

Light in the Valley

by Richard E. Bieber

Richard E. Bieber's sermon emphasizes finding God's light and purpose in the valleys of life, encouraging believers to rejoice and grow through their struggles.

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, Psalm 139:23, Habakkuk 1:1, Habakkuk 3:17, Luke 18:7

Topics: "Trusting God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about finding God's light, fulfillment, and joy in the midst of valleys, where everything seems to be going wrong. Using examples from the lives of Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus, he emphasizes the importance of embracing difficult times as opportunities for growth and formation into the image of Christ. The sermon encourages believers to trust that God is in control, to seek His presence daily, to rejoice in Him regardless of circumstances, and to find strength in Him to eventually emerge from the valleys prepared for higher places.

Transcript

The oracle of God which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and

thou wilt not hear? Or cry to thee "Violence!"

and thou wilt not save?

Why dost thou make me see wrongs and look

upon trouble?

Habakkuk 1 : 1 - 3

Bob Fell is with the Lord now and is doubtless praying for

us all. For many years when he was with us in flesh-and-

blood he had a concern for the sick. Bob wanted to see

more healing; and he put something into it. He prayed for

the sick, went to the hospitals to visit and encourage them. Sometimes Bob would literally weep at the meager results. One day he shook his head and said,

"I don't know what's wrong. Every time I pray for someone they die!"

So what do you say?

"Don't pray for me, Bob!"

"Think positive thoughts man. Make a positive confession!"

Or, is it possible that at that time Bob was going through a real valley?

There's not one of us who has made any serious attempt to serve God who hasn't experienced, with Bob, a time when things just seem to be going wrong. I'm not talking about the rut we get ourselves into when we allow our thinking to turn sour, when we are deliberately looking for trouble expecting evil every time we turn a corner. And I'm not talking about the times when we need to repent of our complaining attitude and get our eyes back on the God of all grace.

No, I'm talking about those times when,

- our hearts are fixed on God,

we're seeing the cross and thanking God

for His mercy,

- and faithfully - as far as we can tell -

trying to do the things that need to be done,

and still everything goes wrong. We pray for people and

their plight seems to get worse. Baffling setbacks keep knocking us off our feet.

"Lord, I see your mercy on the cross, but I'm having trouble making sense out of my present situation."

The truth is that we are in a valley. It's not

- our sour attitude,
- our wrong understanding of the facts,
- our pessimism and self-pity,
- it's a real valley!

We're simply experiencing a time of difficulty, slow progress, isolation from others, monotony in our daily life.

We see other saints sailing along enjoying success in their work, taking pleasure in their circumstances, bearing much fruit, receiving some acclaim. And here we are, stuck in this valley.

"What's happening, Lord? I could understand a few days or weeks of this, perhaps, but this thing goes on and on. It doesn't seem to have an end down here!"

It's in the valley that men and women are formed into the image of Christ. Moses spent years and years and years as an exile in the wilderness of Midian. But every day Moses was out there, separated from the luxuries of Egypt,

cut off from his fellow Jews and his father's house, he
was being formed into the meek man,
the lowly obedient faithful man,
through whom God would deliver Israel.

John the Baptist spent his youth, and all his adulthood,
in the wilderness. And it wasn't a vacation. It was a
long season of inward breaking and outward toughening for
the brief work of announcing the Christ. But that preparation
made John a burning and a shining light.

And Nazareth wasn't exactly Fifth Avenue for the Son of God.

Thirty years of almost total obscurity. Growing up among
people who were narrow,

and shallow,

and petty, and who tried to kill Him as soon

as His ministry began. Even at the height of His popularity

Jesus was walking in a valley - a man of sorrows and

acquainted with grief - until the hour arrived to drink the

cup of death to set us free.

Not once do we hear Jesus complaining about His valley in

the midst of the sorrow and the grief He knew so well.

He never ceased rejoicing before His Father.

"My meat is to do the will of him who sent

me and to accomplish his work."

Nor do we hear John the Baptist complaining,

"Lord, get me out of this wilderness! I'm

sick of it!"

Or Moses - does he complain? Moses yields to the lessons

of Midian and becomes a man of deep inner peace.
Instead of fighting against the valley and complaining,
"Lord, get me out of here,"
we need to learn with our Lord,
and John the Baptist,
and Moses, to find the light of the
living God right down here in the shadows. Not just
gritting our teeth and toughing it out, but finding
our light,
our fulfillment,
our joy,
here in this valley.

Though the fig tree do 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, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my
feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread
upon my high places. Habakkuk 3:17-19

Habakkuk didn't start out that way. He was full of questions
and complaints against God - at first. But he learned what
every servant of God needs to learn,
- that the light God wants me to have,
the fulfillment,
the very joy of heaven,
is right here in this valley, and nowhere else.

