

Just as Paul could've blamed his situation on the people around him, he could've complained that the gospel was the reason that he was in prison. He could've complained about how unfair he was being treated. Why didn't he? He chose not to. That wasn't the way he thought. He understood that everything that was happening wasn't about him, but the Lord. Paul's actions set an example for others. They encouraged others to speak the word boldly and without fear, instead of running away. How we respond affects others. They are watching.

We, like Paul, can learn what he learned. No matter our circumstances, or condition in life, we can be content. Everything doesn't have to go our way for us to be content.

Paul said, "Whether little or much I can choose to be content and rejoice in the Lord. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Think about it!

Rickie Jenkins

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Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Study / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Bold Statement in the Bible

Habakkuk's Faith: Habakkuk 3.17-19

One thing I must constantly remind myself when reading and studying God's word is the people (Jesus being the exception) were men and women just like us. James notes that "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours" (James 5.17). Elijah was a great prophet of God, so great even that Elijah didn't die, God took him into heaven (2 Kings 2.11), yet he was one of us. Therefore, the Bible provides many examples of ordinary people, doing and saying extraordinary things. One of which is Habakkuk's declaration of faith.

Habakkuk 3.17-19 says, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor the fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there 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; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills." What can we learn from Habakkuk's faith.

First, our faith must be strong even in the worst of circumstances. It's easy to have faith when everything is going well. But how is your faith in the trying times? Does it fade and we question God? Or does it continue to trust in God knowing that He has a plan? During the time of Habakkuk, the wickedness of Judah was great, and God was going to use the Chaldeans, a nation even more wicked, as His instrument of Judgement. But what is God's answer to the cries of Habakkuk, "the just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2.4). ...

Even in these difficult circumstances, with impending trouble, and even if all means and resources for food fail, Habakkuk declares, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.” The battle for faith begins in the heart, and for Habakkuk, this battle had already been won. Has the battle been won in our hearts as well? If we have made up our mind that our faith is in Jehovah, then circumstances good or bad, won’t cause us to turn away from Him, but instead we will continue to trust in God’s plan knowing He can use any means to carry it out. As God told Habakkuk, “For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you” (Habakkuk 1.5b)

Habakkuk also teaches us that our joy is independent of our circumstances. Habakkuk says, “I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Even amid all that was going on Habakkuk still found a way to be happy. Happiness is a choice. We can either choose to mope around all day, or we can choose to be joyful. No one enjoys being around someone who always has a doom and gloom, unhappy attitude. If this person is a known Christian, their attitude is going to hurt their influence in spreading the gospel. Why would someone want to become a Christian if this is the attitude they have? While the person who is joyful despite difficulties displays an attitude different than most and may influence others to find why you are so joyful. The reason Habakkuk could have this joy is because he knew through the Lord the victory was already secured. “He will make me walk on my high hills” is language of victory and triumph. Jehovah will reward those who are faithful to Him. The faithful will find strength in Christ to triumph not only over the trials in the world, but the world itself. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. We can only have this triumph by looking to Christ, and solely focusing on Him. Habakkuk knew that, and we need to learn that from him.

Written by; Derek Steen

Amazing Things About Paul

There are many things about Paul that are amazing. One thing that has always impressed me is what he says while in prison (Philippians 1). He said that even though he was in prison, the gospel was still being preached. Although some were preaching out of selfish ambition, envy, and strife, the gospel was still being preached. Here he is in prison, some people are verbally tearing him up, and he still rejoices that the gospel is being preached.

His attitude and spirit are such a great example for us. People are trying to pick a fight with him, but he won’t fight. He doesn’t place the attention on himself. He points his attention towards the gospel. When we feel slighted by someone, how often do we turn the attention inward? It all becomes about “me.” Then, we develop a narrative in our minds that plays over and over again, and before we know it, we’re angry, despondent, and bitter. But not everything is about “me.” In fact, most things are not about “me.” Our thinking has to be changed.

As we change our thoughts, our narrative will change. We can construct a narrative that will build us up just as easy as one that can tear us down. If we are thinking about pure things, honest things, lovely things, noble things, true things, and just things, our internal story will be one of encouragement. Paul didn’t let the attitude and behavior of others influence his choice of how he was going to respond. We get to choose.

Further, rejoicing is not dependent on our circumstance or others. Here, Paul is in prison — his situation is miserable. Happiness is not expected. Yet, he rejoices.

Things don’t always have to go our way. Everyone doesn’t have to like us for us to rejoice. Paul was able to rejoice because of his intimate relationship with God. Others didn’t change that relationship. Others didn’t define him. God gave him the strength and courage to face the challenges he endured. His commitment to the Lord produced his joy. We must not wait until the stars align for us to be able to rejoice. People, things, and circumstances cannot take away our joy.

Continued on back...