



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## How Long God?

Part 6: Don't Worry. Be Happy.

Habakkuk 3:3–19

Tim Badal | August 27, 2017



We're finishing up our seven-week series in which we've looked at this three-chapter book of Habakkuk. Some of you may never even have heard this guy's name before and now you've invested a lot of time learning about him, about his relationship with God and about his understanding of the world around him. I've even heard that some of you have come to enjoy this series. Habakkuk is a guy who's a lot like you. You have a lot of questions. You want to know what God is up to and when He's going to address some of the evils and injustices that seem to be overflowing in our world.

You're thinking, "God, when are You going to get about the business of proving You're the One Who created all things and is in charge of all things? Let's get there, because I want to be vindicated. I want my testimony of You to be proven right to the people I live around and work with. When I've told them I'm a Christ-follower, I really want them to see what I've said about You is true." That's what Habakkuk is saying. He sees injustice and tragedy taking place and he wants to know when God is going to show up and prove Himself to be the God he knows God is.

As we come to the end of this book, we've seen the education of Habakkuk. He comes to God with his complaints and laments about what it's like to live in a sinful world. He wonders where God is when trouble comes. But God has taught him about His plans and purposes. He tells Habakkuk, "I've been watching and working, and My plan is being played out even now. I'm going to bring discipline upon My people because they've chosen to follow their neighbors' gods instead of following Me. I have faithfully led them and provided and cared for them, but instead of following Me and My ways, they've gone in other directions."

Then Habakkuk is told that the evil neighboring empire, the Chaldeans or Babylonians, are going to come as God's rod of discipline against His people. So that raises Habakkuk's second question: how can God discipline His people—who are running into some trouble because of sin—by using an even more evil, vicious, violent and treacherous group of people to exercise that discipline? God says, "That's exactly what I'm going to do. But even though I'm going to discipline Judah and the people of Israel, in due time I will actually destroy the empire of Babylon." There's a big difference between discipline for a season and destruction.

When God tells Habakkuk, "I've got a plan and purpose," Habakkuk needs to make decision, just as we do. We're either going to say, "God, I'm going to trust that Your plan is good, and I'm going to follow that even when it doesn't make sense to me," or we're going to go our own way. Habakkuk learns that the righteous live by faith, so he decides to trust God. In Habakkuk 3, as we close out this book, we see that the Habakkuk who was complaining in chapter one is now standing secure, resting, and in fact rejoicing, in the plans and purposes of God—even when they didn't make sense to him.

That's where we're going today. The theme of this series is when trouble comes and issues arise that we don't like, when we run into difficulties we didn't see coming, when God's plans are different from ours, we'll do one of two things. Either we'll go our own way and, like the world, rebel against God, or we'll follow Habakkuk, who rejoices and rests and trusts in God and God alone. Today we're going to learn how to do that.

At the end of this passage, what we realize is that Habakkuk's real problem is worry and anxiety. I've come to realize this is something we all experience. I just finished watching a documentary on World War I and I loved learning more tidbits from history.

The phrase “shell shocked” came from World War I. When the soldiers came back from the front, they experienced what was then a new malady. Seemingly able-bodied men were shaking uncontrollably. Doctors couldn’t figure it out. But as they saw more and more of this involuntary reaction, they realized that it was a consequence of the trench warfare which characterized much of World War I.

The soldiers would sit in dugout trenches, hoping not to get bombed. They would listen as the enemy’s artillery shells came flying through the sky. This would go on hour after hour, day after day. They would literally be in constant fear, wondering if this was the shell that would hit them. But it would hit somewhere else and they’d still be alive. Then another would come and their fear was repeated. The anxiety of always wondering, “Is this the bomb that’s going to take me out?” caused a permanent malady they termed “shell shock.”

Some of us find ourselves in the trenches of life, wondering if the next situation or argument we have will be the time our life falls apart. Even though you might not show the external manifestations of shell shock, every part of your insides is shaking right now. You’re filled with dread and anxiety. Studies show that more than a third of adult Americans suffer from some level of anxiety or worry. That’s a problem.

