

**Thanking God through the Lord's Supper
Habakkuk 3:17-19**

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Dr. Steve Horn

I probably have already shared with you that Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I know that probably sounds strange in that Easter and Christmas should stand above all other holidays to us as Christians. I'm not so much talking about the reason that we celebrate, for that certainly would mean that Easter and Christmas stand above all. I just like Thanksgiving season for the relative simplicity with which we celebrate this day. And, today, I share with you my favorite Scripture on the subject of Thanksgiving. From the Old Testament Prophet, Habakkuk, we read....

Text: ¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud
and there is no fruit on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,

¹⁸ yet I will triumph in the LORD;
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!

¹⁹ Yahweh my Lord is my strength;
He makes my feet like those of a deer
and enables me to walk on mountain heights!

Introduction: Habakkuk most likely prophesied just before the beginning of the exile when the sin of Judah is at the peak. Habakkuk questioned God as to how long He would allow sin to reign in Judah (1:1-4). God answered back that He was preparing the Babylonians to deal with Judah's sin. (1:5-11). Habakkuk's second question concerns how could God use the Babylonians, who are more wicked, to be the instrument of judgment against Judah (1:12-2:1). God answered Habakkuk in two ways. First, God declared that the "righteous will live by faith" (2:4). Second, God declared that He was "in His holy temple" (2:20). Chapter 3 is the prayer of Habakkuk indicating his complete trust in God, though he does not understand exactly the ways of God.

In other words, Habakkuk's prayer concludes with a thanksgiving even when things were seemingly at their worse. As we prepare our hearts for the Lord's table today, I want us to mediate on just a few powerful reasons for our thanksgiving.

We can be thankful...

Even in the Absence of what might we might consider important.

Habakkuk saw only misery, but he was going to give thanks. To feel the emotion of Habakkuk's experience, we might put Habakkuk's words in a contemporary poem. It might sound something like this:

Though the sugar cane crops yield no sugar
And the oil wells all dry up
Even though there may be no money in the bank
Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord!

Though I share Christ with all my neighbors and family
But there are no decisions
And, even though, the Doctor called last week
And the news is not good

I will put all my faith in the Lord and rejoice in Him!

This month's edition of *Reader's Digest* has a wonderful little article in it entitled, "Two Simple Words: How the Power of Thank You Changed My Life." In the article, this man sort of down on his luck—business gone bad, marriages failed, just unhappy at every point in life heard what he calls an inner voice say to him, "Until you learn to be grateful for the things that you have, you will not receive the things that you want." This man vowed to write at least one "thank-you" note each day.

As believers in Jesus, we have much to be thankful for even in the absence of what we might consider important.

For the Awareness of that which is purely blessing.

Then, we can be thankful for those things that are simply "purely blessing." The essence of the word grace is that God does not give us what we deserve, and in exchange even gives us what we do not deserve.

Because of the Assurance of Christ's Atonement.

Maybe Habakkuk could not yet understand the impact of the God of his salvation. But, as believers in Jesus Christ, we now recognize that this is not just our physical rescue, but His salvation is our spiritual rescue.

The Lord's Supper helps us to give thanks!

Scripture of Meditation as We Receive the Elements (1 Corinthians 11:17-26)

¹⁷ Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, to begin with, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ There must, indeed, be factions among you, so that the approved among you may be recognized. ²⁰ Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. ²¹ For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others, and one person is hungry while another is drunk! ²² Don't you have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you look down on the church of God and embarrass those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I do not praise you for this!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: on the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same way [He] also [took] the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.