

Take your Bibles Habakkuk 3- coming to the end of our study- a faith shines in the darkness- when we are introduced to Habakkuk he was confused and had many questions- he could not align what was happening around him, what God's people were doing with God's response, or in his mind lack thereof- his faith was not very bright- by the time we get to the end we read about a different person- Habakkuk is not a person whose faith is wavering, he is a person whose faith is resolute- his faith now is hinging brightly into the darkness and chaos around him- I like the way one preacher describe this book and by extension it "begins with a question mark and ends with an exclamation point"- that is very true- Habakkuk goes from questioning God to emphatically stating his faith in God- we read this in Habakkuk 3:16-19- this morning as we finish our study of Habakkuk I want you to notice four ways to respond to move your faith from a question mark to an exclamation point-

1. Wait- We wait for God even when things are frightening- vs. 16- when you read vs. 16 it does not require any great insight to recognize that Habakkuk is afraid- body trembles, lips quiver, rottenness in bones, legs tremble- he is afraid- why is he afraid- is it the Chaldeans are coming- they are a brutal people who carry off the Israelites- yes he is- however what has shaken him to his core is not the Chaldeans arrival- instead it is the coming judgment of God that has him in this state- chapter 2 was the description of God's coming judgment- that is what brought Habakkuk to the end of himself where he humbled himself to God's authority, specifically seen in God's plan- remember the end of Habakkuk's last complaint he was waiting to lodge another complaint against God- God's plan silenced him and created this fear and trembling in his body- vs. 2 your work O Lord I fear and here in vs. 16- he

says God's voice has caused him great fear- Psalm 29 focuses on the voice of the Lord- His voice is over the waters, it is powerful, full of majesty, breaks the cedars of Lebanon, flashes forth flames of fire, shakes the wilderness, strips the forests bare- God's voice has made his lips quiver- for out of God's lips emanates his coming judgment- this is Habakkuk's emotional state- he is greatly afraid- in his fear what does he do- Habakkuk says he will quietly wait for day of trouble- the day of trouble is the invasion of the Chaldeans- let me ask you this- put yourself in Habakkuk's place- what would you do- I'm scrambling down off the wall- I'm mustering every able body that I can to get ready to fight- if I had in any connection to the royal court, in Habakkuk's case King Jehoiakim, to say make treaties with surrounding kingdoms to come to our aid to fight- I'm going to do something because I don't want a hook in my nose as I am carried off- he does the opposite- he says he will wait patiently- that is antithetical to what we want to do- we want to run ahead of God- if we did everything I just said we would be running ahead of God- the Bible is full of stories of people running ahead of God- it leads to trouble- Abraham not waiting for Isaac- Moses striking the rock- Peter you won't go to the cross- that is our tendency as well- when we are afraid, when God's plan frighten us, when the outworking on earth of God's plan frightens us, when we things around us are frightening instead of running ahead of God we must patiently wait on the Lord- that is so hard- this is the proper Biblical response- **Is. 28:16 Whoever believes will not be in haste**- a mark of our belief is to acknowledge God is working and to wait on Him even when we are afraid-

2. Recognize- We recognize God is in control even when everything fails- vs. 17- with the coming invasion everything he

knows will be taken away- when the Chaldeans march into the land they will bring utter destruction with them- look at the list of what they will destroy- figs, fruit, oil, flock, cattle- that list is more than just 5 items- that is a list of what is need for life to survive- it starts with more optional items figs, fruit, olives- usually represented as the best of the land- to the bare bones necessity- grain, flock, cattle- look at all of this realize it is more than just food- when all of this disappears there are no figs to make fig cakes- there is no fruit to eat- olive is gone means there is no oil- to cook with to make bread which doesn't matter because there is no grain to make bread- flock is gone there is no milk neither is their wool for clothes- the cattle is gone there is no meat- food and clothing what they need for survival is gone- what else disappears when those things are gone- worship- the temple sacrifices, the great feasts- they are all gone- when they are carried off into captivity, they are not going to be able to perform the prescribed sacrifices- everything Habakkuk knows is about to fail- going to fail because of God's plan- when everything around us fails, we must recognize God is still in control- at this point I imagine many people would quote **Jeremiah 29:11**- everyone's favorite verse before they embark on a new stage of life- **For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil-** do you know the context of that verse- Jeremiah writes around the same time as Habakkuk- that verse is in the middle of God's instruction to his people who are about to be taken into captivity- that verse reminds them and reminds us today as well- when we forget God- remember the judgment is coming because they walked away from God- God does not forget his people- God is still in control- know what else that verse tells us- our future, hope, peace, welfare is not based in our circumstances- it is found in a

God who knows and remembers us, even when everything falls apart-

Rejoice- We rejoice in the God of our salvation- vs. 18- yet-powerful word to be so small- also packed full of information- Habakkuk is not going to ignore what is happening- not going to pretend it doesn't really exist- there is no power of positive thinking- not shutting out images he just articulated- he sees what is going to happen for what it is- in that process he recognized God is greater than everything that is about to happen- that recognition leads him to make a deliberative decision to worship- through trembling body, quivering lips, shaky legs Habakkuk worships- nothing about his physical condition would lead us to think he would even be able to worship- yet when Habakkuk saw the vision of the coming Lord in all his power and glory it moves him to rejoice in the God- why- because God is the God of his salvation- notice the designation of God- first part is the Lord- Habakkuk rejoices in the covenant keeping God- who said if you forsake me you will be carried off- God was true to his word- he worships the covenant keeping God who says I will be your God and you will be my people revealing the personal relationship that is possible with the Lord- then he turns and says I will take joy in God, Elohim, of my salvation- the God who is more powerful than the Chaldeans- the God who has in him the power to save his life on this earth, more importantly powerful enough to give him life beyond this world- that is cause to rejoice- even when nothing around you looks like you should worship- notice the truths in the names have nothing to do with your surroundings- it is rooted in the never changing Lord and God of the universe- the Lord God who never fails- The Lord God who never forgets his people- there is not one single instance in the Bible that says or demonstrates

that God forgets his people-that is why as Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica we can rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances- then finally

Rely- We rely on God's great strength- vs. 19- Habakkuk's strength has failed him- it's hard to stand when your legs are shaking- when your bones hurt- in moments like these we must rely on God's strength- if I feel that way I'm going to sit down and complain of a man cold- not Habakkuk- what does he do- he dashes up the mountain as swift and strong as a deer- similar **to Isaiah 40:31 but they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles-** here and in Isaiah the heights represent dominion and conquest- where one emerges in victory after defeating his enemy- the heights is the domain of believers- we may have setbacks- everything around us may collapse- yet through God's strength we can ascend to the heights of victory- as believers in Jesus Christ our ultimate possession and position is a place of victory-

Look at what has happened- before our very eyes, in three short chapters, we see the fulfillment of Hab. 2:4 but the righteous shall live by faith- Habakkuk lives- he lives by faith- he continues trusting in God despite the utter devastation about to befall him- and as a result he lives-

The same is true for us today- all who place their faith in Jesus Christ shall live- we must not let the circumstances in our life, family, job, state, nation, world break our confidence in the victory we have in Jesus Christ- with that unbreakable confidence we will live- we will live by faith-