I don’t mean this to be pejorative, but I’ve learned that it mainly affects two specific groups: adult women and teenagers. They’re worried and concerned. But there are all kinds of ways to find their way out of it. Some try lots of self-help techniques. Others pursue pharmaceuticals, which might work at times, but not always. But many of us simply ask, “How do I stop worrying? How do I stop being anxious? There’s so much to worry about. What if this happens? What if that happens?”

We find ourselves filled with dread, and that’s where Habakkuk was in chapter two. God tells him, “I don’t want you to be anxious or fearful about things.” But that’s a large chasm to cross. The distance from worry to trust can be substantial. I’m not here to say that there are simple answers, and then send you off to fix everything. I recognize that even in my own life I worry about a lot more things than I’d ever want to admit in public. I worry about some really crazy things. The theoretical things and the what-ifs that spin around in my head are things I would be ashamed to tell you about.

Another study indicates that in an average lifespan, we spend about 6.4 years of our lives in a state of worry. We consider the amount of intoxication in our world, the strife in our relationships, the difficulties our students are experiencing and we know we’re a society that worries. Even before there were self-help manuals and pharmaceuticals, Paul says in the Bible, “Be anxious for nothing, but pray” (Philippians 4:4–7). Jesus said, “Do not worry about what tomorrow may bring, for today has its own worries” (Matthew 6:25–34). You might say, “But that doesn’t help me any, because I’m worrying about today.”

From my youth, I remember a “theologian” from the Caribbean named Bobby McFerrin said this: “Don’t worry. Be happy.” I love what he says in the first stanza of his song: “In every life we have some trouble...” I should say this with a Jamaican accent, but I don’t dare. “In every life we have some trouble, but when you worry you make it double. So don’t worry. Be happy.”

Now, listen. I know some of you are throwing barbs at me right now. “Are you kidding me? You’re going to quote Bobby McFerrin? The things I’m concerned about—Tim, you don’t understand that tomorrow may be my last day at work. I’m concerned that my marriage might not stay together. My kid is going the wrong way and I’m not sure what to do about it. And you’re quoting a pop song from 1988 to tell me that the answer is don’t worry, be happy.”

I want you to know that this has nothing to do with Bobby McFerrin. It’s from the Word of God. God has an antidote for all of our struggles and all of our situations. His antidote is faith in Himself. We should not be worried about the things of this world—what North Korea is going to do, or the racial tensions and polarization in our society and whether our country will be torn apart. We must learn to trust that whatever God is up to, He’s going to do it well. But I realize that’s easier said than done.

A few different people have said some great things about worry—far better than I could ever say them. Corrie Ten Boom has probably one of the best statements on worry that has helped me immensely. She says, “Worrying is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.” Think about that. Worry is just back and forth, back and forth. It doesn’t get you any closer to a solution, but it gives you something to do. Some of you are filling your lives with worry and while it keeps you busy, it doesn’t go anywhere.

Another person said, “We humans have moments that are absolutely free of worry. We call these brief respites from panic.” Some of us are living there. John MacArthur put it this way: “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith.” Let me say that again. “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith. The beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.” Another pastor put it this way: “All of our

fret, anxiety and worry are caused by us calculating life without God.” When we worry, what we’re saying is God can’t. Faith says God can.

We need to realize that when we are walking in anxiety, we’re not totally walking in faith. God wants us to be people of faith. *“The righteous shall live by his faith,”* Habakkuk 2:4 says. But let me remind you again that this is not a simple solution. It’s a daily decision to put everything under the cross of Jesus Christ and the sovereignty of God. Listen—men, women, children, rich, poor—wherever we find ourselves, we have all experienced the clutches of worry. We’ve had that small trickle of fear that meanders through our minds at crazy times of the day, and we know it can drain our lives.

So God in His infinite love and mercy says, “I don’t want you to live this way. I want you to live by faith.” And this prophet shows us how to. Let’s turn now to Habakkuk 3 and read the rest of the book. Remember, we finished last week at the point where Habakkuk was praying a prayer according to the Shigionoth—a violent and erratic sort of prayer in a violent and erratic kind of life. Some of you today are living Shigionoth kinds of lives, and that’s what fills you with fear, anxiety and concern.

