, we entered into a few what we call stanzas. And the stanzas are sort of reinforcing the movements of the book and where we're going.

And now we're here. I'm sure there's probably more Christians with this tattooed on their arms somewhere than many other verses in the Bible. This is the chorus of Habakkuk's resolve.

And have you ever noticed how we can often quickly forget the verses of a song, but somehow the chorus just sticks in our heads.

It's that chorus that is the earworm, as we might call it, that sticks in our heads, and we can't get that out. If you're around me for any length of time, you'll probably realize that most of those choruses are from Christmas.

And that I'm whistling and singing along the way. And don't listen to Carmen. But these choruses stick with you.

[2:42] We might not remember every word. We might actually make up words that sound like they're, that's the words that we're actually supposed to be singing. But you remember the part that you sang again and again.

It's the chorus that we sing long after the music has stopped. It's the chorus that contains often the emphasis and the depths of meaning within the song.

Over the past few weeks, we've been listening to Habakkuk's song. We've heard the opening verses, starting in chapter 3, verse 1 and 2. We heard his prayer begin.

And this is kind of like the prelude, if you may. He got into the magnificent work and the magnificent, mighty, and power of God through verse 3 to verse 7 last week.

And then we saw his works unfold. The reality of his works and the recollection of his mighty works throughout history from verse 8 through 15. And last week, we unpacked it stanza after stanza.

[3:54] Habakkuk has been rehearsing the glory of God. But now, as the song draws to its conclusion, we arrive at what we might call the final chorus.

And this is remarkable, church. Absolutely remarkable. Because the prophet is trembling. The prophet is trembling. His nation is facing destruction.

And everything he depends on could soon disappear. And yet he sings. The chorus rises before the crisis has passed.

It's remarkable. Now, how can someone sing with this confidence, though, when everything around them is basically falling apart?

Well, the answer is found in the God of whom they're singing about. The God they're singing to. And Habakkuk emphasizes today that the God revealed in the stanzas becomes the confidence that he's expressing in this chorus.

[5:08] From verse 16 to 19. And I want us to pay close attention today. I've never said this from the pulpit, but no sleeping today, please.

No falling asleep. If you have to, stand up. Stretch your feet. Get some more coffee. But stay awake today. Stay awake today. Because what Habakkuk sings here is a song every one of us needs to hear, especially believers.

We need to learn this song. Because sooner or later, church, we will all face circumstances that will test us to the core as to if we truly believe the words that we sing.

The point I want to reinforce to us this morning is that when everything trembles, the Lord remains our song.

When everything trembles, the Lord remains our song. The sermon title today is Yet I Will Rejoice.

[6:17] And I'm going to basically break this up into three movements within this last chorus. I'm going to look at verse 16, then 17 and 18, and then close out on verse 19.

But I want us to see that when everything trembles, the Lord remains our song. Let's pray as we begin this work. Lord, we thank you for the effectiveness of your word, the sufficiency of your word, the authority of your word.

And we thank you for bringing us together today for the lesson you have from your word. May it indeed be your word that speaks today, not my word, not my opinion.

May I just be merely a herald of a promise of long ago, echoing among history, just one of the echoes within the chamber of time.

Help me, Lord, to proclaim this boldly and let us all listen attentively. And we pray that you make this happen by the power and the work of your Holy Spirit, mightily, miraculously in our midst right now.

[7:41] And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. The first movement of this chorus I want to label as faith waits when fear overwhelms.

And we see this in verse 16. I want you to listen to Habakkuk here. He says, I hear and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound.

Rottenness enters my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Boy, what an unexpected way to begin such a song.

A chorus of confidence. What an interesting way. His whole body seems completely overwhelmed. Almost experiencing like a paralysis.

That he can't move, can't think. Everything is wrong. His insides churn. His lips shake. His strength drains away. And his legs can barely support him.

[8:56] I mean, think about it. He knows what Babylon's invasion is going to mean. The Babylonians will come. They will siege Judah.

It happened in real history. Not just biblical history, but secular history as well. In the early 6th century BC. The siege is coming.

Hunger is coming. Violence is coming. Exile? Coming. And you better believe with it all. Grief is coming.

He has prayed for God to act against Judah. Sinful Judah. God's people and their wickedness. And now the answer to his prayer seems to absolutely terrify him.

Complete paralysis. Have you ever pleaded with God to change something? To change something only to find yourself that you're more afraid of what his answer might involve?