The best training school in the whole world for the work
God has ordained you to accomplish is in the valley where
you are.

- Harvard Divinity School might make you
a snob,
- Fuller Seminary might make you a Pharisee,
- Lutheran Seminary or Moody Institute
might teach you habits it will take you
years to unlearn,
but the valley where you are, if you will accept it as
from God and find God in it and move when He guides you,
will make you a servant of God as nothing else will.

Ah, but how do I accept this valley as from God and find
God in it? By daily learning four lessons:

Daily,

1. I need to learn that it's going to come out God's way
no matter how bad things look.

I will quietly wait for the day of trouble
to come upon people who invade us.

Habakkuk 3:16c

Now the people that invade us are not flesh-and-blood, but
powers and principalities, demons, the satanic kingdom.

And make no mistake Satan's day of trouble is coming - it's
going to come out God's way.

Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and looked down over
Jerusalem and wept. With the eye of the Spirit of His
Father He could see more than twenty centuries of anguish.

There won't be one stone upon another. But
in the end, this will be the city of the Great King. The
light of God will arise upon this city, His glory will be

seen upon it, and nations will come to its light and kings
to the brightness of its rising.

So with us,

"Will not God vindicate his elect, who cry
to him day and night? Will he delay long
over them? I tell you, he will vindicate
them speedily." Luke 18:7-8

It's going to come out God's way because He's on top of
the situation now.

It's like being on a ship that's going through a frightening
storm. Then you look at the captain's face. It is perfectly
calm and you know that no matter what the wind
does, or the waves, this ship is going to make it.

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all
the earth keep silence before him."

Habakkuk 2:20

2. I need to learn daily that God is with me in this
valley and His presence is my light.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of

the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. Psalm 27:1-4

I don't have to escape the valley to pursue God, I pursue
God in this valley, He's here. All I have to do is
seek Him.

"Lord, save us - we perish!" said the disciples.

- He arose and rebuked the wind

and the waves and there was a
great calm.

"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?

Isn't it enough that I am with you in the
boat? Don't you understand?"

If everything looks dark and you can't see any light at
all, it isn't because the light is gone - it's because
your eyes aren't open to the God who's at your side.

"Lo, I am with you always."

"I will never leave you nor forsake you."

"Where two or three are gathered together
in my name there am I in the midst of them."

There are times in our coming together when everything
goes right. Things click. It's easy to sense the presence
of God. And there are times when everything goes
wrong. There are disruptions,
noises,
nobody seems to be with it. It's boring.

Does that mean that the Lord isn't here? Is heaven only
here when we feel that presence? No! If we come together
in His name, He's here. And He is our light. He is with us

- when we have a headache,
- when we're swamped in problems,
- even when we have the sniffles.

He's right here in the valley. He walks with us in the
midst of the fiery furnace - and keeps us.

3. I need to learn daily to rejoice in God even if every

thing else in my life is letting me down.

Though the fig tree do 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, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Habakkuk 3:17-18

When things were going so smoothly how could I know whether it was God I was rejoicing in or the fact that the vines were full, olives ripe, and the flocks growing? But now that everything else is stripped bare, my joy can only be the Lord Himself.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

There are people alive on this earth who have learned this.

There are men and women imprisoned for their faith who greet the gray light of dawn in their cells with praises to God. They really rejoice in Him. There are patients in a nearby nursing home whose lives have been stripped down to nothing but sheer monotony...but how they love God! ...how they enjoy Him!

...how they praise Him!

This is not whistling in the dark, it's the purest form of faith, the holiest wisdom, and the most perfect pleasure we can know on earth.

"...yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation."

4. I need to learn daily that God is my strength and by His power I will emerge from this valley when the time comes.

God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my

feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread

upon my high places. Habakkuk 3:19

This valley is not my destination. It's my school preparing

me for the day when I will be treading the high places

-in this life or the next.

- I'm down here getting a pair of strong

sure feet.

- I'm learning to travel over the rocks

without stumbling.

The Israelites may not have needed forty years in the

wilderness, but a season in the wilderness they did need.

If they had crossed the wilderness in three weeks, and

emerged at Caanan, they would have been wiped out by the

Caananites. They had to learn in the wilderness

- to live in God's strength,

- to conquer in God's might.

- and so do we!

If we suffer with Him

- We shall also reign with Him.

If we walk the valley with Him,

- We shall also tread the high places

with Him.

If we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God,

- He will exalt us in due time.

This valley is not a mistake and it's not some kind of

hell. There is light in this valley. God help us to

find it,

walk in it,

rejoice in it, until we're ready for the high places.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/light-in-the-valley/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net