We need to realize how God empowered Habakkuk not to worry and how we ourselves can win against worry. Let’s look to our text starting in verse three:

<sup>3</sup> God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. <sup>4</sup> His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. <sup>5</sup> Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. <sup>6</sup> He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. <sup>7</sup> I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

By the way, Cush and Midian are areas around the present-day land of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup> Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? <sup>9</sup> You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers. <sup>10</sup> The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. <sup>11</sup> The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. <sup>12</sup> You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. <sup>13</sup> You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. <sup>14</sup> You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. <sup>15</sup> You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

Habakkuk responds, saying:

<sup>16</sup> I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. <sup>17</sup> 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.

We know this is a song, because it ends with this: *“To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.”*

## Winning against worry means rejecting human strategies.

Worry brings a natural response: how do I fix it? Many times, instead of going to God in faith, we go to our own resources. But if we want to win against worry, we must first reject human strategies. We must stop trying to fix it ourselves or trying to win this war on our own. But that’s often our response.

People will tell us a lot of ways to get over worries and anxieties. Some will say, “Just stop thinking about it”—and you just want to slap them, right? That doesn’t work. If it was that easy, we would never worry. But even some of the more helpful things people say begin to help for a season, but then they begin to fall flat too. When the troubling skies gather around us, when the seas of life begin to foam, we usually go to one of three postures or strategies.

### The Murphy’s Law approach

When trouble comes, the first strategy many of us turn to is “Murphy’s Law.” This was made famous by Eeyore from “Winnie the Pooh.” When things didn’t go as planned, when those little forest creatures ran into a problem, Eeyore would say, “This is how it’s

going to go. It's just going to happen this way." And some of us see trouble and say, "Well, there we go. What can go wrong will go wrong." This thought fills us with fear, because we think that when one little bad thing happens there will be a ripple effect of bigger and badder things to come. We're devastated—not because of the actual situation, but by the prospect that things will only get worse.

We do this with medical issues. We have a pain that won't go away, or something is there and it doesn't clear up. We go on WebMD and it says, "Either take an antacid or you have stage four colon cancer." What do we do? "I've got colon cancer! I'm dying." There are times—and yes, it's affected our family—when the cancer diagnosis will come. But I've got to be honest. How many times have we feared this little pain or ache in our bodies—something an aspirin can take care of—but in our minds we're already in need of four surgeries.

I get it. I'm a parent. I'm concerned about my kids. I'm a husband whose wife has gone through cancer surgery. I get it. Our family has been concerned about things and sometimes we've had to be humbled in a doctor's office. Now, I've got a lot to be careful about here. I'm not saying when you're concerned not to go to a doctor. I don't want someone who is growing three new arms to tell others, "Pastor Tim said don't worry about it." You're in charge of your body. I don't want you coming back and hanging that on me, okay?

We need to think through these things. But how many times do we allow medical needs to bring us to anxiety that changes everything about our lives and who we are before we have an answer? That's Murphy's Law: what can go wrong will go wrong and it's only going to get worse.

## The ostrich approach

A second strategy that does not work is the ostrich approach. When trouble comes this reaction is head down, dig a little bit and put your head in the sand. "La-dee-dee, la-dee-dah. I see nothing. I hear nothing. Don't talk about it. La-la-la-la-la. I don't want to know about it."

So, you've got some issues in your marriage. "No, I don't. If I worry about it, that's a problem, so I'm just not going to worry about it. I'll watch TV instead." Some of us just fill our lives with other people's lives on TV, because we don't want to deal with the situation that's going on at home. Some of us are concerned about things in our family or in our jobs. Instead of addressing them and doing the hard things, we just stick our head in the sand and play our best ostrich role. Some of you are there right now with issues and concerns. Your head's in the sand. You're thinking, "If I just give it enough time, it will go away." Sometimes it does—but many times it doesn't.

## The helicopter approach

A third approach is going to hit close to home—maybe even for some of my peers. It's not Murphy's Law. It's not the ostrich approach. It's the helicopter approach. I heard that sigh. The helicopter approach is especially popular with those of us who are parents. We're worried about our kids. We're worried that they're not doing so well in school. We're worried about their playing time on the field. We're worried that they're not first chair in the band. We're worried that they just got an "extra" part in the play.

So we get in our little helicopters and we just hover right over them. Wherever they go, we're following them. When they're on the field, we're right there—right in the coach's ear. "Hey, what about number 12? He's really good. You're a bad coach, because number 12 is not in the game." You go to the parent-teacher conference and say, "Teacher, what's your problem? It's not my kid. It's got to be you, because surely it's not me." You go wherever your kids go and do whatever they do—why? This can be a good thing that gets out of hand, because you're concerned about them.

But then that concern goes to worry, and worry goes to anxiety, and then you start imagining things: "What about this? What about that? What if someone offers them this or if this temptation comes?" I get it. I get it, because every part of me wants to be a helicopter parent.

But here's the problem. Have you ever been near a helicopter on the ground? All it does is create great turmoil. Your propellers are buzzing and the kids are getting hit in the face by gravel. Nobody ever likes that. It's not like we say, "Yeah, let's bring a helicopter here during our services and put it right at the roof line." It's loud and obnoxious. It throws everything up in a whirl. But in society today, that's considered good parenting. No. It's being an anxious parent.

Again, I know I'll get emails. Listen, I'm a parent of three boys moving into teenage-hood. There's a lot to be concerned about, and I get it. But always ask the question, "Do I have faith in God? Does God not love my kids more than I do? Is God not watching over them?" Again, I don't mean that we're not concerned, or that we don't set curfews. I don't want some teenage kid to say, "I really loved the sermon last week, Pastor. My parents don't care about me anymore. They're letting me watch whatever I want. No more curfew. No more nothing." That's lousy parenting. That's abandonment.

How many of us have overreacted and done this helicopter approach? Can I be honest with you? As a boss, especially in my catering company, I'm a helicopter boss. I should tape one of my phone calls to one of my crews when I'm not on the event. "Hey, how are things going?" "Leave us alone...with all due respect! Everything's fine." "Well, what about this?" "It's fine." "What about that?" "It's fine. You know what? Why don't you go on the job next time, boss."

I'm a helicopter employer because my concern moves to "What happens if everybody's puking at the event?" Well, it hasn't happened. If it has, I need to know right away. But we worry, and we're anxious about things. Things are going to go just fine. And even if things don't go the way we want them to, the helicopter approach or the ostrich approach or the Murphy's Law approach are not the way to handle it.

So what is a Christian to do? Habakkuk says none of these approaches work. Now, before I move on, I need to cover my bases again. Some might say, "But wait a minute. What's the difference between concern and worry?" Let's compare the two:

- Concern is focused on others. Worry is, "How's this going to affect me?"
- Concern motivates us to serve. I see a situation—I see that my kids are struggling—and I'm going to address it. I'm going to do something tangible to take care of it. Worry puts up barriers that keep us from serving. "If I serve, what if this happens? If I get involved in Junior's life, he may resent me, or do this or that." So we back away and don't engage.
- Concern promotes constructive action. Worry paralyzes you. You can't move.
- Concern is welcomed by others. "Hey, how are you doing today?" "I'm doing great." Nobody's ever going to say, "Wow, get out of my face, man." Whereas worry—as my employees will tell you—is not welcomed by anyone.
- Concern is driven by love. You're concerned about your kids. You're concerned about your marriage. You're concerned about your job. Those are good things to be concerned about. But worry is fear: What if this happens? What if that happens?
- Concern has a goal in mind. This is going to get me somewhere, so I'm going to do X, Y and Z to accomplish that goal." Worry has no goal at all. It's the rocking chair—back and forth, back and forth. You're not getting anywhere.
- Concern strengthens relationships. Worry tends to weaken relationships.
- Concern is tempered with our faith in God. Worry overwhelms faith with doubt. Instead of believing "God can," worry says, "God can't."

Are you concerned today? If you are, that's great. But I'm going to be honest. I usually call my worry "concern"—and that's a problem. So what do we do?

## Winning against worry means remembering God's sovereignty.

The entire theme of this text in Habakkuk focuses on our remembering the sovereignty of God. Those human strategies aren't going to work. So what does work? Turning to God. Remember, Habakkuk is dealing with some very difficult things. He knows that the hand of God's discipline is upon his nation. It's going to hit his neighbors and his family and his countrymen. So he's filled with all kinds of worry and anxiety. But as he's conversing with his God, he recognizes that God is beating a drum we've heard over and over.

You might be thinking, "Hey, Tim, isn't this a bit of a broken record. Bad things are going to happen, but trust in God." I will tell you: we need a couple of sledge-hammer hits on the wall of worry in our lives, and I think Habakkuk did as well. As God broke through one of the walls of his fear and anxiety, another one came up. And God continued to knock down these barriers. So what do we need to know?

Notice at the beginning of chapter three that Habakkuk says, "I have heard the report of You." He knows what God has done in the past and he recognizes that maybe God will do the same thing in the future. But still he asks, "What about now?" Isn't that the cry of every Christ follower? We know what God did in the past and we know He promises to do something in the future. But what about the problems of 2017? "To be honest, who cares about what You did in the first century?"

We're going to read about that in two weeks when we open the book of Acts. We'll see how God addressed the problems of the early church. We know from Scripture that God will address the issues of the future church in the last days. But what about now? What about what is concerning us today?

Habakkuk is wondering if God will come through as He has in the past. Look back at Habakkuk 2:14: "*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*" Let me just remind you of English 101. When it says the phrase "will be," are we talking about the past? No. Are we talking about the present? No. We're talking about the future. At some point, God's glory will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. It's a promise of something to come.

But notice Habakkuk 3:3 says, "*God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.*" English 101 again. When it says covered, that means it's already happened. It's not future. When it says the earth was full of His praise, that's already the current state of things. Habakkuk says, "I've heard what You did in the past." God is saying, "Open your eyes to what I'm doing now."

Some of us, in our worry, look back to the old things God has done and say, "That's great, but what about now?" God says, "Open your eyes and see My majesty and glory right before you. You may not be so anxious if you see that I am on the move." That which Habakkuk hoped for in chapter two is now a reality. What changed? Did God all of a sudden say, "I'm going to start doing things differently?" I believe it wasn't God Who changed, but Habakkuk's perspective that did.

Some of us are mad at God because we're filled with anxiety, fear and dread. We're saying, "God, You're not showing up." And God is saying, "I'm here. You're just not looking at Me. You're not focusing your attention on Me."

We might think of Peter, as he walks out to meet Jesus on the water. He loses his footing when he takes his eyes off the One Who establishes and keeps him settled and looks at the circumstances around him. We talked about that last week. Some of us are so filled with worry that our attention is on the worry and not on God.

Habakkuk has his mind focused on God and things start getting a little more secure and less anxious. So how does he do this? God declares two things about His sovereignty.

## God is the Creator and Controller of all things.

First, He is the Creator and Controller of all things. If you struggle with worry, this is where you need to settle. God is the Creator and the Controller of all things. Let's start with the Creator side of it. Notice what God says. In verse four we read, "*His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.*" And in verse six, "*He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.*"

God can move His anger against rivers and seas. He can do what He wants with nature. If you don't remember anything else today, remember this line: God is the Creator of all things—all we see in the world. He's the Creator of us, because we're created beings. He's the Creator of angels, and even the Creator of the angels who fell and became demons. And he's mapped out our universe by the span of His hand.

This last week we got to observe an eclipse, which was really just a cloudy day in Sugar Grove. It was a little anticlimactic, if we're honest. But then I saw some videos from Franklin, Tennessee, where in the time lapse it went from the bright noonday sun to utter darkness. I want you to know what the eclipse is. It's God taking His thumb and just moving the moon a little bit. "Let's give these guys a show. Let's have some fun with them. And by the way, I'm going to have this set on a perpetual loop, over and over again." He does that and we marvel.

He spans the universe with His hands and says, "You're only seeing part of My pinky right now. That thing you call the Milky Way? That's the first digit of My pinky. That Hubble telescope is getting halfway to the second digit of My pinky. But you're missing all this that I've also created." God is a huge God. This God Who formed the world by the power of His word "in the beginning" is the same God Who knows the intimate details of your life that are befuddling you, that have you concerned.

