

Family TableTalk

Conversation 12

God's Presence in Our Pain

read

Habakkuk 3:17-19

think

Most of us attempt to avoid discomfort at all costs. We know from experience that suffering brings sorrow, fear, and real confusion. We know that pain is both discouraging and disorienting. But the prophet Habakkuk tells us that pain and suffering are unavoidable realities of life in a fallen world (3:17). If we can't actually avoid all the brokenness and difficulty, then what should we do with it?

Habakkuk gives us two beautiful and necessary encouragements. First, we should remember that *God is our joy* in the midst of suffering (3:18). We will face hardships, yes, but the LORD has secured a salvation for his people that cannot be touched by disease, financial loss, or the realization of our greatest fears. Even death cannot threaten the salvation secured for us by Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).

Second, we should remember that *God is our strength* in the midst of suffering (3:19). When pain comes, we don't have to "try harder" or "dig deeper." We don't have to make it through on our own. We can lean into Jesus, the One who promises to give sufficient grace and perfect power in our time of weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As Christians, we don't have to hide from our pain. We shouldn't ignore it or try to explain it away. We are free to embrace the reality of suffering with confidence; a confidence drawn from the promises and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, our eternal joy and enduring strength!

apply

- Where do you see suffering in our world? How are you experiencing pain in your own life?
- What does an active Christian joy look like in real time? Who is the source of our joy?
- How can you "lean into" or rest in the real strength of Jesus today?

pray

Dear God, we know that we are not immune from pain and suffering. We are broken people living in a broken world. In all the hardships that we face today, we pray that we would know you as our eternal joy and everlasting strength. You alone are our salvation, now and forever. Amen.

by Matthew Icard

Matthew Icard currently serves as the pastor of youth and families at Clemson Presbyterian Church (Clemson, SC). He's also been a frequent elective speaker RYM's summer conferences (www.rym.org). When he's not spending time with parents and students, Matthew is usually playing guitar, cooking something new, or tinkering with his old Jeep. Matthew and his wife Rachel have been married for 10 years.

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