

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor 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.

When we think about joy, we tend to think of being content with the things we have, and the teachings usually go something like this: *“Be happy and content with what you have and don’t be looking to have more things to bring you joy.”* Which is all good and true, because we should not seek to have more stuff to give us joy, or greater joy, because the more stuff we have does not mean the more joy we will have, even Paul said to the Philippians:

† **Philippians 4:12-13 (NLT2)** *I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

Now we all know and quote verse 13 *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* But have you really paid attention to verse 12? When we read verses 12 and 13 together, we read that no matter how much we have, or don’t have, our strength is in the Lord, not our stuff. Yet we tend to read just verse 13 and use that when we have little, and we are reminded to have joy when we don’t have all that cool stuff that the neighbors have. But one of my favorite teachings in Proverbs is in chapter 30:

† **Proverbs 30:7-9** *Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die):
Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;
Lest I be full and deny You,
And say, "Who is the LORD?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.*

The older you get, the more you realize that material things do not bring you joy; Therefore, you desire less things for yourself and desire more to do for others who don’t have. And we do so because we have all been in that boat, with having much, or very little. But today’s verse takes it even one step closer to what true Joy is, let’s read it again.

† ***“Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor 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.”***

If you put in today's terms it would be something like; Even though I live paycheck to paycheck, or even if I have lost my job and have no money; even though my friends have forsaken me, my bank account is empty and I am homeless-- ***Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.***

Notice that Habakkuk reminds us that the joy is not in having things, even if it is little, which most teaching tend to say, but here it is saying that true JOY is in the Lord, even if you have nothing at all. Some may read that and think, "*Well, that sounds all fine and dandy, but how can you have joy when you have absolutely nothing?*" The answer is in the next verse in Habakkuk, which says:

† **Habakkuk 3:19** ***"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.
To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments."***

Like I always say, God gave His Son Jesus to us and because He did, we have eternal life through Jesus, Who died for our sins, and everything else that He gives us is just a bonus. My family, my job, my home, my stuff, my ministries, etc... I consider all a bonus, because without Jesus in my life, they would all mean nothing and my life would be empty and without Joy, even if it was full of stuff... worldly stuff.

† **Matthew 16:26 (NLT2)** ***And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?***

† **Psalms 139:1-6 (NLT2)** ***O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!***

† **Philippians 3:8 (NLT2)** ***Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ***