

# THE STRENGTH TO REJOICE

## The Strength To Rejoice

### Key idea:

Righteousness, peace and strength are mine not because of my current circumstances or vain desires, but from a true faith in God's love, mercy, and goodness toward me and His people.

### Key text:

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the 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, <sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup> God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

### Key points:

1. Christianity is under attack and there are many who say it won't last, there is no hope for Christianity. But the truth is that Christianity is the only hope for these bodies and this world.
2. Habakkuk shows us the Christian life in that he carries his complaint to God, then listens to God's complaint against him, then carries his complain to God, then takes God's complaint against him, then he praises God for who God is.
3. Judgement begins with the household of God. The Babylonians will eventually be judged for their evil, but first in line for judgement are the people of God. God's Messiah comes as the household of God to take our judgement.
4. It's easy to believe the line between good and evil separate the good from the bad, but as Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, the line dividing good and evil cuts through every human heart.
5. Christ didn't talk about the good vs. the evil so much as the unrighteous vs. the self-righteous.

6. For Habakkuk, turning suffering into praise meant remembering God's past faithfulness, relying on God's strength, and relishing God's promise of a Messiah that would come and save His people.
7. The relationship with God doesn't happen because Habakkuk has all his questions answered, but because he trusts in God. He still has questions and complaints, even after He's a believer.
8. Relishing the promises of God also means getting a vision for the resurrection life that we witness in Jesus after His resurrection. The Bible gives a tangible picture of the physical resurrection life Jesus leads. Walks in the country, fishing with friends, barbecues on the beach, and long talks about what matters most.

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. Did anything stand out from the teaching you found particularly interesting or useful?
2. How do you answer the question how can God be good, all powerful, and allow suffering?
3. Does it surprise you that even after becoming a prophet, Habakkuk questions the motives and conduct of God?
4. Why does God use one really evil group to punish a less evil group?
5. What does it mean that the House of God is first in line for judgement?
6. Do you sometimes think those people over there deserve judgement, but me and my group deserve blessing?
7. What comfort do we have that Christ calls Himself the temple of God in John 2:18 and takes our place at the head of the line for judgement?
8. What are some ways you can use to "remember" the faithfulness of God in His past actions on behalf of you?
9. Where is your strength? Is God your strength; or is your strength your God? What ways can we turn our possessions, or desires, or pursuits into our strength?
10. Do we anticipate the return of Christ, our Messiah, as Habakkuk anticipated the first coming of Christ?
11. In the Gospels, we're given a very tangible and physical picture of Christ's resurrection life we can see and take comfort from? These include long country

walks, fishing with friends, meal after meal, late night discussions about the word and world of God. Does this picture of life after Christ's resurrection impact how you see your own life after resurrection? Can you take hope from this vision?

12. Can we "rejoice in the Lord" even in the midst of pain, heartache, and suffering?

13. Who will I call or see to encourage this week? Who can I invite to BRCC this week?

**Preview of next week: Unashamed To Suffer for the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8-18)**