[10:05] I've been there. I've been there. And Habakkuk is there right here. He believes God is sovereign. He has heard God's promises of old that he recollected last week in the stanzas.

But he still trembles. He's still left in paralysis. I mean, everything that God has revealed in this book from the beginning of this book to chapter 2 is now settling in upon him.

And Judah's sin is definitely serious. Judah's sin is serious. And Babylon's violence is going to be horrific. And it was horrific.

And so this is important, church. Real faith makes room for honest grief. Real faith makes room for honest grief.

I mean, some of us would probably say, well, I think the faithful would have an absence of fear. Isn't fear sort of the antonym of faith? Well, I would say, I think that that would be untrue for this prophet.

[11:18] This mighty man of God. The mouthpiece of God. Bringing this song to his people.

Preserved in Scripture. Throughout all this time.

I know many of us assume a stronger faith would often include feeling unafraid. We fall for that lie. But this prophet didn't.

This prophet whose body, his entire body bears the weight of fear here. I want you to hear the song of faith arise among his trembling here.

Look with me. One word makes all the difference. Yet. Yet I will wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

Based upon how he's structuring this song, we have to see that his trembling disposition is the prelude of his confidence in God.

[12 : 23] He doesn't just try to slap a declaration of victory over his situation. Then he can have confidence. No, he comes crawling on his belly to God saying, I will wait.

Habakkuk yields to the timetable. And I don't believe that he's giving up at all and just saying, well, my hands are obviously unable to do anything about this.

But I believe that this point in Habakkuk's life, he's giving in to God, giving in to God's ways.

Habakkuk is waiting for God's judgments to come against Babylon for trouble, as he says here.

And God will use this nation to judge Judah. And he will also hold Babylon accountable for its cruelty. We've learned that all throughout the woes.

That Judah will be judged, but also Babylon will not escape their judgments as well. And so Habakkuk can't control the judgment that comes.

[13 : 37] In fact, he may never even see it in his lifetime. Now, I want to place this in history because I do believe that Habakkuk did experience this in his lifetime.

Because about the time when this letter was written, when this prophet wrote this, it was just about 19 years or so later that the Babylonians did come.

And they desecrated Judah. Now, I mean, unless he was like 90 years old or something like that, God only knows. But imagine the reality, the realistic historicity of this passage coming to fruition.

Like, real fear. This isn't just folklore, church. This is real history and real trembling that happens.

And he realized that he can trust the one who has spoken. And look at the development. If you look a little bit further back in our series in Habakkuk, earlier God has told him, if it seems slow, what?

[14 : 43] Wait for it. In chapter 2, verse 3. And here at last, Habakkuk does just that. His waiting is an act of faith in God's justice carried out while his questions and his fear still remains.

He didn't have to suck it up buttercup. Right? No. He's acting in faith. And you see this, the righteous live by faith.

As he took his stand in the watchpost to wait to see what God would tell him, here he's resolving in that same waiting sense. The righteous live by faith while they wait for God in what he has promised.

Whether those are good promises or whether those are not so good, not so lovely promises. The waiting will not prevent Babylon's advance or spare Judah every hardship.

But it will keep Habakkuk from treating evil as though it could overrule the Lord and his greatness. Now, I don't know if you've heard maybe some churches in your life to leave your burdens at the door.

[16 : 04] Have you ever heard that? I mean, what nonsense is that? I mean, that's... I understand what they're trying to say, but they're doing a horrible job of being biblical.

I mean, it's nonsense. It's actually unbiblical. Habakkuk carries his burdens into worship. It's like, bring yourself.

Bring your burdens. And let's declare to our emotions, to our mind, our hearts, the glory of God. And so what are you carrying into worship today? You might be carrying into your worship today as we invite you to bring your burdens and set it right there with you and to do something with your burdens.

It could be an unexpected diagnosis at the doctor that you're facing the reality. Or for some, as we were praying this morning, it could be a diagnosis that you're having to endure.

It could be a loved one's suffering. It could be an injustice that seems unanswered. Scripture gives us prayers that say, Oh Lord, arise, like Psalm 10, verse 12, to bring your grief before him.

[17 : 21] Pray for justice. Pray for mercy. And then leave the timing at the foot of the cross.

Church, yes. Don't leave your burdens at the door.

Let's do what Habakkuk does. He brings his burdens into worship. He trembles with trembling hands and feet, face down on the floor, crying out to God, yet I will wait.

Ask yourself, am I being governed by what I fear or am I anchored in what God has promised? Because we know the reality, according to Scripture, that our legs may tremble, but God's promises will never tremble. Amen?

