



His Word Is Truth!

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Around 605 B.C. the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk was moved by the Holy Spirit to write about times of suffering and trial that God's people would experience in the near future. During such times God's people would begin to wonder if God had abandoned them. In some cases they would suffer because of the consequences of their sinful behavior. In other cases they would suffer as innocent victims of other people's violence and cruelty. In either case, they would conclude that God had turned His back on them. **Maybe we feel the same way today?**

It doesn't matter if you are suffering the consequences of your own sinful choices or if you are suffering because of circumstances beyond your control. In either case, the result is that you need comfort and encouragement. You need to know that God forgives you. You need to know that God loves you. You need to know that there is hope for the future.

The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk was moved by the Holy Spirit to write words of comfort for people who lived in his day. *However, these words also apply to US!* Habakkuk 3:17-18 reads: **"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes 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, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior."**

The Holy Spirit uses these words of Habakkuk to teach us that we need **more** than *physical* prosperity and security. Even though God knows that we have *physical* needs, He also knows that we can have physical prosperity and yet live in spiritual poverty. We have to understand that our greatest need is to recognize our many sins against God and know that we have forgiveness from Him through the Savior He has promised us. We also

need hope for the future when God helps us see that the material things of this world will one day pass away and that we ourselves must face death sooner or later. **The prophet Habakkuk teaches us that God has not abandoned us!** *In fact, God will often allow us to go through times of suffering and trial because He loves us.*

You see, God uses the difficult times in our lives to humble us and help us see what is truly important in life. (See Romans 5:1-5, Hebrews 12:7-11 and 1st Peter 1:3-9) Simply put, we need the forgiveness, the love and the hope of eternal life that only **Jesus** can give us. If you have all the prosperity this world offers but do not have faith in Jesus as your Savior, then you are truly poor and have no hope! On the other hand, if you are experiencing poverty and suffering in this world but have faith in Jesus as your Savior, then you are truly rich and have the hope of eternal life in God's love

even in the face of death itself!

In Matthew 6:31-33 we read these words of Jesus: **"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."** Jesus teaches us that His Father knows that we have physical needs and He will provide for us as He sees best. *But even when He allows us to go through hard times, He only does this to help us seek first His Kingdom!*

What is the "Kingdom of God?" Simply put, God's Kingdom is **Jesus** Who came into this world to save us from our greatest enemy: OUR OWN SIN AGAINST GOD! Jesus died on the cross in our place of judgment and then

conquered death for us by His bodily resurrection. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to convict us of sin and give us faith in Jesus through Whom we have complete forgiveness of sin, the assurance of God's love, and certain hope for the future. **Seek Jesus for comfort and encouragement!**

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Please read the next His Word is Truth on Monday, April 20th!

Pastor Eckstein will continue his series: "Comfort and Encouragement from Scripture." *The topic of next month's article will be: "Death Has Been Defeated!"*

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiajt.org

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This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.

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Our nation is going through some very difficult times. The economy is a mess. The stock market hasn't seen such losses since the Great Depression. Many people have lost their jobs, and more may yet lose their jobs. Home values have declined, and many have lost their homes due to foreclosure. Many have helplessly watched their retirement investments reduced by 50% or more. Our nation's debt continues to increase. Our battle against Islamic terrorism continues with no end in sight. **Where can we find comfort and encouragement during such**