

## INTRO

- What makes you happy?
- What does being happy mean to you?
- Is there a difference between joy and happiness and, if so, what is the difference?

3 things we've learnt from Habakkuk's journey:

1. **Don't run from difficulty**—God uses those difficulties for our good.
2. **God meets us in the journey**—the process isn't a quick fix but certainly transformative and worth it.
3. **Joy ≠ Happiness**—a biblical view of joy describes a person having joy even in mourning, suffering or difficult circumstances.

## READ

Habakkuk 3:17-19

## REFLECT

In v18, Habakkuk finds joy in the struggle, but it's sandwiched between 2 verses. Let's look at each.

## 1. FACING THE REALITY OF THE STRUGGLE

In v17 Habakkuk outlines the worst possible consequences—epic economic failure and famine. Yet (v18), even amid the reality of the struggle, Habakkuk has learnt that he can trust God and with that comes great joy, not in circumstances, but in God himself.

*Qu: why is it important that we neither deny nor diminish the reality of the struggle we face?*

Habakkuk expresses a *defiant* joy: in the face of struggle, he acknowledges its reality but doesn't allow the circumstance to overwhelm him or be the final word.

*Qu: how is it possible that our joy in God can be more authentic and deeper when we confront our struggles instead of avoiding them?*

*Qu: do you find it easy to acknowledge your current struggles?*

## 2. OUR FOCUS THROUGH THE STRUGGLE

V19 gives the reason to defiant joy in the face of struggle: *"God, the Lord, is my strength."*

**Contingent joy vs Courageous joy**

Contingent joy depends on the right circumstances and often leaves us disappointed. Courageous joy makes us resilient in the face of adversity, by setting the hope of our heart on Jesus alone.

*Qu: Think of a boat in a storm tethered to an anchor. How is that a picture of our joy anchored to Jesus?*

God wants us to grow up into courageous joy in our hearts that is resilient in the face of adversity.

**Courageous joy becomes Contagious**

When we as followers of Jesus live with courageous joy, people notice. We become counter-cultural and create curiosity in others as to the source (Jesus!) of our joy in adversity. The sad reality is that many Christians and churches are just as overwhelmed and cynical as the culture surrounding them.

This should not be. We have much more to anchor our faith, hope and joy in than Habakkuk had. We have seen God's plan revealed ultimately in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

*Qu: how does looking to Jesus help you find joy in your struggles today?*

## RESPOND &amp; PRAY

- Is there a struggle you are currently facing right now that you'd be willing to share with the group? Pray for one another.
- Pray for a courageous, resilient joy to be deeply deposited in your heart.