But the next movement, I think, takes us a little bit further. Just as I said, choruses sort of reinforce a lot of rich meaning within the passage.

[18:24] What if the dreaded future empties the very things that sustain our lives? It sort of takes us further into that. And we see this second movement here.

We see faith rejoices when everything fails. And we see this from verse 17 to 18. And Habakkuk continues, Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit beyond the vines, produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, Well, that farmer's almanac was right in that prediction.

It's going to be a tough harvest. Well, what Judah would be expecting here is total catastrophe. No figs, no grapes, no olives, and for any of you sourdough bread makers in here, no grain.

What a nightmare, right? No sheep, no cattle. Six losses sweep across their supply and their livelihood.

[19:52] And not only that, but an invading army could make this hyperbolic picture, a possibility of a picture. It makes it a reality.

I want you to picture it. You see it. Imagine opening your refrigerator and finding absolutely nothing. Think about it. Going to the store and finding empty shelves.

And yes, for all you COVID fanatics, no toilet paper. It's always the toilet paper, right? Right? You learn that your income, there's no money coming in, nothing to sustain you.

But sometimes that can be isolated, and you're like, okay, well, I'll just reach out to my neighbor.

But this is regional. This isn't just an individual situation or an individual household that you can call mom and say, hey, I need a cup of sugar.

No, everyone around town is experiencing the same implications of what is unfolding. That's the scale of loss that Habakkuk is willing to face in his imagination.

[21:08] And he's putting this forth for Judah to sing in this song.

He sets before this nation a future in which every earthly support could be taken away. And then comes to the astonishing word yet again, yet.

Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. Our English stinks.

Even in Hebrew, it reinforces like this emphasis. Like, I myself, I myself will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

I want you to consider that in light of verse 16. Remember, we're only one verse away from the trembling man. The man declaring joy is still a trembling man. In other words, he has no assurance of any possible restored harvest or an easier tomorrow, but his confidence rests in the Lord himself.

[22:25] Now, I don't know about you, but I rejoice when my bills are paid. Praise the Lord. I rejoice when my kids are healthy.

They're not healthy, but I'm still rejoicing because Habakkuk is telling me to. I rejoice when there's food on the table. Don't you?

We rejoice when there's income coming in so we can take care of things. These are all good gifts, gifts, but it's often the gifts that can become the foundation of our joy, can't they?

And we kind of hardly notice it at times. Habakkuk forces us a searching question. We have to ask ourselves this. If the gifts disappeared in a hyperbolic way, if everything disappeared from the giver, would the giver still be your joy?

If the giver's hand was withheld from you, would that giver still be your joy? I know it's easy to say, well, of course, Brent, still the giver, but I want you to answer that slowly because there are some within this room or on the live stream that have already endured losses that make this question so painful.

[24:02] And the prophet gives you room to weep and calls you to bring your tears before the God of your salvation. But in a hyperbolic sense, if all the gifts would disappear, would the giver still be your joy?

And I want us to really understand what he's saying in referring to joy. We got so many songs, Joy to the World, I got Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy down in my heart.

Where? You know, we have all these songs and we kind of just, you know, joy just becomes a three-letter word that expresses sort of just this level of happiness. And I think happiness is not necessarily a bad thing, but joy goes deeper than happiness.

We need to notice something about this word. This Hebrew word, he actually uses two different verbs here to refer to this joy or rejoicing.

And these together both emphatically work in a way that reinforces the intensity of this declaration because Habakkuk is describing a deep and a deliberate rejoicing in the Lord.

[25 : 16] And the remarkable part of this is that even if fields bear no fruit, his voice will bear a song.

Like, that's not going to make anyone happy. You're not going to be happy. But you will be able to find joy even if no fields bear fruits.

Your voice will find a song. This language should sound familiar to maybe even Psalm 13 that proclaims the same desperate question that Habakkuk asks, how long, O Lord, the psalmist says. Yet the psalm concludes, my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. The same Hebrew word, *gil*, here, is reinforced there.

And so, do you see a pattern unfolding, church, in both passages, sorrow and rejoicing belong to the same family of faith.

[26 : 22] Sorrow and rejoicing belong to the same life of faith. Their joy is grounded in salvation, always, not in stuff.

And church, this is the theme that reaches its fullest expression, I believe, in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This verse reaches its fullest expression in the person and work of Jesus Christ. For even our Savior endured suffering for the joy set before Him. Hebrews 12, 2 says, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame.