This God Who created all that is seen and unseen says He is mindful of us as men and women. He knows the number of hairs, or lack thereof, on your head. He knows what concerns you. He tells you to cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). The God of the universe is saying, "Come to Me, all who are weary, all who are heavy laden, who are burdened with worry and fear, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:38). The God of the universe, Who created it all, says, "Come to Me, and I'll take care of your worry." But will you?

He's not only the Creator; He's also the Controller of all things. We know He controls the celestial things—but really, how does that help us? Who really cares what Neptune's doing right now? I don't think many of you are worried that Neptune stayed in orbit last night. It's out of our sphere. We're worried about our job or our kids or our family or a relationship. We're worried about the things that affect us most.

This takes us to the second thing that Habakkuk talks about. Verse three says God comes from Teman and Paran. Those are real places. God's coming out from these real places. Midian and Cush are real lands. God is doing His work—not in far-off Neptune world—He's doing it in the here and now, right where we are.

He's in Sugar Grove. He's in Aurora. He's in the suburbs where you go to your job. He's in Hinckley. He's in the far-off places of the world. He knows the times and locations of each person. He has a GPS on each of us. Some of you just got worried about that. He's here. He's in control of the situation. He's seeing that things come out as they should.

Notice what he declares in verse five where Habakkuk harkens back to what God did: *"Before him went pestilence, and plagues followed at his heels."* That's an allusion to the time in Egypt when God's people were in captivity. God rescued them by drawing them out, using pestilence and plagues. Are the rivers the problem, or are the seas the problem? Habakkuk says, *"You rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high."* Scholars believe this is an allusion to Pharaoh's army chasing after the Israelites and being consumed by the waters, as God controlled the foment about them after allowing the Israelites to walk on dry land (Exodus 14).

Verse 11, *"The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear."* This is when Joshua was battling the pagan armies in the Promised Land. Because the battle wasn't done, Joshua prays, "Lord, give me more time." God holds the sun in its place. We're told in the book of Joshua that the sun stood still (Joshua 10:1–15). This is the God Who controls all things.

Habakkuk continues, *"You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger."* This is a picture of the conquest of the Promised Land." He tells God, "You allowed all these battles to go through. You allowed your people to be victorious against stronger foes." He then gets more specific: *"You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed."* This refers to one particular battle and person, and scholars believe he's referring to a time only a couple hundred years earlier, when David—as the anointed king of Israel and yet only a young shepherd boy—goes out and defeats Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

He says, *"You went out for the salvation of your people...You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck."* He says "him," not "them." Goliath represented the entire Philistine nation. "You pierced him with his own arrow." The sword of Goliath was used to end his own life. David used it to finish him off. These are allusions of times when God showed up. God says, "When My people run into problems, I'm there for them. I take care of things. I control things."

### **This truth is not to bring confusion but comfort.**

We see that God is both Creator and Controller, but when bad things happen, we start asking God, "Where are You?" I want you to see that when we talk about God's sovereignty, it's not there to confuse us but to comfort us. We sometimes have questions about what to do with evil, but the Christian doesn't have to struggle with that. Even though we don't know how God views the details of evil—I'll leave scholars to deal with that—we do know this: what God says is true and what He says He will do, He will do (Numbers 23:19).

I choose to believe that and take comfort in that. I'm not going to be confused by the weird arguments that can come out of that. I'm just going to be comforted that my God is with me, and because He's with me, I'm more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37). I'm going to believe and trust that. God doesn't want us to be confused about things. Instead He tells us, "I've got it all under control."

## Winning against worry means rejoicing no matter the situation.

We have far less to worry about than we ever imagined when we recognize that God is in control, and that leads us to one final thing. Simply put, we need to rejoice. Instead of worrying, we need to rejoice. We need to believe and trust that God will address the situation before us. Amid any situation—even the worrisome ones—we still should rejoice. How do we begin to do that?

### This involves seeing.

When we see God in all His glory, as Creator and Controller of all things, we should realize how very small we are. Notice verse 16: *"I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me."* Habakkuk sees how great God is. Rejoicing starts with seeing. We see what God is doing in our midst, we read what He's done that's recorded in Scripture, and we're going to see what He'll do in the future. Because of how great He is, we become really, really small.

