

JOY

IN OUR SALVATION

Habakkuk 3:16-19 *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. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

One of the most difficult lessons that I had to learn in my years in the ministry is to let God have His way in my life. So many times my expectations were not met, my goals were not met or the expectations of my peers or their artificial goals imposed upon what God was doing in my life were not met.

Victory Baptist in Rawlins, WY - went from 40 to 80 people in the first year; from 80 to 40 in one week. The same thing happened for the next four years.

Heritage Baptist in El Cajon, CA. - Buildings that went to others instead of us. One church building sold for a dollar to the "big" church which didn't need the building. Then they sold it for several hundred thousand dollars. We were doing right but.....???

In Chapter 1:1-4 Habakkuk pleads with God. Then in Verses 5-11 God declares that He is going to use the heathen Chaldeans to bring judgment upon His people. And so this dialogue between God and Habakkuk goes on into the 3rd chapter. Many times in the word of God we read of men who were disturbed by this seeming contradiction.

The Psalmist in Psalm 73 recounts this problem that we have in life. The wicked prosper and the "righteous" seem to have nothing but problems.

Job encountered this difficulty in his life. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and on we could go. We labour and work for God, and things just don't turn out the way we planned.

Habakkuk 3:17 *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*

Habakkuk moans and groans that there is no fruit, no success in his labors, no harvest, and no increase of the flock or herds. Why? God is at work. He then gives us these great verses that should be the verses of our lives. No matter what God is doing in our life: *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*

What we see here is a determination by Habakkuk to do right. Reminds one of that old Bob Jones, SR. great message entitled, "Do Right: If the Stars fall from Heaven, Do Right."

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Constant joy: - many, many years ago, on the occasion of a missionary's visit to a small village in Uganda, he met an ordained native of Uganda who had worked for five years on the edge of the great pigmy forest. "This remarkable man," says the missionary, "had been beaten, imprisoned, put in the chain gang, had his house-burnt down, and all his property destroyed; and yet he has borne it all with a smile upon his face and a song upon his lips!" He had found the truth of Habakkuk 3:17. Whatever God had in store for him, He was willing to face with a determination to rejoice.

Modern day stories of missionaries and witnesses for our Lord abound with illustrations of folks, young and old, who have learned this great truth. I could recount episodes in the life of some sitting right here who have made that decision. *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Satisfied with the best: - *"I was going down town in a car, one day," says a New York merchant, "when I heard somebody cry out, 'Hallo, Mr. Conductor, please stop your car a moment; I can't run very fast.' The car stopped, and presently there hobbled into it a little lame boy, about ten or twelve years old. His face told such a tale of suffering, and yet he was bright and cheerful. He put his crutch behind him, and placing his leg in an easier position, he began to look round. A happy smile played over his*

pale face, he had seemed to take notice of everything. Presently I got a seat next to him, and had a little talk with him. I found that he knew and loved the Saviour, and it was this which made him so contented and cheerful. He told me that the doctor said his leg would never be any better. 'Well, my dear boy, I said, how can you be so happy and cheerful?' His reply was, 'Jesus, my Saviour, has sent this trial for me to bear. Father tells me He would not have sent it, unless He knew it would be best for me. And don't you think, sir, that I ought to be satisfied with the best?' When I said good-bye to the boy, I thanked him for the lesson he had taught me, which I shall never forget."

Yes, God's will is best for us. And I am convinced that for all of us, the will of God is that we learn to rejoice no matter what happens in our lives.

Philippians 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.*

1 Peter 1:6 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

Revelation 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

So how are we going to rejoice? Look at our text again: *The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*

We must depend upon HIM.

Isaiah 40:27-31 *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

These verses help us to understand how to depend upon God for all things in our lives. It is contained in that famous verse that most of us have printed and posted upon the walls of our homes.

Verse 31: *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

The little word "wait" carries with it more than the idea of serving, but contained within the etymology of the word is the idea of getting entwined with God. Getting wrapped up in God the LORD, if you will.

From Strong's: *qawah kaw-vaw'*

a primitive root; to bind together (perhaps by twisting), i.e. collect; (figuratively) to expect:-gather (together), look, patiently, tarry, wait (for, on, upon)

You and I must "wait upon the LORD." We must get wrapped up in our LORD. And you do that by spending much time with Him. Then it will be easier to let Him do what He desires in our life, even if it does not agree with our goals and expectation. Get entwined with God and He will bring beauty to your life! Then you will "joy in the God of (our) salvation"!

Amos B. Walls gives us this illustration: "Opalescent men: (*Opalescent has changed in meaning. This would be called iridescent today*) *In ancient times, before men learned to cut the diamond, the opal was the most fashionable stone, most highly prized, and most costly. There are not lacking men in modern times who still hold to this ancient estimate of that beautiful stone. No jewel, in all the range of precious stones, displays a finer range of splendid colours — the brightest tints of the rainbow, softened as if seen through a silver haze. As you look at it from different angles, or as you turn the stone, there come glimpses of the richest azure, the deepest emerald, the most fiery ruby, yet all of them mellowed by the opal's own charm, and very different from the dazzling brilliancy of the diamond and sapphire. Whence comes this beautiful play of colour that takes its name from the opal, and is called "opalescence"? It is not in the stone. Hold the opal up to the light, and it has nothing but a yellowish tinge. Besides, the colours shift and vary, as the stone is changed in position. Let me tell you the secret of the opal's beauty. The stone is filled with fissures — minute rifts in its substance, too small to be seen by the eye, yet not too fine to be seen by the light. These fissures catch up the light, beat it back and forth between their sides, and break it up into its constituent colours, very much as a prism would do. And so the stone, out of what might seem to be a flaw or blemish, draws its wonderful crown of beauty. Have you ever seen opalescent men and women? They are all around you, shining with loveliness in many a Christian home. They are men and women whose lives are fissured with poverty, seamed with sickness, cleft with some deformity, shattered by blindness, or deafness, or ugliness; and yet these opalescent Christians make the very shattering of their body, and the flaws in their fortune, a trap for God's sunlight. They catch in these clefts of misfortune the rays that come from heaven. They toss them back and forth and from side to side of their seamed and fissured lives, and lo! we see them glowing*

with a beauty far more wonderful than any opal of earth, or any rainbow of heaven."

We have plenty of difficulties in our lives, yet, if we allow God's light to shine through us, like the opal, we will reflect the many wonderful colours of our LORD and will be a beautiful light for Him.

Isaiah 60:1 *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*

Philippians 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*