And if you know anything about Passion, Passion Friday, you know, Good Friday that was only good because Jesus Christ stood in our place and He was nailed to a cross.

Now, our Savior endured unimaginable, unimaginable pain and suffering. All the while, His eyes, Hebrews says, His eyes were set to the joy set before Him.

[27 : 30] His eyes were set to the joy set before Him. The good news of the gospel reveals that that suffering, He secured our salvation.

And because Jesus endured the cross and rose victorious, our joy has a foundation that suffering can never destroy. And I think we have to be careful because, yes, Jesus suffered to secure salvation and we might get this twisted and say, well, our suffering we're achieving our salvation in a sense, but our suffering is an evidence of, our salvation is an evidence of our endurance regardless of suffering to endure it faithfully.

It's not a means but it's actually an expression, it's evidence. Our endurance is an evidence of salvation. And so suffering can take everything away from us, church, but it can't take Jesus Christ or our salvation in Jesus Christ from us.

But if this is the confidence of our faith, we gotta say, where does our trembling person here, Habakkuk, where does trembling Habakkuk, we'll call him, find strength to live it out.

And this is where he resolves here in this third movement where we see faith endures because God is our strength. Look again at Habakkuk's legs.

[29 : 13] In verse 16, they shake beneath him. But now, in verse 19, he says, God, the Lord, Yahweh, is my strength.

He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places. Now, picture a deer moving across steep, rocky grounds, I mean, the path is narrow, the footing is uncertain, yet the animal, deer are absolutely amazing.

They're experts in balance. If the animal moves securely where any one of us would probably struggle to even stand, and this is the image that Habakkuk chooses at the end of his book about an uncertain and dangerous future.

I want you to notice the words that he uses as well. Notice the words, I will wait, then I will rejoice previously, but he says, he makes my feet, he makes me tread.

He doesn't say that I will make my feet, I will make my feet tread, right? He says, he makes my feet, he makes me tread. And the final word rests on God's action.

[30:46] Habakkuk's endurance depends on the strength that God supplies. Nothing in and of himself is able to strengthen him to stand the rough terrain ahead.

But the Lord makes his feet stable on uncertain ground. There's a beautiful connection here to earlier stanzas.

Habakkuk has sung of the Lord before whom all mountains tremble. You remember that last week? The trembling mountains and the seas that are trampled referring to verse 6 last week and verse 15.

But now the God whose power shakes creation gives secure footing to a trembling servant. Do you see how Habakkuk is actually taking the might of God's power in all of the things seen and he's saying that powerful God is the one who strengthens me, this trembling servant.

[31:56] The Lord who rules the rough terrain of the mountains can steady the feet that walk them. Isn't that good news? And what a reminder that our confidence in Christ must extend beyond certainty of our circumstances.

The Lord supplies the strength to walk the path that he appoints however difficult it may become. And every believer who belongs to Jesus Christ is called to walk in the strength that he supplies. This is a sanctifying aspect of our salvation. The promise does not make the climb easy. I don't know if any of you are rock climbers or hikers.

I don't know what that entails. I enjoy it but it gets tough, right? It doesn't mean that the climb is going to be easy but it does mean that God will sustain his people as they walk the path that he appoints even when that path becomes painful.

remember Jesus, he even said to all of his disciples pick up your cross and follow me. The cross is an object of suffering, difficulty.

[33:17] Do you hear the encouragement church? Some of you might feel today that you're just unable to keep going. You're tired of disappointment.

You wonder whether your prayers matter. Maybe you're a leader in the church just wondering like even if your service even matters in the church, if it makes any difference.

Maybe whether remaining faithful is worth the cost. I want you to consider a historic moment back in the 1600s.

Consider Puritan preachers who remained in London during the great plague of 1665. one of them was Thomas Vincent and if you Google him later you'll find quite a story.

While thousands were dying around him, Thomas Vincent continued to preach the gospel and minister to the sick and actually seven within his own household passed away.

[34:24] And Vincent described how these ministers preached with such urgency when every sermon seemed as though it might be their last. And most powerfully, picture this, Vincent saw, he pictured the grave standing open at the foot of the pulpit, essentially, that where he will be, he could very well die and he was willing to pay that price.

And they continued preaching. Now, I mean, that's crazy to think about, especially just six years, whatever, detached from COVID, which we didn't even know if we were going to make it to 2021 with everything that was circulating.

What would compel a man to continue preaching and proclaiming the gospel when every sermon could be his last? Well, it would have to be someone who knew that death might silence his voice, but it could never overthrow the promises of God.

There was something outside of life that kept him to endure every difficulty that he could very well face. Isn't this what Habakkuk is teaching us?

Isn't this what he's teaching Judah? The sovereign Lord is our strength and our obedience is sustained by God whose victory is already certain and we can walk in that same victory.

[36:01] We can walk in that victory as trembling people. We don't have to put on a smiley face and act like everything's alright and just do your declaration and onward through life.

No. we can have victory as trembling people church because God is our strength to endure. So keep praying for the suffering, keep speaking the gospel, keep resisting idols that compete for your heart, keep loving your family, keep serving the church and pursuing holiness, but depend upon the Lord to give you strength to do all of it.

The path may be treacherous, yes, but the God who steadies our feet is faithful. Amen? And then comes the final instruction.

This might actually be the most difficult of all the passage. The final instruction to the choir master with stringed instruments.

Habakkuk's confession is given to the congregation to sing. Think about that.

[37:18] He gives them news of siege. He gives them news to wrestle with if the refrigerator is empty, yet we will rejoice.

rejoice. If there's no grain, no sheep, no sustenance at all, we will rejoice. He takes literal history, suffering history, and says, here, sing it.

Here, will you sing a church?

Will you sing that song? As we come to the final notes of Habakkuk's song, I want us to leave us with, I'll just call it five lines, five refrains.

Kimberly might say, five tags of the chorus, or something like that. I know not everyone knows this language, but Kimberly will know, and at least somebody will.

[38:36] But I want to call them whatever they want, five reminders, because I believe sooner or later in life, some of us, it might be sooner, some of us might be later, the Lord knows, but life is going to give us a reason to tremble, and when that day comes, we have to remember this chorus.

So I have five reminders for you. Number one is to tremble honestly, to bring your fears, to bring your questions, to bring your grief before the Lord, because He knows your weakness and He hears your prayer.

The second is to wait patiently. wait patiently, because when you cannot understand God's timing, you have to wait. You have to rest in His certainty, in the certainty of His promises.

Third thing is to hold loosely. Hold loosely, receive God's provisions with thanksgiving, while remembering that your ultimate security rests in the giver, whether He gives or whether He withholds.

Fourth, rejoice deeply. Remember, church, that Christian joy is rooted in the God of our salvation.

[40:03] That makes us happy, but it's deeper than happiness. Remember that Christian joy is rooted in the God of our salvation, even when sorrow remains.

We can rejoice through tears because our salvation remains secure. And fifthly, walk dependently.

Take the next step, trusting the Lord to supply the strength that we lack.

May you remember the words of the Apostle Paul, where he says in 2 Corinthians 12, 9-10, He rejoices in his weakness because God's power is made perfect in his weakness.

The world around wants to demonize weakness. You've got to be strong. Well, God makes a way for an upside-down kingdom, counter-cultural to the ways of the world, and we can be weak, feeble, trembling before the Lord, and have all the strength we need to endure.

Praise the Lord indeed. Maybe you're here today, though, without that confidence in Christ. Maybe you are here today without that confidence, and you hear the fear of this passage.

[41:25] Suffering is a universal experience in life, and you don't have to know Christ to understand what suffering means. And a lot of people actually don't follow Jesus, because of some sort of suffering, some theodicy, implications that they've experienced in their lives, and they've resisted a loving God being reconciled to what they've experienced in life.

So we know that's real, but you know that fear. You know the fear of the passage, but you don't know the Savior. And I want you to consider this, a real moment in history.

A real siege came to Judah. a real plague came in the 1600s. There's going to be a real time where you stand before a holy God in judgment, a judgment that even caused Habakkuk to tremble.

What will your confidence be on that day? What will it be? I hope you hear the gospel this morning that Jesus came because he loved you.

Because while you were still sinners, Christ died for you. Jesus died for sinners and he rose again. And the invitation, the action is on our part to repent of our sins and to have faith in him, to believe in him.

[42:47] And in Jesus Christ is where you find forgiveness, where you find confidence in your salvation that the judgment won't consume you. It was paid in full upon the cross.

And he paid for reconciliation with God and everlasting hope and it's yours today if you have faith in Jesus Christ. And for the rest of us, the stand as have reminded us of who God is last week.

Take that sheet of music and carry the chorus. whatever lies ahead. When everything trembles, the Lord remains our song.

Let's pray. Thank you.