When you see God as big and yourself as really small, do you know what else becomes small? Your worries. Your anxieties. You're not worried anymore. Because God is so big and great, because He has things under control, now the thing that seems so big in your life has just become very, very small. You're really puny and so are the things that plague your life. What I mean by that is not that they're so small other people shouldn't care about helping, but in comparison to God, they don't even register on the scale.

Yet—and this is the grace of God—He says, "Even those puny problems that humans have, I care about them." "What is man, that You are mindful of him? Little, little man, that You care about him?" God says, "I care about your problems. They may be puny to Me, but I know they're big to you."

It's like a loving parent who talks to a toddler about the things that scare him. Listen, it's not good when your toddler comes into your room and says, "Daddy, Daddy, I'm scared." "There are no monsters in your room! Go to bed!" That's not good parenting. A good dad is one who will listen and is concerned about the things that concern his child. He'll help them see their concerns aren't based in reality, but fiction. Are you seeing God as big? Then maybe you'll see your problems as much smaller than they would seem to be.

### This involves waiting.

Second, in addition to seeing, we have to wait. Sometimes it's hard for us to wait on the Lord. Habakkuk knows his problems are big. But he says, *"Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us."* In other words, I'm going to wait for God's answer.

Notice a couple things about this waiting. First, it's not "I might wait" or "Maybe I could wait." It's "I will wait." It's a settled decision. "Lord, I'm going to wait on You. I'm not going to move from this place until You say so. I will wait."

Second, we are to wait patiently. We are not to wait thinking, "I wonder what God's going to do. I wonder what God's going to do. I can't focus on going to church, because I'm worried about this." Some of us are doing this, thinking, "I'm waiting. God, when are You going to do it?" We're pacing back and forth, working grooves into our carpeting. We're not patiently waiting. Patiently waiting says, "Lord, I rest in You. I will sit and wait for Your response."

I don't want to do what our children do: "Is it time? Are we there yet? Are we there yet??" We traveled recently, and God bless him, we were only 15 minutes into a 14 hour drive, when Luke said, "Are we almost there?" The guy's got a TV in front of him. Air conditioning. "Fifteen minutes is kind of long, Dad. Can you move through Ohio a little bit faster?"

That's what we're like with God. We know it's going to take some time, but, "Are we there yet, God?" Can I just remind you that God seemingly has no problem with us waiting? Abraham waited 80 years. Moses waited 40 years. David waited years to see what God was going to do. We need to learn that if we're going to beat this thing called worry that God's timetable is not our timetable. He doesn't move at our beck and call.

### This involves trusting.

God wants us to see Him, rest in Him, wait on Him and then He also wants us to trust Him. Verses 17–19 speak of trust. "But what about this, God? What about that, God?" Habakkuk talks about all the what-ifs. I'm going to change the what-ifs as I close this out. Habakkuk talks about the blossoms and fruit, the produce and flocks. So you're thinking, "I don't have fig trees. I don't have any

fruit. We live in Chicagoland—not much fruit growing here. I'm not sure what my olive crop is doing. I'm not sure about my herds in the stall."

So how does this work? Well, let me put it in modern, 21<sup>st</sup>-century vernacular. What if you lose your job? What if the safety net fails? What if you run out of food? What if you can't pay your bills? What if your children end up in jail? What if your loved ones never come to Christ? What if the doctor says it's terminal? What if your spouse has a heart attack and dies, leaving you alone? What if they find someone else? What if our country falls to a foreign power? What if we lose our jobs or end up in jail for our faith? What then?

In the myriad of what-ifs that come, what then will we do? The righteous will live by faith and they will trust (Romans 1:16–17). Habakkuk 3:18, *"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation."* Listen, our salvation is all we need. It's all we need. "God, You are my strength. You make my feet like the deer. You make me tread on high places."

What are you worried about today? Give it to God. See Him in His glory, wait on His timing and trust His ways. When you do I believe with all my heart your worry will disappear. Give it to Him. It's not bigger than Him. I know it's going to be hard. That's why we call it faith. It's seeing something that isn't right in front of us, but believing God has a plan and purpose for it. Take your worries and fears, give them to God and watch what He will do.

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